



Government
Legal Department



We help the Government
to govern well, within the
rule of law

Government Legal Department
Business Plan 2020-21

Contents

4	Foreword
6	Our Core Purpose and Vision
10	Our Values
12	Our Strategy 2019-24
16	Our Key Priorities and Performance Measures for 2020-21
22	Our Strategic Risks
24	Our Resources
26	Annexes
26	Annex A: Organisational structure
28	Annex B: Strategic Risk Register



© Crown copyright 2020

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated
To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

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

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at Government Legal Department, 102 Petty France, London SW1H 9GL



Chief Executive's Foreword



This year marks a notable milestone for the Government Legal Department – our fifth anniversary. The idea was to bring together most government legal teams in order to create a more unified and coherent structure for government legal services, and thereby improve the quality, consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of our service.

The five years since GLD's creation in 2015 have been some of the most eventful for the country in modern times. Among many other things, they have seen three general elections, referendums on Scottish independence and on EU membership, the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and most recently of course the coronavirus pandemic. These events have given rise to legal and constitutional issues of unprecedented scale and complexity. I am immensely proud of the way GLD has risen to the challenge of providing the necessary

high-quality legal input, as well as supporting the programmes of successive governments across the full range of our legislative, litigation, advisory and other specialist services.

I am pleased now to share the Government Legal Department's annual Business Plan for 2020-21. This plan sets out our key priorities, and the performance measures we have agreed with HM Treasury for the coming year.

The plan also outlines the strategic risks to delivery and how we intend to mitigate them, and the resources and budget needed to succeed.

Together these support the delivery of our Vision and Strategy 2019-24.

It is already clear that this year will be an exceptionally challenging one. We begin it amid an unprecedented national health crisis. The impact on GLD, as on the rest of the public

sector and the country as a whole – is huge – both in terms of demand for our services as the government puts in place new legal measures to manage the crisis, and in the effect on the way we work and on the lives of our people.

At such a time it is more important than ever that we adhere to our core purpose – to help the government to govern well, within the rule of law – and our departmental vision. I am particularly pleased that our response has reflected the values which define us as an organisation - to respect each other, take pride in the high standards of our service, and embrace new ideas and collaborate. It will also be vital for us to maintain our strong focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of our people, at a time of unusual pressures and uncertainty.

It is important too that we continue to work towards our longer-term strategic aims.

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-22, sets out how we intend to deliver on our ambition of being recognised as a leading employer in relation to diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. This will remain a key strategic priority for the coming year. Other areas of focus will be:

- Increasing the scale, effectiveness and diversity of our recruitment, and implementing a new capability driven pay framework.
- Further enhancing and embedding our leadership framework.
- Tackling issues around how we manage, reward, develop and promote our people fairly.
- Continuing our focus on legal capability, and strengthening our innovation capability and culture.

Everyone in GLD has a part to play in delivering this Business Plan. It informs all our group and divisional business plans, which in turn help shape everyone's individual objectives. I'm confident that with the outstanding professionalism, agility, expertise and commitment of all our people, our response to the demands of the coming year will fully meet our ambition of being an outstanding legal organisation and a brilliant place to work.

Jonathan Jones

Sir Jonathan Jones KCB QC (Hon)
Permanent Secretary and Treasury Solicitor

“This year marks a notable milestone for the Government Legal Department – our fifth anniversary”



Our Core Purpose and Vision

Our Core Purpose and Vision

Our vision is to be:

An outstanding legal organisation, committed to the highest standards of service and professionalism

A brilliant place to work, where we can all thrive and fulfil our potential

Our purpose is:

To help the Government to govern well, within the rule of law



We help the
Government to
govern well, within
the rule of law

Achieving this vision means:

- Everyone, whatever their role, taking pride in what we do and performing to the highest possible standards
- Demonstrating and building on our unique range of legal knowledge, expertise and understanding of government
- Delivering value for money legal services to clients
- Working together to achieve the best results
- Investing in the high-quality skills, tools and infrastructure we need
- Continually seeking opportunities to improve and innovate, including through new technology and smarter ways of working

For our people in particular it also means:

