



Government  
Finance  
Function

# Government Finance Function Strategy 2019-2023

## Executive Summary

**We put finance at the  
heart of decision making.  
Driving the agenda,  
not just keeping score.**

## Foreword

The **Government Finance Function** vision is:

**We put finance at the heart of decision making.**

**Driving the agenda, not just keeping score.**

This vision requires us as a function to drive improvement across all that we do, to support the delivery of high quality public services. Success will only be possible if every member of the finance community demonstrates leadership, commitment, energy and a willingness to challenge the status quo.

To position ourselves as the go-to trusted partner at every level of decision making across government, we will:

- Support the vision of **'A Brilliant Civil Service'** by investing in our people to build and strengthen our capability, while creating a great place to work;
- Cultivate an inclusive learning culture, which encourages innovation and collaboration;
- Set clear delivery expectations through consistent standards and policies with a focus on high quality public services that deliver value for money;
- Deliver customer-focused expert advice and specialist services by bringing a strategic and cross-cutting perspective, supported by robust data and efficient processes and systems.

"We have made enormous progress over the past few years and this strategy is an opportunity to clearly set out our ambition to go much further. It is a chance to engage the whole of the Government Finance Function and beyond in this journey and is a call to arms for the functional leadership. We will inevitably face challenges along the way but are confident that we will rise to these and build a Government Finance Function fit for the 21st Century that provides value for money across government and supports the provision of quality public services."



**Mike Driver**  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Ministry of Justice;  
and Head of the  
Government Finance  
Function,  
HM Treasury



**James Bowler**  
Director General,  
Public Spending,  
HM Treasury

## Our objectives

The Government Finance Function Strategy sets out our vision and ambitions in a single cohesive document for the first time.

This summary outlines the leadership roles, deliverables, and ways of working that will ensure we can meet our ambitions; enabling us, wherever we work across government, to deliver a quality service for our departments and organisations.

To achieve our vision, we have identified six key objectives that are fundamental to our success:

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Sound forecasting and reporting, with robust data, efficient transaction processing, and effective management of risk, supported by standards, policies, guidance and strong functional leadership



A function informed by analysis, underpinned by good quality data and supported by analytics and visualisation tools



A high performing and diverse function, with great people in the right roles with the right skills



The 'go-to' partner for colleagues to provide expert advice and informed decision making

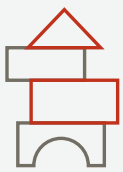


A modern, collaborative finance function that delivers quality services more effectively and efficiently



Driving a strong culture of planning, risk and performance with integrated financial and business planning, aligned with robust risk and assurance

## Our outcomes and how we will support departments and their organisations in 2019/20



### 1 Getting the basics right

“It means paying attention to the detail, ensuring all that we do is accurate and clearly presented, that we follow our own policies and procedures and that we keep in mind our stakeholders. This gives us the credibility we need to put finance at the heart of decision making.”

**Elizabeth Honer**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Government Internal Audit Agency

#### The outcomes we need to achieve:

- Efficient core processes, systems and management information
- Consistent standards and policies
- Collective functional leadership
- A progressive brand and narrative

#### To progress these in 2019/20, we will:

- Refresh the Finance Standard and support organisations to embed this
- Develop a functional performance framework to measure delivery and effectiveness
- Identify opportunities to align departmental plans to the Government Finance Function Strategy
- Deliver effective communications and engagement activity across the UK, supported by a new digital platform



### 2 People, diversity and capability

“Our people and their diverse skills, experience and backgrounds are right at the heart of our strategy. We want the Government Finance Function to be a great place to work and develop, where staff at all levels and in any role are valued for the vital contribution they make to delivering excellent public services.”

**Catherine Vaughan**  
Director General and Chief Operating Officer,  
Department for International Trade

#### The outcomes we need to achieve:

- Expert people
- A diverse and inclusive culture
- Clear career frameworks
- Confident and visible leaders

#### To progress these in 2019/20, we will:

- Build a diverse and inclusive function, developing action plans to attract and retain talent
- Refresh the Government Finance Academy vision and strategy
- Develop a new career framework with an effective implementation approach
- Guidance on success profiles, a defined senior resourcing offer and clear succession plans
- Manage our talent and leadership



## 3 How we operate

“This is about identifying and sharing leading-practice so that we can learn from each other, understanding and exploiting the opportunities presented by technology and developing shared solutions to common problems.”

