



Department
for Education



Infrastructure
and Projects
Authority

Sophie Langdale and Frances Oram
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
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06 April 2020

Dear Sophie and Frances

Appointment as SRO for Social Work England

Social Work England is a jointly funded programme between the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to set up a new regulator for social workers in England. This letter confirms your appointment as DfE Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) for Social Work England. It sets out your responsibilities, and the support you have the right to expect from the Department.

The appointment is made with effect from 3 February 2020. In this role, you are directly accountable to Indra Morris, the Director General (DG) for the Department's Social Care, Mobility and Disadvantage (SCMD) Group, with oversight from the Permanent Secretary and the Secretary of State for Education.

The specific details on how the sponsoring Department and DHSC will work with Social Work England are set out in Social Work England's Interim Framework Document, the final version of which is currently being prepared and is expected to be published before the end of this financial year. This includes the agreed expectations for how day-to-day interactions will be handled between all parties to oversee and support Social Work England in the delivery of its statutory responsibilities and objectives. Alongside this, Social Work England's grant in aid letter sets out the high level Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that the Department will work with Social Work England to deliver. As per DfE Arm's Length Body sponsor best practice, the day-to-day accountability for Social Work England sits with the Department's Senior Sponsor (the Deputy Director for Workforce, Children's Social Care) and the Social Work England Sponsor Team. However, they will continue to report to you as the SROs for Social Work England.

You should be aware that SROs of projects on the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) will now be held personally accountable to, and could be called to attend, Parliamentary Select Committees. You will be expected to account for and explain the decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the project (or specific milestones).

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.

Guidance on “Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants” is available online and can be accessed [here](#) and Infrastructure & Projects Authority (IPA) guidance on management of major projects is available [here](#).

A signed copy of this letter will be published on the DfE website. This is a requirement of all projects that are part of the GMPP.

Thank you for taking on this important role – you have my full support in executing your responsibilities and in drawing on the support and resources of the Department as set out in this letter.

Summary of responsibilities

As DfE SROs you have personal accountability for delivery of Social Work England. You are responsible for:

- setting the long-term vision for the body with Social Work England and DHSC;
- the delivery of agreed objectives and policy intent over the lifetime of the project (see below);
- putting in place effective management for the project to ensure work is appropriately defined, planned, monitored and controlled, and quality managed to maximise success;
- ensuring that the Senior Sponsor and Sponsor Team are effectively discharging their duties set out in the Social Work England Interim Framework Document (and subsequent versions);
- acting as a point of escalation for the Senior Sponsor and Social Work England on its performance, finance, and risk;
- liaising with DHSC to provide a joined up approach on Social Work England’s implementation, assurance and delivery of both Departments’ Ministers’ priorities for social work reform;
- identifying and securing the necessary investment and approvals for the project internally and externally, for example HM Treasury (HMT) clearance and Cabinet Office (CO) controls;
- managing the resources allocated to the project through oversight of Social Work England’s financial position and financial risks;
- realising the benefits of the project as outlined in the agreed business case;
- understanding how risk is managed in the Department (the risk management framework, which can be found on the [intranet](#), sets this out), setting up and embedding processes to identify and escalate risks and issues in your area, and actively managing risks where you are the owner; and
- influencing the context, culture and operating environment of the project so as to maximise its chances of success.

Executing your SRO role

SROs are generally expected to remain in position for the lifetime of a major project, to see it through to its successful conclusion. You should make sure that you have appropriate

knowledge management arrangements in place and could manage an orderly handover to a new SRO if required.

Before signing this letter, you should have established in discussion with your DG how managing your SRO responsibilities is going to be feasible alongside your other responsibilities. You will be expected to carry out this role alongside your other responsibilities, and are responsible for making sure that you allocate sufficient time to the effective delivery of your SRO role and responsibilities.

If you find that you are not able to allocate sufficient time and attention to your role, you should escalate the issue to your DG in the first instance, and in doing that you have the right to expect the issue to be resolved satisfactorily. If that is not possible, you should escalate, and have the right to require resolution of, the issue through the organisation's formal governance structures.

Support for you in your role

I am fully committed to making sure that DfE SROs have access to the corporate services, support and resources they need to execute their responsibilities. As SROs of a major project, I will invite you to a quarterly meeting with all the major project SROs where we can discuss common concerns and issues.

Your DG is your senior sponsor for this project. In that role you can expect them to offer you support, advice and oversight on my behalf. This should include help with escalating unresolved risks and issues to the Performance and Risk Committee (or where necessary, the Leadership Team) , dealing with strategic blockers to delivery, and supporting you in obtaining the resources and support you need to execute your SRO responsibilities.

