



Government  
Legal Department

Government Legal Department

# Business Plan 2016–17







Government  
Legal Department

---

Government Legal Department

# Business Plan 2016-17



Cover image: The growing network of legal teams merging with the Government Legal Department in sharing legal services

© Crown copyright 2016

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/) or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this document/publication\* should be sent to us at Government Legal Department, One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4TS.

This publication is available for download at [www.official-documents.gov.uk](http://www.official-documents.gov.uk)

This document is also available from our website at [www.gov.uk/gld](http://www.gov.uk/gld)

# Foreword



One year on from becoming the Government Legal Department, we have started to see our vision and strategy become a reality. We have introduced new ways of working to reduce cost, add value and maintain the quality of our legal work, and despite the continued changes in the organisation, our level of staff engagement has remained above the civil service average.

There is still more to do to get the full benefits of the new organisation, for us and for our clients, so the objectives we set out last year will remain for 2016-17. Supporting these, we have identified priorities for this year, including improving the value for money of our advisory services, developing a high quality digital-based legal service for our people and clients, delivering a new approach to engaging and managing external legal suppliers, and refreshing our diversity and inclusion action plan. This business plan sets out the full list, and how we will measure our success in maintaining high professional standards and client satisfaction.

*Jonathan Jones*

**Jonathan Jones**

**Permanent Secretary and Treasury Solicitor**

# Contents

---

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Core purpose and vision</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our strategy for 2015 and beyond</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Objectives and performance measures for 2016-17</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Risks and opportunities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Annex A: Organisation structure</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Annex B: Strategic risk register</b>	<b>14</b>

---

# Core purpose and vision

## We help the government to govern well, within the rule of law

The Government Legal Department provides high quality legal services to most Whitehall departments and to more than a hundred other government and public bodies. It is one of the largest legal organisations in the UK with around 1,400 solicitors and barristers.

We apply our combined legal professional skills to provide consistently excellent legal services, drawing on our unique perspective of the law across the legal landscape of government.

As an organisation our vision is to be:

- **trusted** by government to provide consistently excellent and value for money services so government departments want to come to us to meet their legal needs
- known throughout the legal profession for the **quality** of our legal work
- the **best employer** for our people

### Trusted

We will:

- provide consistently excellent, efficient and value for money services so government departments want to come to us to meet their legal needs
- add value as a result of providing government legal services from one department
- commit to achieving the best outcome for government, for clients and for the public purse
- demonstrate our unique knowledge and understanding of government and public law and specialist expertise including litigation, employment and commercial law
- be proactive and anticipate client needs

### Quality

We will:

- focus on quality and continuous improvement and strive for excellence in all we do
- build strong relationships with the legal profession and the judiciary
- be a role model and pioneer in the leadership of professions

### Best employer

We will:

- provide unrivalled opportunities for interesting, varied, high quality, challenging work in a professional environment
- value individuals and support them to fulfil their potential
- be an inclusive and open organisation and involve our people in how it is run
- provide a work/life balance that meets individual and business needs

### Our values

Our **values** are important and are at the heart of the Government Legal Department.

One GLD working together:

- valuing and respecting each other
- taking pride in the high standard of our service
- embracing new ideas and collaborating

# Our strategy for 2015 and beyond

Our organisational strategy has been developed to ensure that we make our core purpose and vision a reality. It is flexible to cope with what we know about the future: continuing austerity and severe pressure on clients' budgets and that there will continue to be a high level of demand for legal services and a greater expectation that we will work in different ways, including more remote working.

## Our strategy

### Work

We will:

- continue with our existing range of work, although there may be changes at the margin
- have a new name
- deliver excellent quality and efficient legal services to our clients
- offer centralised expert services – commercial, litigation and employment – and look at opportunities for others
- keep our charges flat where possible or demonstrate the value for money of increases
- continue to drive up the quality of our legal work through continuous improvement
- develop stronger relationships with external legal providers, the rest of the legal profession and judiciary
- move to more flexible working, as the government's property strategy is likely to reduce our presence in central London

### Clients

We will:

- remain the principal provider of legal services to Whitehall ministerial departments
- only act for clients beyond our core client base of Whitehall ministerial departments where we have the capacity and capability

to do so without compromising the service to our existing clients and when it is the best solution for the government as a whole