**Nick Joicey**

Finance Director General,  
Department for Work and Pensions

**The outcomes we need to achieve:**

- A shared understanding of how we operate
- Organisational structures that promote collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Greater process standardisation

**To progress these in 2019/20, we will:**

- Refresh the Government Finance Taxonomy and help to embed this consistently across functional activities and departments
- Evaluate the impact of location on the function
- Develop a blueprint for cross-government Centres of Excellence (CoEs)
- Roll out robust, best practice process convergence based on the Global Design Principles



## 4 Insight

“Delivering insight to the business by shedding light on the numbers is a key part of why we are here. This relies upon not only the quality of the analysis, but also the tools available to extract and analyse it, and, crucially, the skills we equip our people with to interpret and communicate it effectively.”

**Nick Joyce**

Director General Resources and Strategy,  
Department for Transport

**The outcomes we need to achieve:**

- Data driven insight
- Enhanced analytics and data visualisation tools
- Clear, consistent and accessible data governance, definitions and standards

**To progress these in 2019/20, we will:**

- Deliver costings and data projects to drive down costs and ensure data is consistent and reliable
- Develop guidance and deliver Management Information (MI) townhall events to share best-practice and build the capability of the Government Finance Function
- Implement and share the Data Strategy to ensure consistent understanding and use of data across government



## 5 Trusted partner

“Achieving our vision relies on being trusted by the business. We have to earn our seat at the decision making table by demonstrating not only that we understand the numbers, but just as important, that we understand the business itself.”

**Catherine Little**  
Finance Director General,  
Ministry of Defence

### The outcomes we need to achieve:

- Influential and solution focussed people
- Credible and reliable experts and business partners
- Strong and embedded relationships

### To progress these in 2019/20, we will:

- Pro-actively manage the Cross-Government Talent forum for SCS grades and the Future Finance Leaders programme for SCS1s
- Refresh the G6/G7 talent forum to connect people across the function
- Develop a new career framework identifying core functional roles and specifying their accompanying behaviours and skills



## 6 Planning, risk and performance

“Finance is not just about money, it is about whether our organisations are delivering expected policy outcomes on time and to budget. This means we need to understand how policy and strategy connect through to delivery performance, and how risks and opportunities are identified and managed.”

**Rachel McLean**  
Finance Director General,  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and  
Local Government

