



Department
for Work &
Pensions



Cabinet Office

To: Charlotte Clark, Senior Responsible Owner
for the Automatic Enrolment Programme

Date: 24 March 2015

From: Robert Devereux, Permanent Secretary, Department for Work and Pensions

David Blackall, Acting Chief Executive, Major Projects Authority

Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the Automatic Enrolment Programme

We are writing to formalise your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the Automatic Enrolment Programme, with effect from 21 July 2014. You will be directly accountable to the DWP Accounting Officer, under the oversight of the Minister for Pensions. This will be a part time role.

As SRO you are personally responsible for delivery of the Automatic Enrolment Programme. You will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives and policy intent; for securing and protecting its vision, for ensuring that it is governed responsibly, reported honestly, escalated appropriately and for influencing constructively the context, culture and operating environment of the programme.

In addition to your internal accountabilities, you should also be aware that SROs will now be held personally accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees. You will be expected to account for, and explain, decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the programme or specific milestones within the delivery plan. This means that from the date of the signature of this letter you will be held personally accountable for the delivery of the Automatic Enrolment Programme and could be called by Select Committees to provide evidence to account for and explain the decisions you have taken.

It is important to be clear that your accountability relates only to implementation. It will remain for the Minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development.

Detailed guidance on SRO roles and responsibilities is attached at Annex 1. You should follow that guidance and also ensure that you understand the guidance "Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants"¹ and make

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/364600/Osmotherly_Rules_October_2014.pdf

yourself aware of the Major Projects Authority guidance on the management of major projects².

Programme Status

The Project Status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the programme to the Major Projects Authority. This is the agreed position as you assume formal ownership of the programme.

Tenure of Position

You will be expected to remain within this role until the end of the programme, which is planned for November 2018.

Objectives and Performance Criteria

The Automatic Enrolment Programme was established to implement the Government's workplace pension reforms. The overarching aim of the reforms is to get more people saving more for their retirement. The Programme 'went live' in October 2012, delivering:

- 1) Automatic enrolment - a new duty on employers to automatically enrol their eligible workers into a qualifying workplace pension scheme; to increase the incentive to remain saving in a pension scheme there is a mandatory employer contribution.
- 2) The National Employment Savings Trust - offers low cost pension provision to individuals on low to moderate earnings and their employers. NEST has a public service obligation to accept any employer who wishes to use it to meet their employer duty.
- 3) An employer compliance regime - run by the Pension Regulator to support these measures.

The implementation period for the Programme is 6 years: employers are being 'staged' by size, starting with the largest, over the period October 2012 to February 2018; and contributions to pension schemes are being 'phased' in over time to provide a period of adjustment for employers and individuals, with full contributions being paid from October 2018.

Once fully implemented the Department expects to see around 9 million people newly saving or saving more into a workplace pension, and an increase in pension saving of around £11 billion a year.

Proposed changes to the programme scope which impact on this intent or benefits realisation must be authorised by the Accounting Officer, who may delegate his decision-making authority to DWP's Portfolio Management Committee, and may be subject to further levels of approval. You are also responsible for recommending to

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/policy-teams/major-projects-authority>

the Accounting Officer the need to either pause or terminate the programme, where necessary and in a timely manner.

Extent and Limit of Accountability

The whole life cost budget for this project is as per the latest approved business case.

Her Majesty's Treasury spending controls will apply, as set out within the Accounting Officer's letter of delegated authority. Where the Automatic Enrolment Programme exceeds the delegated authority set by HMT, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply and the details of each approval process must be agreed with the DWP's HMT spending team.

You should note in particular that where expenditure is considered novel, contentious, repercussive or likely to result in costs to other parts of the public sector, HMT approval will be required regardless of whether the programme exceeds the delegated authority set by HMT.

You should ensure that you operate at all times within the rules set out in Managing Public Money.³

In addition you must be mindful of and act in accordance with the specific Treasury Delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to projects.⁴

Major Projects Leadership Academy

As SRO of a Government Major Projects Portfolio programme, you are required to attend the Major Projects Leadership Academy, which we understand you are currently undertaking as part of Cohort 9.

Following graduation from the MPLA, we will both expect and support you to continue your on-going professional development, and will encourage you to take an active part in MPLA alumni activities. On graduating, you will also become a recognised, accredited MPA reviewer and as such will be expected to lead or participate in such reviews for other Government Departments, the wider public sector and other areas of the Department for Work and Pensions as appropriate.

You will be required to participate in such reviews at least once every 12 months to maintain your accreditation.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you success in your role as SRO for the Automatic Enrolment Programme.