- make visible efforts to help our clients reduce their legal costs as budgets are tight
- build on our good reputation for high levels of client satisfaction, demonstrating the worth of our shared legal service and the value of the outcomes clients get for their fees
- help clients to build their capability to support better decision-making and reduce their call on us
- strengthen engagement with clients, building on our successful relationship management arrangements
- find innovative and more efficient ways to work, while maintaining quality and reducing costs to clients
- ensure our heads of expert services and relationship managers work closely together to deliver a joined up, coherent and complete team service to the client

### People

We will:

- continue our commitment to be the best employer for our people
- value and promote diversity and equality of opportunity within our organisation
- set the tone in a friendly, collegiate and supportive work environment because our values matter to us
- help all our staff to develop their careers whatever their grade and discipline
- offer a full career for government lawyers within our organisation with a range of interesting and rewarding work, much of which cannot be found with any other employer
- ensure that other professionals and specialists in our organisation will benefit from the expansion of shared services across the civil service



- be more proactive in helping our staff take advantage of these greater opportunities
- support work/life balance, which is an important component of our offer
- support managers, staff and teams as we embrace more remote working

## Our achievements in 2015-16

We became the Government Legal Department on 1 April 2015, as a strong and visible sign to the rest of government and the outside world that the shared legal services we had been working hard to bring about over the last few years is now a reality. The occasion was marked with a highly successful One Organisation Event which delivered what our people had asked for, namely information on the new organisation, the opportunity to network, a chance to get involved and be inspired. We also coped professionally and co-operatively as an organisation with the major disruption caused by the “Great Fire of Kingsway” which kept us out of our main London Office for the best part of April 2015.

The initial merger programme was concluded when the MOD advisory team joined the shared service on 1 May 2015.

### Legal achievements

We have continued to deliver high quality legal services to government, enabling the delivery of departmental priorities. The General Election in 2015 had a significant impact on a number of areas of our work, both in terms of preparation before the election and also changing government priorities after it. Highlights have included:

- we have **delivered the government’s legislative agenda**. This has included primary legislation passed or introduced in the first session of the current Parliament, such as the European Union Referendum Act, the Scotland Act, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act, the Welfare Reform and Work Act, the Education and Adoption Act, the Immigration Act and the Investigatory Powers Bill. We also produced around 800 statutory instruments (in 2015) to implement government policy on everything from pollution to serious crime.
- we have **advised on the some of the highest profile issues of the year** in which the government has played a role, including the negotiation of the new relationship with the EU and the preparations for the Referendum on 23 June, the changes to the devolution settlements in Scotland and Wales, national security matters, reform of the welfare system, the proposed new contracts for junior doctors, the threat from Zika virus, flooding, proposed far reaching reforms of the courts system, the prison and youth justice system as well as major changes to legal aid arrangements, and migration.
- we have **conducted litigation** on behalf of government in domestic and EU courts. We have acted in approximately 66,000 cases in domestic courts, including individual employment disputes, immigration appeals, contractual disputes and judicial reviews of government policy and individual ministerial decisions. Of the cases decided by the Supreme Court last year, we acted for the Government in 14. Not only do we act in the most important cases, but our success rate is high – achieving a successful outcome in almost 80% of all judicial reviews brought against government. We also acted on behalf of the UK Government in 57 cases before the Courts of the European Union.
- in our **Employment Law Group** we have advised and litigated on matters which are of importance not only to the Civil Service and the wider public sector but also in the general field of employment law. We have dealt with the year’s leading cases on indirect discrimination, reasonable adjustments for disabilities, and the consultation required in redundancy situations, as well as challenges to the legality of changes to public sector pension schemes. We have advised on the employment aspects of many commercial transactions entered into by Government, often in conjunction with GLD’s Commercial Law Group.

- in our **Commercial Law Group** we have worked with a wide range of government departments including MOJ on the award winning Transformation of Rehabilitation Programme and with DWP to manage a range of varied commercial relationships, ranging from IT contracts underpinning a complex and extensive IT estate, to locally based contracts providing critical direct support to help people stay in, and get back to work; from ensuring that benefit claims are properly assessed to working on the commercial property arrangements managing and transforming the Department's 600 strong property portfolio. Our Commercial Law Group's litigation service has helped provide battleships to MOD, enforced EU grants for DCLG and defended subsidies for DECC, intellectual property for No 10, Tax Credits for HMT and medicines for DH. We have also saved the taxpayer money by avoiding formal litigation using alternative dispute forums such as mediation and adjudication
- we have **provided legal support** in relation to a number of independent reviews and inquiries including Sir John Chilcot's Inquiry into the Iraq War, the Wass Inquiry into child sexual abuse on St Helena, the Pitchford Inquiry into Undercover Policing and the Macur review. We also represent a number of departments who are or are likely to become Core Participants to the Goddard Inquiry into child sexual abuse.
- the Treasury Solicitor also acts as the Crown's Nominee for **dealing with bona vacantia** (ownerless property). Our Bona Vacantia Division dealt with 47,491 cases this year and collected £116.14m in receipts. We paid out £12.33m to entitled kin on estates cases and £13.82m to Directors/shareholders of previously dissolved companies. Additionally, £80m was forwarded to HM Treasury for use in the same way as monies collected through general taxation.