- Giving clear leadership and direction, continually developing the skills of leadership and management across the organisation
- Providing unrivalled opportunities for interesting, varied, high-quality, challenging work and careers in a professional environment
- Being an inclusive, engaging and motivating employer, valuing the diversity of our people, the range of talent and experience they bring
- Listening to our people and giving everyone the opportunity to challenge and contribute their ideas
- Ensuring our people are fairly rewarded for the work they do
- Proudly celebrating and rewarding our successes and achievements



Our Values

Our Values

Our Values are important and are at the heart of the Government Legal Department

One GLD: working together:

We value and respect each other



We take pride in the high standards of our service



We embrace new ideas and collaborate



Our Strategy for 2019-24



Our Strategy for 2019-24

Our Strategy sets out how we intend to attain our Vision. Our strategic aims are that by 2024 we will:

Leadership

Improve our leadership at all levels by developing and embedding a leadership framework with clear standards linked to progression and retention, with a shared expectation, confidence and accountability.

Elements of this we will achieve quickly, whilst some may take the full lifecycle of the strategy. Throughout this period, we will need to continually professionalise across all parts of the department, innovating to improve the quality and efficiency of all our work.

Alongside this, success will only be possible with investment in our individual and collective leadership capability, at all levels of the organisation, visibly demonstrating the Civil Service Leadership Statement and our departmental Values.

Be recognised

Be recognised across the Civil Service, and externally, as a leading employer in relation to diversity and inclusion and wellbeing.

Improved offer

Put in place an improved offer to attract, retain, reward and develop the talented people we need to be an outstanding organisation

Connected

Increase our numbers outside London whilst operating as a fully integrated department, connected across our many sites within and outside London and exploiting the opportunities technology provides to enhance the working experience of our staff and the quality of our service for clients.

Capability

Enhance the capability and capacity of our staff through the operation of a fully integrated digital Knowledge Management system accessible to all throughout GLD, an enhanced training offer through the use of digital delivery platforms alongside traditional techniques and the further development of GLD Digital.

Professionalise

Professionalise and modernise all aspects of our service, both corporate and legal services, using a 'fail fast / learn quickly' approach to encourage innovation.



Be recognised across the Civil Service, and externally, as a leading employer in relation to diversity and inclusion and wellbeing