### The outcomes we need to achieve:

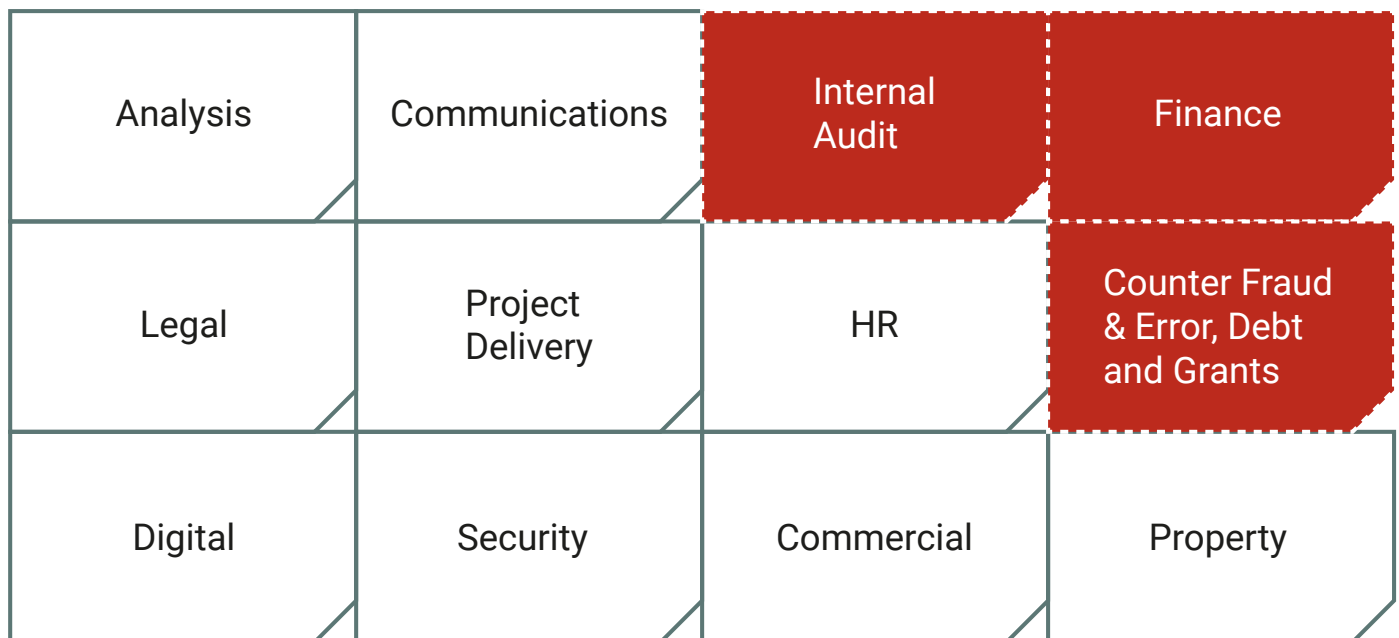
- Affordable and deliverable departmental plans
- Effective risk management
- Insightful reporting and monitoring of spend, performance and risks

### To progress these in 2019/20, we will:

- Work with HM Treasury and Cabinet Office to enhance SDP Guidance
- Refine the planning maturity model and help to embed the Orange Book reforms into active risk management, developing supplementary guidance and tools
- Help departments embed recommendations from the Management Accounts Project

## Leading the functional agenda

The Government Finance Function, as one of 12 functions operating across the Civil Service, is integral to HM Treasury, helping the government achieve its fiscal and economic objectives by investing in its people, establishing robust financial systems, and developing performance and risk management frameworks and guidance.



Close links with other functions are vital for effective **cross-government collaboration**. The impact of this has already been demonstrated; for example, through our collaboration with Counter Fraud & Error, Debt and Grants to set up Centres of Excellence for Debt and Grants, and also through our continuous sharing of learning and development best-practice with Internal Audit.

We are building a **broad and inclusive function** that is breaking down silos, sharing the excellent best-practice that exists across government, and establishing effective relationships with other functions.

The Government Finance Function is a diverse community of over 10,000 people spread out across the United Kingdom, with **three-quarters based in regions outside of London**. The function is far broader than individual professions, bringing together a range of disciplines and expertise, from strategic business partners, to accountants, to risk and audit professionals.

Our people are **embedded in every government department and their organisations**, building trust by understanding, supporting and where appropriate challenging the business. They work together to deliver financial information, strategic insights, accurate and transparent performance reporting, and creative and pragmatic solutions.

## Achieving our vision

Our objective is to **empower every member of the Government Finance Function** to fulfil their respective roles and take ownership in leading the function, piloting new ideas, learning from others and improving outcomes for government and citizens. In conjunction, finance leaders are expected to take responsibility for developing and executing their respective organisational strategies and aligning these to the function’s vision and objectives.

To do this, the new **Finance Strategy Board** will provide greater oversight of how the strategy is delivered and will ensure that we join up effectively across the function and government, championing and influencing the wider functional agenda and supporting the **Civil Service Board**. The Finance Strategy Board will operate alongside the already well-established **Finance Leadership Group** which will continue to provide visible leadership for the function, endorsing, supporting and challenging cross-cutting finance issues.