### **Delivery of excellent and value for money services**

To build on our partnership with our clients we have refreshed our Relationship Management Strategy, and developed an action plan to improve our client satisfaction. 95% of our clients rated our service as good or excellent in our annual survey of client satisfaction.

To demonstrate the benefit of our service to our clients and to help inform their decisions about the use of legal resources we have developed a suite of client facing management information (MI) for our major clients. Our original objective was to produce a standard MI pack but given the varying nature of our clients' businesses these have been tailored to meet their needs. We have also developed our internal MI and have rolled out a balanced scorecard for Advisory Division Directors, following a successful pilot, and have launched our Legal Awareness Library to support delivery of legal awareness sessions to our clients.

New ways of working are being introduced to reduce cost, add value and maintain quality.

These include:

- our External Legal Services Strategy which will provide efficiencies and improve the way that external legal advice is procured and managed
- the use of paralegals is now embedded in several litigation teams and we are starting to see the benefits following a period of transition. Nearly 40% of immigration cases are now handled by paralegals
- further investment in our Case Management System to bring improved efficiency and service delivery
- the introduction of Finance Business Partners to enhance business management support

In addition we also retained ISO 27001 and Public Sector Network (PSN) accreditation and used the CIPFA VFM indicators to assess the value for money of our back office functions.

### Quality of our Legal Work

We delivered a number of important projects in our legal quality programme of work:

- following the successful pilot of a new approach to delivering Statutory Instruments (SIs), which brought together people from four advisory divisions in a SI Hub to test if the approach improved the quality, consistency and efficiency of SI delivery, we are now establishing a larger permanent hub, which will take on at least 20% of the drafting work for GLD in 2016-17
- updated guidance on how to approach legal risk was published, supported by training, to ensure a consistent approach to the assessment and presentation of legal risk to policy colleagues and ministers. A cross-GLD legal risk group is reviewing how the guidance is being used and embedded
- following a number of successful workshops our “Excellence in Advisory Work” guidance was rolled out. This will help us capture and share best practice for all lawyers undertaking advisory work and give good induction support for new members of staff
- five “centres of excellence” were established, following a pilot, to provide assistance and guidance on policy and handling issues, maintain cross team networks, provide training and create and maintain knowledge management and guidance material. Further work on this initiative will now be taken forward as part of the Advisory Best Value Programme in 2016-17

We were once again awarded Lexcel accreditation – the Law Society’s “gold star legal quality mark”, in relation to the conduct of litigation in our Litigation, Employment and Commercial Law Groups. In Lexcel terms we are a centre of excellence and continue to demonstrate an exceptionally high degree of compliance with the standard.

### Being the best employer for our people

80% of our staff participated in the 2015 People Survey. The engagement index for GLD was 60%, meaning we have now stayed at broadly the same level for the last four years. We remain above the Civil Service average, which is quite an achievement given the change we are going through as an organisation.

GLD’s first People Strategy was published in June. Trialled at the One Organisation Event it sets the route to our goal of being the best employer for our people. The strategy has three strands, each with an action plan and a GLD Director sponsor working closely in conjunction with HR and other colleagues:

- leadership and managing change
- the career deal
- culture and behaviours

We held our first Careers Week in November, acting upon feedback from the One Organisation Event that people wanted more focus on careers. The “week” covered a wide range of topics, with something to suit everyone. Close to 3,000 spaces were available at approximately 50 events held across London as well as in Bristol and Leeds. It was also the opportunity to launch our Career Pathways Toolkit, to help our people match their skills against different roles and to plan the next steps in their career.

The Good Manager Programme has been developed in response to the feedback in the 2014 People Survey. It has been designed to support new and inexperienced managers in helping their teams feel inspired, confident and empowered.