Our Key Priorities and Performance Measures for 2020-21



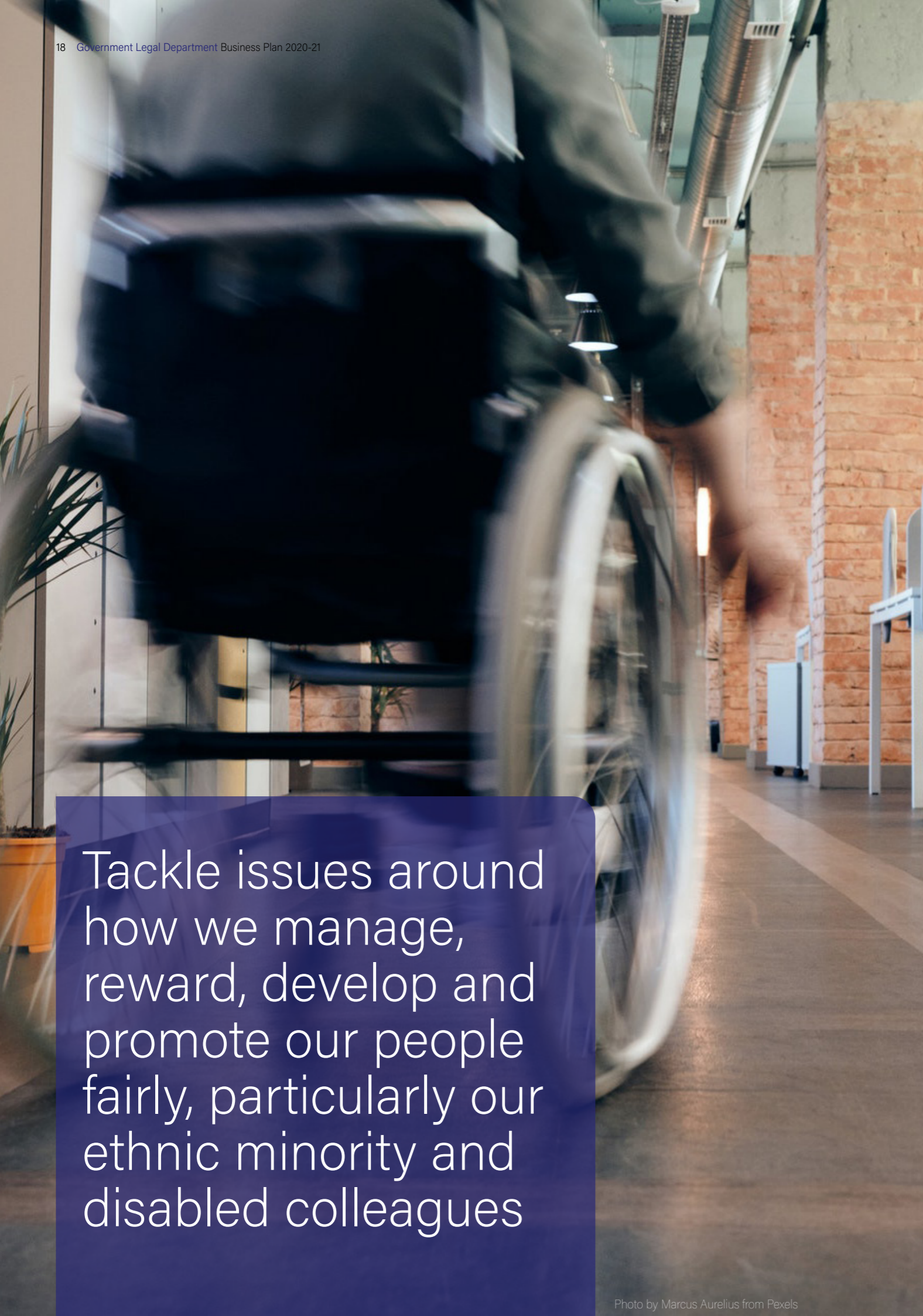
Our Key Priorities and Performance Measures for 2020-21

Our immediate priority for the forthcoming period will be to ensure the health and wellbeing of our people and that the Government receives first class legal services to develop and implement its policies and deliver public services in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of producing this Business Plan there is no certainty about the scale or duration of the emergency, or the impact and demands on GLD. Our response will therefore need to be highly flexible. The other plans and priorities set out in this Business Plan may need to be adjusted accordingly.

Subject to that, GLD will also continue to provide high quality legal support for the implementation of the new Government's agenda. A particular priority will be providing effective and joined-up legal advice on issues concerning the Withdrawal Agreement with the EU, the Transition Period and negotiations with the EU on our future relationship, as well as negotiations with other countries, such as the United States.

Our other priorities for 2020-21 will be to:

- Increase the scale, effectiveness and diversity of our recruitment by improving our attraction and branding, and implementing a new capability driven pay framework.
- Further enhancing and embedding our leadership framework: to equip our people to lead and deliver the changes to become a modern and fit for purpose organisation.
- Tackle issues around how we manage, reward, develop and promote our people fairly, particularly our ethnic minority and disabled colleagues; taking steps to develop inclusive leadership and the skills and behaviours to build effective working relationships.
- Continue our focus on legal capability, reducing the time it takes new joiners to become fully effective in their roles, and increasing the support we give to new clients working with us.
- Strengthen our innovation capability and culture, so that GLD encourages innovation, where good ideas are listened to, objectively evaluated and acted on.
- Continue to exploit the opportunities of locations outside of London, initially in Leeds and Croydon, to attract, recruit and retain staff, and reduce our costs of occupation.
- Assess the opportunities that emerging digital tools and technologies, can bring to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our support services and legal service provision to our clients.



Tackle issues around how we manage, reward, develop and promote our people fairly, particularly our ethnic minority and disabled colleagues

Photo by Marcus Aurelius from Pexels



Continue to exploit the opportunities of locations outside of London, initially in Leeds and Croydon, to attract, recruit and retain staff, and reduce our costs of occupation





Performance Measures

The performance measures we have agreed with HM Treasury for 2020-21 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), from 96%/7.85 in 2019-20
- 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 Board and Committees will identify additional performance measures for the supporting actions to the priorities set out above.