As part of the major projects portfolio, you will have access to:

- support and expert advice from DfE's corporate functions including finance, legal, commercial, transformation, digital, project delivery and analysis. Where the requirement is significant, you will have access to a named, accountable individual who will provide the required services and support
- help to bring in essential external expert support and services if the organisation is not able to meet the need internally
- support from your Portfolio Lead in the Major Projects Directorate
- a growing network of delivery and programme specialists to act as contacts, mentors or sources of assurance at critical stages of the project
- the [Project Delivery Capability Framework](#) which describes the job roles, capabilities and learning for all Government Project Delivery Professionals across government
- the right to be involved in decisions in the Department that may affect your ability to deliver.

Objectives and Performance Criteria

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 established the primary legislative framework for the creation of a new regulatory body for social workers, Social Work England. The aim of this regulatory body is:

- to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and well-being of the public;
- to promote and maintain public confidence in social workers in England; and
- to promote and maintain proper professional standards for social workers in England.

Social Work England will be responsible for delivering a number of key functions in respect of social work, these are as follows:

- setting profession-specific education and training standards and approving training courses;
- setting profession-specific standards;
- maintaining a register of all social workers in England;
- running a fitness to practise system;
- auditing continuous professional development; and
- approving post qualifying courses and specialisms.

A summary of the project's scope, benefits, timeline and governance is set out in the attached annex.

Proposed changes to the project scope which would affect the policy intent or benefits realisation must be authorised by your DG.

The objectives and vision of the project should be regularly reviewed and also agreed with your DG.

Financial, Commercial and Project Delivery authority

Your financial and commercial delegated authority are set out separately from this letter, in your budget delegation letter. You may have been delegated financial and commercial authority and so be authorised to approve expenditure in accordance with the published scheme of delegation. You are responsible for seeking authority from relevant budget holders for spend on this project, where it is in excess of your own delegated financial authority.

As is usual best practice for a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), financial authority for Social Work England has been delegated to the Social Work England CEO and Accounting Officer, Colum Conway. The Senior Sponsor and Sponsor Team will receive monthly finance reports from Social Work England and finance meetings as set out in the Interim Framework Document (and subsequent versions) to ensure value for money, but also to encourage an open dialogue about finance with Social Work England.

You are also responsible for recommending to your DG and the relevant Social Work England accountability boards (as set out in the Interim Framework Document, and

subsequent versions) the need to either pause or terminate the project where necessary and in a timely manner.

HMT spending controls including any CO spending controls will apply on the basis set out within the [Department's delegated authority letter](#).

Where the project exceeds the Departmental delegated authority limits set by HMT and/or regardless of the value if it is novel, contentious, repercussive or likely to result in costs to other parts of the public sector, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply.

All cases that need Accounting Officer and HMT formal approval will first be referred to your finance business partner for initial advice who in turn will involve Central Strategic Finance (CSF) for final consideration and clearance and including liaison and clearing approval with HMT spending team.

Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to your DG and the Social Work England Senior Sponsor. When you do that, you have the right to expect the issue to be resolved satisfactorily. If not you should continue escalating it through the organisation's governance structures until you are satisfied it has been resolved.

Governance

The Department's [governance structure](#) is there to support you if you have a risk, delivery or performance issue that cannot be managed within your directorate, or that would benefit from further assurance.

The programme detailed in this letter is part of the DfE major projects portfolio and will have oversight from the Performance and Risk Committee (PRC). PRC is responsible, on behalf of Leadership Team, for regular oversight of the Department's top tier risks and major projects and programmes.

Your Portfolio Lead, Mark Frisby, can advise and support you in working with the appropriate committees including specialist advice from the risk team on escalating risks to the Department's top tier risk register. When you do that, you have the right to expect a joint conversation about how the organisation can support you to reduce or mitigate the escalated risk.

Assurance

You will be required to undertake internal and external assurance reviews which are an essential part of successful project delivery. The reviews are often required for formal HMT approvals or business case approval points and they also provide support and constructive challenge to SROs. Further advice and support on assuring your project is available through your Portfolio Lead.

You are responsible for making sure that you are appropriately skilled and able to execute the functions outlined in this letter. If you need support or training, please contact your Portfolio Lead in the first instance.

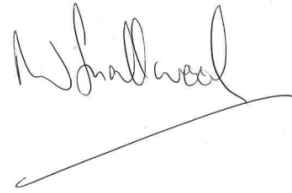
I would like to take this opportunity to wish you success in your role as SRO.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Slater

Permanent Secretary
Department for Education



Nick Smallwood

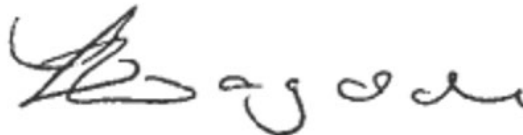
Chief Executive
Infrastructure & Projects Authority

We confirm that we accept the appointment including personal accountability for implementation of Social Work England as detailed in the letter above and annex.



Frances Oram

22 June 2020



Sophie Langdale