As part of our commitment to a fair and inclusive workforce, five new networks have been created to recognise and celebrate diversity in GLD, and in July we held Diversity Fortnight to give people a chance to get involved.

*Further details of our achievements can be found in our 2015-16 Annual Report and Accounts on [www.gov.uk/gld](http://www.gov.uk/gld).*

# Objectives and performance measures for 2016-17

## Objectives for 2016-17

In 2015-16 we set out specific objectives to deliver on our vision. These will remain our objectives for 2016-17:

### **Vision: Trusted by government to provide consistently excellent and value for money services so government departments want to come to us to meet their legal needs**

- build on our partnership with clients to improve our ability to provide an effective and efficient service to them
- demonstrate the benefits to clients of our services and to help inform their decisions about the use of legal resource
- identify new ways of working in GLD which reduce cost, add value and maintain quality

*Performance and Client Committee to monitor*

### **Vision: Known throughout the legal profession for the quality of our legal work**

- deliver consistently excellent advice across all Divisions/Groups which supports the delivery of policy/operational objectives and takes a proportionate and constructive approach to legal risk
- deliver consistently effective litigation outcomes for government
- deliver consistently excellent primary and secondary legislation which meets the government's objectives in the most effective way

*Legal Quality Committee to monitor*

### **Vision: The best employer for our people**

- build a unified department with a friendly and supportive environment where people are encouraged to be the best they can be and are proud to work for the GLD
- improve career development opportunities which attract and retain our staff
- provide inspiring, confident and empowering leadership, supporting managers and staff to improve their skills and performance

*People Committee to monitor*

## Our key priorities for 2016-17

In support of these objectives we have agreed the following cross-cutting priorities for this year:

- creating an SI Hub to undertake at least 20% of our SI drafting as well as acting as a centre of excellence for all SI drafting, improving the quality and value for money of our SI drafting work
- a wider Advisory Best Value Project which will improve the value for money of our advisory services and contribute to meeting the commitment to a 10% productivity gain in the delivery of advisory services to clients across GLD from April 2018
- a Digital Project which will develop a high quality digital based legal service to deliver an effective approach to knowledge management for our people and the provision of information and services to clients on-line

- to continue the programme of improvements to our Case Management System to contribute to a 10% productivity gain for our clients in the conduct of litigation from April 2018
- an External Legal Services Project which will provide greater value for clients by delivering a minimum 10% reduction in costs by a new approach to engaging and managing external legal suppliers from April 2018
- embedding our approach to Career Pathways, supporting career development for all our people
- a refreshed Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, developed with the support of our new staff networks improving opportunities for all our people
- implementing the first phases of our five-year Accommodation and Technology Delivery Plans

We shall continue to contribute to the Government's agenda on sustainability and transparency.

## Performance measures

The performance measures we have agreed with HM Treasury for 2016-17 reflect our continued commitment to maintain our high professional standards as well as delivering excellent client satisfaction.

The measures are:

- to improve our client satisfaction rating(s)
- to maintain Lexcel (the Law Society's Practice Standard) accreditation
- to recover from clients the full operating costs of chargeable services

In addition we will have regard to our People Survey results and our Committees will identify additional performance measures for the supporting actions to the objectives and cross-cutting initiatives set out above.

# Risks and opportunities

**Recovery of our operating costs and providing value for money:** We want to keep our charges to clients unchanged but this puts us under pressure to be ever more efficient to ensure that our charges cover our operating costs which are subject to inflationary pressures. The significant structural and delivery changes we are implementing, including the Advisory Best Value Programme and the development of digital services increase the level of financial risk inherent in the budget. Controls are in place to manage this risk and also ensure that clients continue to benefit from better than budgeted financial performance, should this occur.

**Meeting client demands and needs efficiently:** Our clients have a high regard for our services and we have developed ever closer relationships with them. We need to maintain the trust of our clients to provide consistently excellent, value for money services and maintain our focus on quality which is recognised by our high client satisfaction ratings and through our Lexcel re-accreditation. We need to work collaboratively with our clients and ensure that we can continue to work flexibly and more efficiently in meeting their needs.

**Resource capability and capacity:** To deliver the service our clients need we need to recruit and retain the right quality of staff with the necessary skills and capabilities to deliver that service. We need to ensure that our people feel valued and engaged and that there are opportunities for them to fulfil their potential, and to do high quality and challenging work. We need to be inclusive and provide a work/life balance that meets both individual and business needs.