Our Strategic Risks

Our Strategic Risks

Providing effective legal support for the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic will be our key priority, along with necessary support for the implementation of our exit from the European Union, while maintaining our support for the rest of the Government agenda. This will present a number of significant challenges in terms of legal demand, our ability to resource this, and our reputation with clients.

In relation to these matters, the ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty of our clients' work programmes creates risk to delivery. Our success, therefore, will depend on our ability to ensure the health and wellbeing of our people and to recruit, grow and retain sufficient expertise to meet the level of demand for our services, requiring a flexible and adaptable approach to recruitment and agile deployment of staff, and use of external legal resources, if needed. We will need to work collaboratively and flexibly with our clients to understand and meet their needs as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The outbreak of Covid-19 presents major new challenges in terms of meeting the intense demands for legal services related to the outbreak whilst managing the impact of the virus on our own workforce, becoming accustomed to much more remote working and new use of technology, and supporting the health and wellbeing of our people over an exceptionally difficult period. Our priority, therefore, will be (as far as possible) to maintain our high quality legal service provision in these challenging circumstances, prioritising the allocation of available resources to meet clients' emerging legal service needs.

Our business resilience is assured through the maintenance of an ISO22301 aligned business continuity management system and a comprehensive suite of recovery plans. These have been previously tested for a pandemic, and invoked for Covid-19. Incident management exercises are otherwise generally 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.

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

Our Risk Management Framework ensures that Strategic Risks to the delivery of our strategy and the associated strategic aims, and to the provision of our legal services to clients, are identified, evaluated, monitored and owned by a respective Board member. The Framework ensures that action is agreed to mitigate the risk and/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 of this assessment are captured in our Strategic Risk Register for 2020-21, which is at Annex B.



Our Resources

We plan to use the following number of people to deliver our objectives in 2020-21:

	FTEs
Advisory Divisions	1,206
Litigation Group	555
Commercial Law Group	191
Employment Group	136
Legal Trainees	73
Bona Vacantia	51
Staff seconded to Inquiries	40
Total front line staff	2,252
Corporate Services	291
Total staff	2,543

We plan to spend £232m, the main components of which are:

	£000
Staff costs (excludes secondees)	198,099
Other operating costs	1,737
Accommodation (net of income)	5,129
Depreciation	9,165
Project delivery and management	4,450
ICT maintenance and network	3,731
Training	2,936
LION (net of income)	1,315
Other administration costs	5,338
Total operating costs	231,901
Net disbursements	200
Total costs	232,101

These costs will be funded by:

	£000
Legal fees and charges to clients	226,960
Recovery of the cost of Bona Vacantia	5,033
Funding from the Parliamentary Estimate	2,483
Total income	234,477

Inevitably, the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has brought about a high degree of uncertainty about what our income and costs will now be for 2020-21. There will clearly need to be adjustments in-year to cater for changes in the operational and social context within which we will be operating, and certainly in the early months of the financial year.

Our financial performance will be monitored closely by the Executive Committee and the Board throughout the year. Demonstrating value for money and delivering a high quality legal service to our clients will remain paramount. If necessary, however, we will need to consider making interventions to reduce our operating costs and/or to adjust the fixed fees and hourly rates we charge our clients, to ensure that we achieve full cost recovery for the year.

Our funding from the Parliamentary Estimate covers the cost of public interest casework (Letters of Request), both in terms of time spent and disbursements. This was 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, we procure around £45m per annum of disbursements, which includes the engagement of counsel, expert witnesses, and private sector law firms. These expenses are billed directly to clients.

We will also receive Parliamentary Estimate funding of £1.4m towards meeting our requirements for capital expenditure, e.g. investments in technology devices and infrastructure, and estates, furniture and fittings.