Yours sincerely,

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-controls/cabinet-office-controls-guidance-version-40>

Robert Devereux
Permanent Secretary
Department for Work and Pensions

David Blackall
Acting Chief Executive
Major Projects Authority

I confirm that I accept the appointment including my personal accountability for implementation of the Programme detailed in the letter above.

Name of SRO: Charlotte Clark

Signature of SRO: Signed and returned by Charlotte Clark on 24 March 2015

ANNEX 1

Senior Responsible Owner Role and Accountabilities

The role of the SRO

You are personally accountable for ensuring the on-going delivery of the Automatic Enrolment Programme. You are responsible for ensuring that the related implementation and transition activities realise the agreed objectives and benefits. You will be personally accountable to the Parliamentary Select Committees and be expected to explain the decisions and actions you have taken. This could include where a Minister has intervened to change the programme during the implementation phase in a way which has implications for the cost and/or timeline of implementation. You will be able to disclose your advice about any such changes.

You must ensure the effectiveness of the governance, assurance and programme management arrangements and maintain them through the life of the programme. You should adopt best practice and be prepared to justify any deviation from it, in line with the guidance published by the Cabinet Office.

An SRO will:

- Be a visible, engaged and active programme leader, not a figurehead;
- Ensure the agreed outcomes and benefits are deliverable;
- Create an open, honest and positive culture committed to delivering at pace;
- Challenge senior officers and Ministers when appropriate and escalate quickly;
- Provide appropriate support, steer and strategic focus to the Programme Director and ensure that they have a clear and current letter of appointment; and
- Have sufficient time, experience and the right skills to carry the full responsibilities of the role.

Specific SRO accountabilities

Ensure the programme is set up for success

- Ensure that the programme is set-up to make an unambiguous and demonstrable link to strategic policy;
- Translate the policy intent into clear deliverables which are established and agreed with senior stakeholders;
- Carry out robust and commercially viable options appraisal, which balances the risk with opportunity, as part of initial programme feasibility;
- Establish a firm business case for the programme during the initiation/definition phase and ensure that any planned changes continues to be aligned with the business;
- Identify and secure the necessary investment for the business case (this includes both budget and operational resource);

- Design and implement robust, appropriate and transparent programme governance; build strong and effective relationships with key stakeholders, justifying their trust and retaining their confidence, and obtain commitment to benefits realisation.

Ensure that the programme meets its objectives and the projected benefits are deliverable

- Gain agreement to the programme objectives and benefits amongst stakeholders, including Ministers where appropriate;
- Understand the broader government perspective and its impact on the programme;
- Ensure the strategic fit of the programme's objectives and benefits, taking appropriate action where necessary to ensure their successful delivery.

Develop the programme organisation and plan

- Ensure that there is a coherent organisation structure and appropriately detailed programme plan;
- Build the right team, securing necessary resources and skills and providing clear lines of accountability;
- Provide appropriate support, steer and strategic focus to the Programme Director.

Monitor and take control of progress

- Monitor and control the progress of the programme at a strategic level, being honest and frank about programme progress, risk and issues;
- Ensure that any changes to agreed programme benefits are flagged appropriately within programme governance and that the business case is updated accordingly (throughout the programme life-cycle);
- Ensure that the integrity of the programme is maintained and speak truth to power – including to Parliamentary Select Committees;
- Communicate effectively with senior stakeholders regarding programme progress and provide clear, appropriate and delivery-focused decisions and advice to the Programme Director.

Ensure problem resolution and referral processes are appropriate and effective

- Identify, understand and drive the successful mitigation of programme risks;
- Escalate serious issues quickly and with confidence to senior management and/or Ministers;
- Develop strong and effective engagement between programme teams and its stakeholders and sponsors;
- Ensure the communication processes are effective and that the programme's objectives and deliverables continue to be consistent with the organisation's strategic direction.

Ensure that the programme is subject to review at appropriate stages

- Recognise the value of robust programme review and ensure it occurs at key points in the programme lifecycle, particularly at the pre-initiation (feasibility) and initiation stages;
- Make certain that any recommendations or concerns from reviews are met or addressed in a timely manner;
- In the event of a “red” or “amber-red” review or “amber” quarterly GMPP review rating, you should ensure that the Permanent Secretary has been made aware of the situation and briefed accordingly.

Manage formal programme closure

- Formally close the programme and ensure that lessons learned are documented with the final evaluation report and disseminated to stakeholders;
- Ensure that the post implementation review takes place and that the output is communicated to appropriate stakeholders;
- Ensure a plan for both long term benefits realisation and on-going sustainability is agreed with key stakeholders as part of the process of moving to business as usual.