Our People Strategy for the next four years sets out our commitment to our staff.

**Client data security:** This remains critical to the integrity of our service provision and is assured by our adherence to Cabinet Office Security Standards, maintaining ISO 27001 certification and Public Services Network (PSN) accreditation. Cyber security and resilience is maintained through comprehensive penetration testing, vulnerability management and protective monitoring policies.

We continue to contribute to work carried out by the Cabinet Office on the wider security transformation agenda and are actively contributing to the government-wide security governance review.

**Business resilience:** We enjoy a high level of client satisfaction and it is essential that we are able to maintain our normal quality service whatever the circumstances. Business resilience is assured through the maintenance of an ISO22301 aligned business continuity management system and a comprehensive suite of recovery plans. Incident management exercises are carried out and our disaster recovery facilities are tested on a regular basis.

Our disaster recovery site has remote access capacity, resilience and security which reduces the risk of service disruption should our main London office be unavailable. This facility and plans were robustly and successfully employed during a major incident between 1 and 20 April 2015, following our evacuation and denial of access to and utilisation of our main London office.

Our risk management framework ensures that all the key risks to the delivery of our service to our clients and the achievement of our objectives are identified. The framework ensures that action is agreed to mitigate the risk or that contingency plans are developed where there is limited scope to prevent a risk occurring and it is necessary to respond to the risk, should it occur. The results are captured in our Strategic Risk Register for 2016-17, which is at Annex B, and each risk has a Board level owner. The register also includes a summary of the main actions required to manage the risk or the contingency plans that are either in place or that need to be developed.

# Resources

We plan to use the following number of people to deliver our objectives in 2016-17:

	<b>Total FTEs</b>
Litigation Group	570
Employment Group	123
Commercial Law Group	143
Advisory divisions	693
Bona Vacantia	48
Legal trainees	40
<b>Total front line staff</b>	<b>1,617</b>
Corporate support staff (including GLS Secretariat)	228
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>1,845</b>

We plan to spend £142m, the main components of which are:

	<b>£'000</b>
Staff costs (excludes secondees)	119,258
Other operating costs	2,527
Accommodation costs (net of income)	6,933
Depreciation	2,200
Project costs	3,000
IT maintenance and network	1,899
Training	1,002
LION (net of income)	983
Other administration costs	3,474
<b>Total operating costs</b>	<b>141,276</b>
Net disbursements	700
Budget impact of provision movements	247
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>142,224</b>

These costs will be funded by:

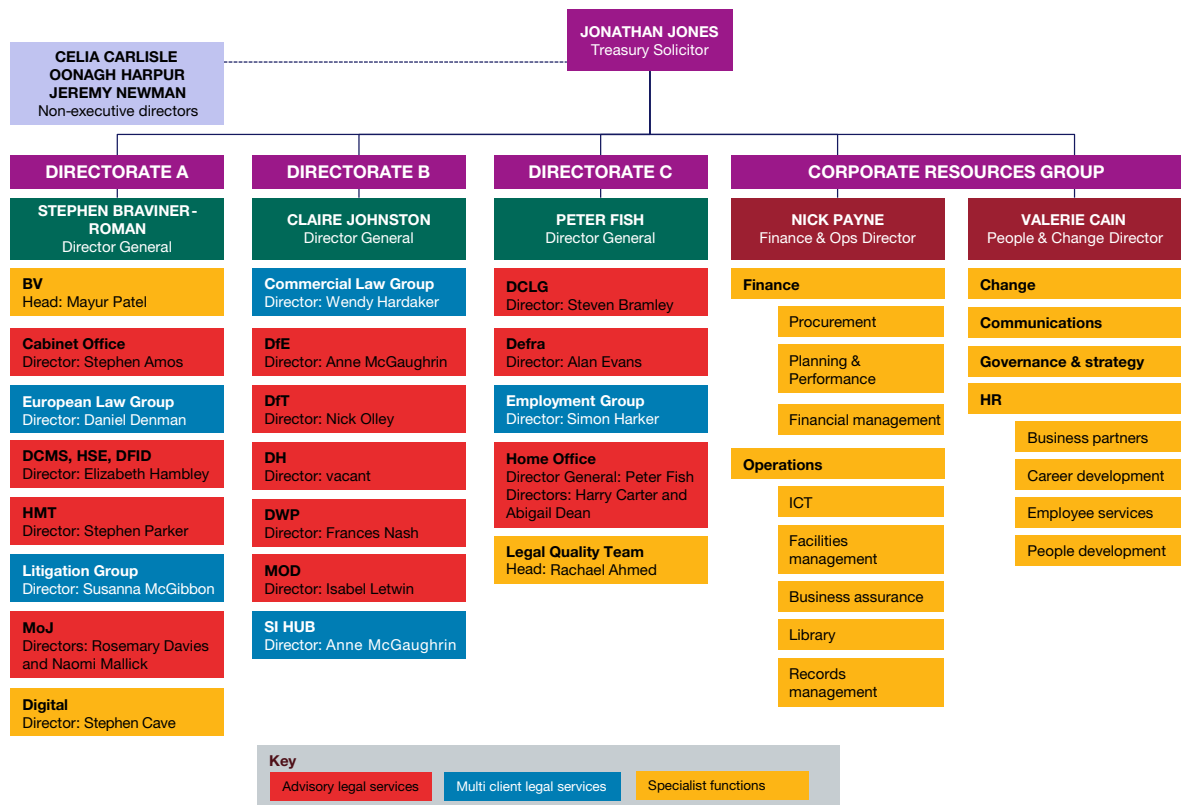
	<b>£'000</b>
Legal fees and charges to clients	136,863
Recovery of the cost of Bona Vacantia	3,981
Funding from the Parliamentary Estimate	1,590
<b>Total income</b>	<b>142,434</b>

