



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

To: Hilda Massey, Senior Responsible Owner  
for the Automatic Enrolment Programme

Date: 23 May 2019

From: Peter Schofield CB, Permanent Secretary, Department for Work and  
Pensions

Matthew Vickerstaff, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure and  
Projects Authority

### **Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the Automatic Enrolment Programme**

We are writing to formalise your appointment as the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Automatic Enrolment Programme, effective from 1 April 2019. You are directly accountable to the DWP Accounting Officer, under the oversight of the Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion. This is a part time role.

As SRO you are personally responsible for delivering the Automatic Enrolment Programme. You are held accountable for delivering its objectives, benefits 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, SROs of GMPP programmes and projects are held personally accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees. You are expected to account for, and explain, decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the Programme or specific milestones within the delivery plan.

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

### **Tenure of Position**

You will be expected to remain in this role until the end of the programme, which is planned for November 2019.

### **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 April 2019.

Once fully implemented the Department expects to see around 11 million people newly saving or saving more into a workplace pension.

As you know, the Department is also transforming the way it delivers its business by introducing digitally-based, user-centred services to better meet customer needs and deliver increased efficiency. As SRO of the Automatic Enrolment Programme you should be sighted on and aligned with Departmental Strategy and the Single Departmental Plan and attend appropriate governance fora to provide assurance that the programme deliverables are aligned with DWP's strategic direction and processes.

Any proposed changes to the programme scope which impact on government policy, digital transformation or the benefits your programme has been set up to deliver must be authorised by the Accounting Officer, who may delegate his decision-making authority to either DWP's Investment Committee (IC), or the DWP Change Portfolio Board (CPB) and may be subject to further levels of approval. You are also responsible for recommending to the Accounting Officer or the IC, the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner.

## **Programme Status**

The Programme status is reflected in the latest quarterly return to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, where the most recent assessment of deliverability was Amber/Green. The whole life cost budget for this programme is as per the latest approved business case, and totals £1,125m (see Annex 1). Detailed guidance on SRO roles and responsibilities is attached at Annex 2. You should follow that guidance and also ensure that you understand the guidance "Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants"<sup>1</sup> and make yourself aware of the

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/364600/Osmotherly\\_Rules\\_October\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/364600/Osmotherly_Rules_October_2014.pdf)

Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) guidance on the management of major projects<sup>2</sup>.

### **Extent and Limit of Accountability**

HM Treasury spending controls will apply, as set out within the HMT Delegated Spending Authority letter. Where the 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 project exceeds the delegated authority set by HMT.

Following recommendation from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), from April 2017 an Accounting Officer Assessment should always be produced for projects or programmes which form part of the GMPP at the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage (or at the point when it enters the GMPP if this is later).

As the Automatic Enrolment Programme is beyond the OBC stage, there is no mandate to undertake an assessment. You should note an Accounting Officer Assessment should be prepared at subsequent stages of the programme if it departs from the four standards (regularity, propriety, value for money and feasibility), or the agreed plan – including any contingency – in terms of costs, benefits, timescales, or level of risk.

It is for you, as the SRO, to decide whether or not an Accounting Officer Assessment should be prepared at any other stage of the programme. You should be prepared to defend your decisions to Parliament if challenged, for example, if called to give evidence to the Public Accounts Committee.

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

In addition you must be mindful of and act in accordance with the specific Treasury Delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to projects. Information on these controls can be found here.<sup>4</sup>

### **Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA)**

As the SRO of a Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) programme there would normally be the expectation that you will attend the Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA).

We appreciate that due to the time remaining on the programme that it will not be possible for you to undertake the MPLA accreditation and given the success of the

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

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

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

programme to date, the support you will receive from an established programme team and experienced programme board, accept that your appointment without formal accreditation is low risk.

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

Yours sincerely,

Peter Schofield CB  
Permanent Secretary  
Department for Work and Pensions

Matthew Vickerstaff  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
Infrastructure and 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:

Signature of SRO:

Date:

**Programme/Project Budget**

The latest planning allocation assumptions are:

<b>Whole Life Cost (£m)</b>
<b>1,125</b>

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<sup>5</sup> Based on the February 2016 RAM allocation for SR15 and March 2019 RAM for current allocation

### 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 the related implementation and transition activities will deliver the agreed objectives and the benefits stated in the Business Case.

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 guidance published by the Cabinet Office.

#### An SRO will:

- Be a visible, engaged and active programme leader, not a figurehead;
- Deliver the agreed outcomes and benefits;
- 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 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

##### Set up the programme for success

- Ensure 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 any planned changes continue 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.

### **Meet the programme objectives and deliver the projected benefits**

- Gain agreement to the programme objectives and the benefits to be delivered amongst stakeholders, including Ministers where appropriate;
- Understand the broader government perspective and its impact on the programme;
- Ensure the strategic fit of the programme objectives and the stated benefits;
- Agree a clear and simple approach to performance management and monitor delivery of the objectives and benefits taking appropriate action where necessary to ensure their successful delivery.

### **Develop the programme organisation and plan**

- Design and implement a coherent organisation structure and an 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 project progress, risk and issues;
- Monitor benefits and ensure that any changes to the agreed programme stated benefits are flagged appropriately within programme governance and the Business Case is updated accordingly (throughout the programme life-cycle);
- Maintain the integrity of the programme and speak truth to power;
- Communicate effectively with senior stakeholders about programme progress and provide clear, appropriate and delivery-focused decisions and advice to the Programme Director.

### **Effective and appropriate problem resolution and referral processes**

- 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 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, ensure the Permanent Secretary has been made aware of the situation and briefed accordingly.

### **Manage formal programme closure**

- Formally close the programme documenting lessons learned with the final evaluation report and disseminate to stakeholders;
- Put plans in place for a post implementation review, agreeing this with your Programme Board and other relevant stakeholders;
- Agree a plan for both long term benefits realisation and on-going sustainability with key stakeholders as part of the process of moving to business as usual.