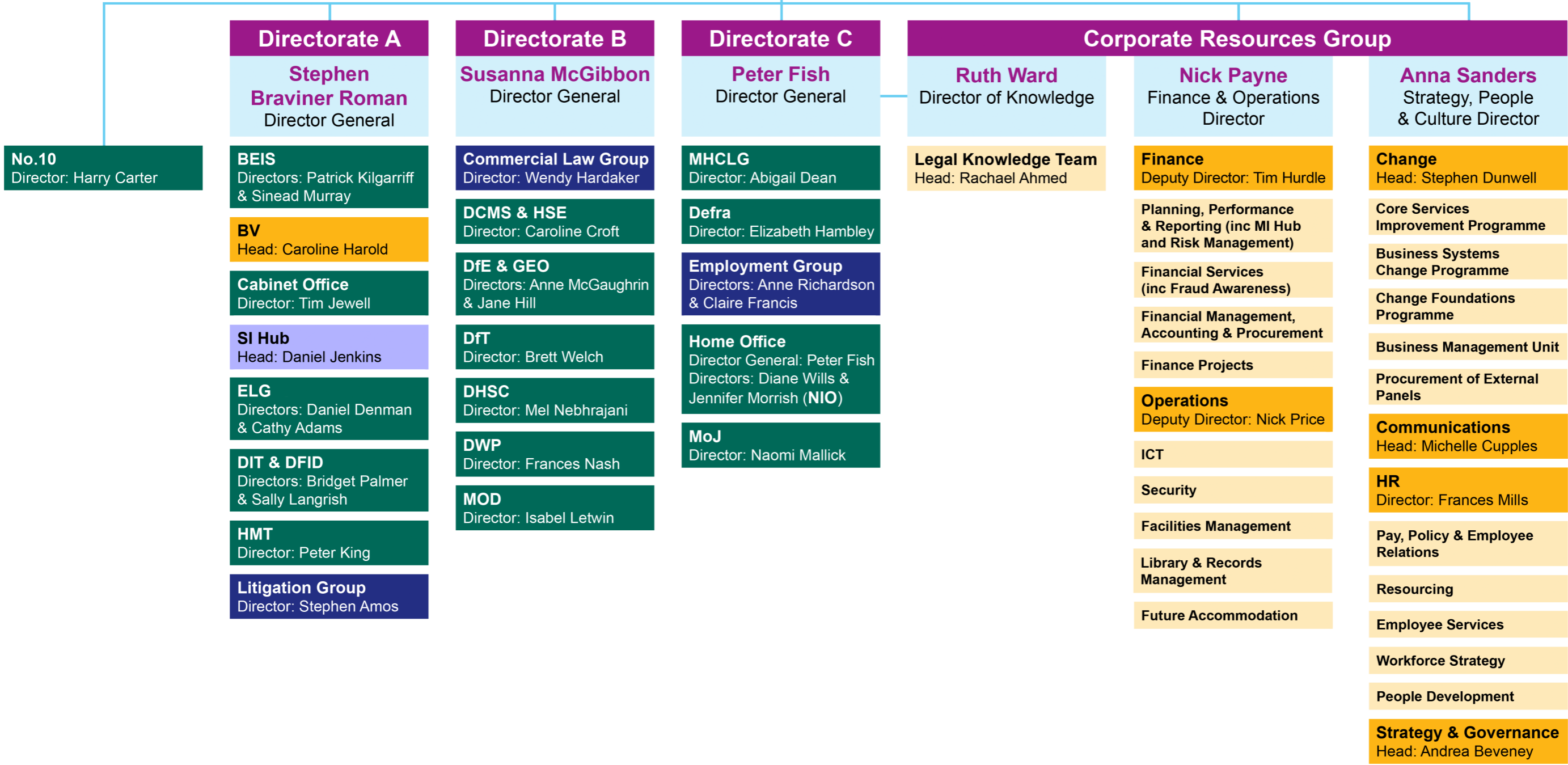


Annex A: Organisation structure

Advisory Legal services Specialist functions Expert services

Jonathan Jones
Treasury Solicitor

Catherine Berney, Erica Handling & Thomas Taylor
Non-executive directors





Annex B: Strategic Risk Register

Risk Category	Risk Description	Owner	Actions to Treat/Tolerate/Transfer/Terminate
Commercial	We are unable to manage the demands placed on us, as they do not match the expected levels forecast by our clients.	Stephen Braviner Roman	Annual business planning and regular progress meetings with clients to assess demand. Directors' weekly and monthly reports. Flexible use of internal and external resources to meet changes in client demands. Close monitoring of casework trends. Time recording reports. MoUs agreed with clients setting out how in-year demand changes will be dealt with. Ability to redeploy and/or release excess staff.
Operations	We damage the confidence, trust and relationships with our clients, the judiciary and other stakeholders, as the quality of our work falls below the standards both we and they expect.	Peter Fish	A focus on effective line management, a strong culture of sharing legal knowledge and raising capability through effective legal induction and core curriculum training. The continual development and deployment of legal knowledge tools, training and quality policies and procedures. Quality Assurance panels. Lexcel accreditation. JCSI and Merit Committee reports. Feedback from AGO, LCJ and OPC. Client Satisfaction Survey and NED client 'deep dives' Client Services Forum and Client Care Action Plan.
People	We cannot recruit or retain sufficient numbers of people to deliver the breadth and quality of legal services our clients' need.	Anna Sanders	Recruitment and retention of staff with the necessary skills. Effective workforce planning, and our annual Resourcing Cycle, including the deployment of staff to expand client and work experience. Improving the Employment Offer. A focus on diversity and inclusion and the promotion of health and wellbeing. Increased use of Apprenticeships and of paralegals. Access to agency staff, locums and secondees or outsourcing to law firms or panel counsel.
People	We have insufficiently competent, experienced and skilled professional and support staff to deliver the breadth and quality of legal services required by our clients.	Anna Sanders	The provision of learning and development opportunities to build and refresh capabilities, knowledge, and skills. Leadership and management development at all levels. Succession planning and Talent management. Improving the Employment Offer. Access to external expertise through legal panels and panel counsel.

Risk Category	Risk Description	Owner	Actions to Treat/Tolerate/Transfer/Terminate