Our funding from the Parliamentary Estimate covers the cost of public interest casework we undertake on behalf of the Attorney General's Office, both in terms of time spent and disbursements. This is agreed with HM Treasury as part the Spending Review process. The balance of our operating costs is recovered from our clients; in setting our fixed fees and hourly rates, we apply HM Treasury's guidance on fees and charges contained within their publication, *Managing Public Money*.

In addition to the above, we will receive Parliamentary Estimate funding of £1.90m to meet our requirements for capital expenditure.



# Annex A: Organisation structure



# Annex B:

## Strategic risk register

Strategic Risk	Owner	Mitigation
Demands placed on GLD do not match expected levels	Stephen Braviner-Roman	Strategic and business planning with clients Service Level Agreements/MoUs agreed with clients
The quality of GLD's work falls below the standard expected by clients, the judiciary or other key stakeholders	Peter Fish	Continued development and embedding of expert services Legal Training programme and Knowledge Management (including centres of excellence and SI Hub) Strong line management Weekly and monthly reporting to Directors General and Treasury Solicitor Quality policies and procedures (including Lexcel, risk guidance) Legal Quality Team Client relationship management model Panel counsel
Lack of resource capacity and/or capability to deliver the service clients need	Claire Johnston	GLD Capability Plan/in house training programme/TLO Group/ Access to Civil Service Learning. Talent Management and succession planning. Strategic and tactical workforce planning. Annual Resource Cycle – including external recruitment and internal development moves. Performance Management of staff
Clients are unwilling to pay for the legal services which GLD provides or procures because of budget pressures	Stephen Braviner-Roman	Close engagement with client Finance lead by client Relationship Manager and GLD Finance; ability to redeploy staff quickly to other clients; maintenance of around 10% of legal staff as temps; building client capability
Clients do not believe that the legal services GLD provides or procures offer the best possible value for money	Stephen Braviner-Roman	Financial planning including the Panel Review process for setting fees. Management and use of Panel Counsel and use of Crown Commercial Services frameworks. Provision of management information
Injury or harm to staff, loss of GLD or client assets, or major loss of sensitive or confidential information	Nick Payne	Business Assurance Team Mandated training for manual handling, data protection and information security for all staff. Information Security Policies Regular Security messages, Security Focus Group Clear desk policy. Health and safety policy. Compliance with Cabinet Office Security Policy Framework and other CO security initiatives. Third party information risk management. Assurance from Panel Counsel Survey
Significant external events have an adverse impact on our ability to deliver services to the client and/or achieve full cost recovery	Nick Payne	Business continuity and incident management arrangements in place and tested annually. Fully functioning Disaster Recovery site available for immediate swap over. 300 plus laptops and around 100 Blackberry's are distributed and could be used for resilience in the event of a business continuity incident plus the implementation of GLD Smart. All staff provided with wallet card with basic details of what to do in the event of an incident





Government Legal Department

One Kemble Street London WC2B 4TS

All content is subject to copyright © Crown Copyright 2016