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TRAINING

ONE YEAR ON  
REFLECTIONS





In the first of this two-part series, Dods Training Director, Tom Brown, shares his thoughts looking back at the past year since we first entered lockdown, and highlights the successes and the priorities going forward.

**A message from Tom Brown, Director of Dods Training:**

The past 12 months have pushed us to extremes that most of us have not had to deal with over the course of a year before. Anxiety, stress, juggling childcare, isolation, loss of loved ones. But also tremendous courage and resilience from frontline workers, connecting with neighbours on our street, spending time with children whilst not commuting, speaking to family members you usually only see at Christmas, stopping to think about what really matters to us.

In March 2020 our delivery model at Dods Training was 99.6% in-person training. Within 3 weeks of the first lockdown, all of our delivery had switched to virtual. I don't think I've ever worked harder in my life than in April 2020.

We had to build a completely new delivery model and rapidly work out how to facilitate learning without many of the subtle nuances of human communication which are really important to our training – and only from the shoulders up! Since then we've delivered nearly 800 workshops virtually for over 9000 people.

Like everyone a lot of the lessons we learnt in this time was through rapid trial and error, adjusting with the collective human experience of staring at screens for too long every day, and being flexible to changing needs and work patterns. A phrase which has rung true for us so many times this year has been: *don't let perfect get in the way of good*. That has meant reacting quickly and adjusting to learners' circumstances. People will forgive the very occasional technical hitch if you are really listening to what their needs are and equipping them solve a problem.

There has been a lot of talk of the new normal over the past year: things that will change forever, or that we will never go back to. And yet there has also been a near-constant yearning for what we knew and the human interaction that we need.

There are so many benefits to remote working. The absence of commuting means work-life balance no longer has a 2-hour roundtrip in the middle and is much better for the environment.

Suddenly a sense of geographical equity has started to emerge – people everywhere can have access to the same activities, rather than having to travel to HQ. But we also need human interaction, for creativity, connection and relationship.

Lots of things probably will return to the way they were - we will go back to offices (if not 5 days per week). Client lunches and after-work drinks will be back. But the days of the Training Tourist attending a couple of days' training in a hotel in London, for a course which bears no relevance to their job, are long gone. For us, learning is becoming more targeted, frequent and demonstrably effective. Virtual or in-person, that's the direction of travel, and we're excited about the year ahead.



## Dods Training: April 20 – March 2021

UK Single Client deliveries – 258

Open courses – 32 open courses delivered

900 people registered across a number of webinars. With 360 people registered for our 'Building the Civil Service workforce of the future webinar', which you can [watch again here](#).

### Noteworthy new business:

- **Welsh Government** – Dods training have been working with the Welsh Government to deliver their Policy Programme. The programme covers core policy skills for all levels. It includes a new base camp for senior civil servants. It also holds great opportunity to commission bespoke products e.g. podcasts and webinars across Dods services
- **Dstl technical symposium** – Dods Training are working with Roleplay UK to deliver a variety of tailored training courses to support staff at Dstl with their virtual presentation skills.
- **BEIS Introduction to Policy** - After many successful face-to-face deliveries of a Policy Excellence Week for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Training are converting the content and design to online learning. The five modules in the series take staff through the entire policy process and give them the knowledge and capabilities they need in their policy careers.
- Dods played a big part in supporting the well-being of remote workers through the delivery of maximising productivity and resilience sessions in MOJ
- Home Office Policy basecamp - We supported the delivery of policy base camp, 17 bite-sized follow up workshops to keynote sessions from policy leaders across departments and Ministers.

### What to look out for: Webinar Series

We are launching a webinar series that will consist of a 1-hour free webinar every month covering a variety of topic areas. Starting with Persuading and Influencing on the 27th April.

Please register for **Persuading and Influencing at Work 101** on **Apr 27, 2021 11:00am BST** [here](#).



**Contact the Dods Training  
team for more information**

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