Financial	We fail to achieve full cost recovery, as our clients cannot afford to pay for our legal services, or are unwilling to pay, as they do not believe that the services we provide or procure offer the best possible value for money.	Stephen Braviner Roman	Close engagement with clients to ensure that we can respond to their budget pressures, including the redeployment of staff and the use of different delivery models. Building client capability so that they know when to come to GLD for advice and support, and when they don't. Ensuring that we operate an efficient business, keeping our fixed fees and hourly rates to a minimum. Client Satisfaction Survey and NED client 'deep dives' Transparency in determining fixed fees and hourly rates. The provision of activity case related management information to clients.
Property	Our staff, contractors or visitors suffer injury or harm, in the workplace or in the course of their work.	Nick Payne	Adherence to health and safety policies and processes. Mandatory bomb/fire, health and safety training and exercising. Training of First Aiders, and Mental Health First Aiders. Staff communications to reinforce PHE/NHS advice and building cleaning and physical security controls, e.g. guarding, CCTV, secure door entry, etc.
Strategy	Significant external events may have an adverse impact on our ability to deliver legal services to our clients and/or achieve full cost recovery, or results in a major loss of information.	Nick Payne	Contingency arrangements to reduce the risk of service disruption. Business Continuity exercising, planning and testing, including critical role succession planning. Remote working capability. Disaster Recovery Centre capability. ISO 22301 accreditation
Security	A major loss of our, or our clients', information or assets, or a cyber-attack, which has an adverse impact on our ability to deliver legal services to our clients and/or to achieve full cost recovery.	Nick Payne	Adherence to information security policies and procedures. Mandatory information management training. Internet access policy and blocked site access. Use of CJSM to securely communicate with counsel. Penetration testing, the use of active cyber defence tools, security patching applied regularly, and daily backups, with tapes stored offsite. Building intruder detection systems, security guards, protective enclosures and protective monitoring systems. ISO 27001, PSN and Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation.

We help the Government to
govern well, within the rule
of law

An outstanding legal
organisation, committed to
the highest standards of
service and professionalism

A brilliant place to work,
where we can all thrive and
fulfil our potential





Government Legal Department: Business Plan 2020-21.

© Crown copyright 2020.

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated.

Designed and printed cost-effectively in-house.