Annex 3 Advertising, Marketing and Communications

Policy Summary

3.1 Control of government advertising, marketing and communications expenditure ensures that only essential activity continues. The control ensures that future advertising, marketing and communications expenditure will be more transparent, better coordinated and less bureaucratic.

What is in scope of this control?

3.2 This control applies to the following:

- advertising including: TV; radio; digital advertising; outdoor; print; advertorials; recruitment; costs of media; fees and commission for media buying; media planning; creative development and production;

- marketing activities including: design and branding; direct and relationship marketing; customer relationship management programmes; telemarketing; campaign help lines; partnership marketing; sponsorship marketing; field or experiential marketing; merchandising; advertiserfunded programming; audio-visual activity; storage and distribution of marketing materials;

- consultation activities including: associated publicity, events, resources and materials, research, analysis and evaluation;

- communication strategy, planning, concept and proposition testing and development;

- market research that informs marketing and advertising activity and evaluation of marketing and advertising activity;

- printing and publications;

- events, conferences and exhibitions, including stakeholder, public and internal communication events, but excluding training events;

- public relations (PR) activity; and

- digital activity including: website and application development; search engine marketing, including pay-per-click; digital display advertising; content partnerships; email marketing; mobile and SMS marketing; interactive online content.
3.3 All public-facing digital services must be built in line with the Government Service Design Manual and pass an assessment against the Digital by Default Service Standard. Please see annex 5 of the Cabinet Office Controls guidance for further detail on how the Digital and Technology control applies.

Cabinet Office Controls Thresholds

Advertising, Marketing and Communications of £100K or above.

Process

3.4 In order to ensure a timely decision in line with Cabinet Office principles outlined in annex 2.2, organisations are encouraged to engage early with advertising, marketing and communications' team. In addition, advertising, marketing and communications will:

- Endeavour to return a Ministerial decision to departments within a 21-day Service Level Agreement (SLA) – and give notice of any changes to this standard (e.g. where Parliamentary recess may extend it) on the Government Communication Service website at Service website at https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/campaigns/professional-assurance/.

- Have regular communications with organisations once the submission has been received to ensure a ‘no surprise approach’

3.5 The standard Cabinet Office approval process set out in Annex 2.3 applies. Only expenditure on the following essential activity will be approved:

- where government has a legal duty to provide people with information, such as changes to legislation or public services;

- where marketing and advertising is critical to the effective running of the government; and

- where there is robust evidence that marketing and advertising delivers measurable outcomes that meet government objectives.

3.6 Any activity that involves digital spend will also be reviewed by Government Digital Services (GDS). If GDS set conditions, the organisation is responsible for meeting these conditions and should engage with GDS directly (see annex 5 for more details).

3.7 For all approved expenditure, organisations should submit an evaluation report to the Cabinet Office that sets out the success of the activity against its objectives, and provides recommendations for future activity. The report should follow the best practice standards for government communication evaluation, and Cabinet Office will provide further advice on the report when notifying an
organisation of an approval. Reports should be submitted to communications.controls@cabinetoffice.gov.uk. A template for these evaluation reports is provided on the Government Communication Service website at https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/campaigns/professional-assurance/ and questions should be directed to the Communications Control e-mail inbox at communications.controls@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

3.8 In addition, all new contracts for the supply of any government advertising and marketing services must be procured only through government frameworks approved by the Cabinet Office. For guidance on procurement through approved frameworks please refer to the Crown Commercial Service website (http://ccs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/) or call the Crown Commercial Service customer support line on 0345 410 2222.

Templates

3.9 Expenditure requests should be submitted to communications.controls@cabinetoffice.gov.uk using the template at Annex 3.1 of this guidance. Please also refer to this document for guidance on completing the expenditure request form.

Contacts

3.10 All queries relating to this control should be directed to communications.controls@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.