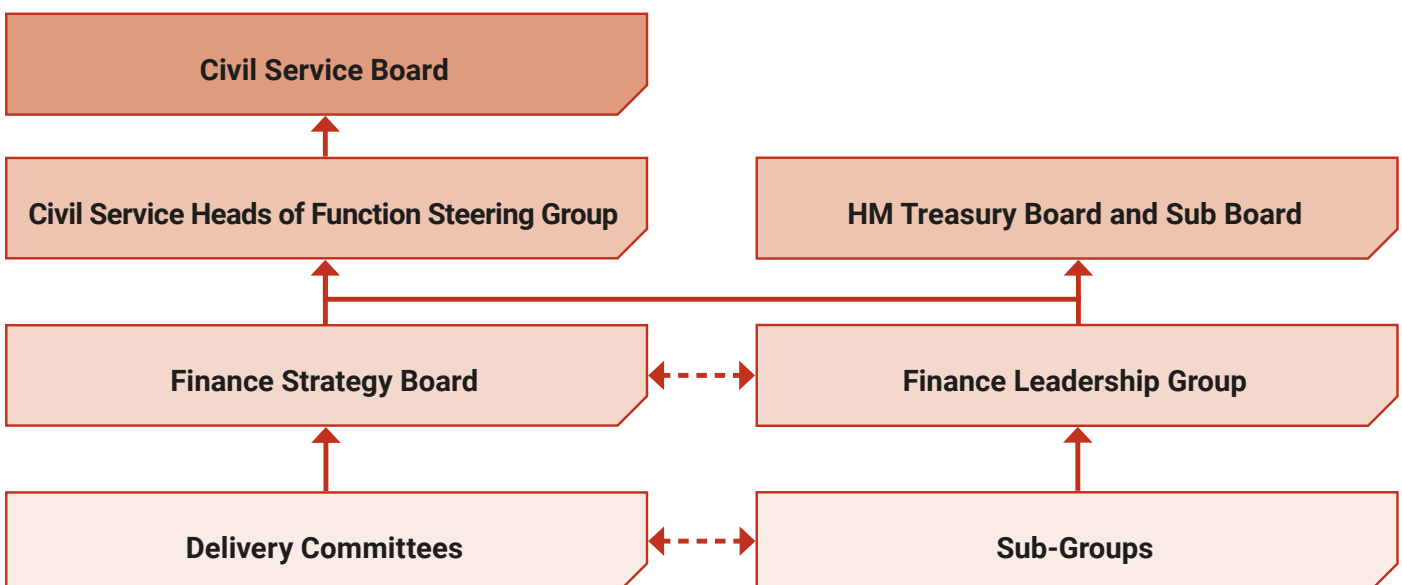
**The dedicated central resource** will support the functional governance and finance leaders in the delivery and performance management of

the strategy. They will operate in three separate capacities: **delivering** guidance; **enabling** departments; and **measuring** performance.

**Collaboration with other functions** is essential in the delivery of this strategy. We must seize opportunities to align our strategic approach, share knowledge and information, and solve shared problems.

This strategy also presents an opportunity to strengthen our links with the **devolved governments** and **regional finance networks**. By clearly setting out our achievements and ambitions we can identify areas to better leverage each other’s expertise, knowledge and resources.

## Our Governance Structure





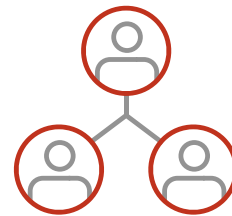
## What you can do next

As we continue this journey together, new knowledge resources, events and forums will be introduced to enable us to work collaboratively across government, towards these ambitions. Below are a range of steps you can take to engage as we make this strategy a reality together.

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Keep up-to-date with work, and share what you are doing through the OneFinance platform  
<https://e-pims.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/OneFinance/>



Encourage your team to attend a Government Finance Function regional event, and the annual conference – you can book on through the Government Finance Event Hub <https://registration.livegroup.co.uk/governmentfinance/>



Get in touch with the central teams at [GovFinance@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:GovFinance@hmtreasury.gov.uk) – they are available to engage with you and your teams, and help you to learn more about what is going on across the function.



Use the engagement toolkit to engage your teams and colleagues on how the strategy relates to your respective area and how it can support you in your day to day role. This can be accessed via the OneFinance platform <https://e-pims.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/OneFinance/>

*A Brilliant  
Civil Service*