



Office of the
Public Guardian

Office of the Public Guardian

Business plan
2020 to 2021





Our vision

Our vision is for the Office of the Public Guardian to strengthen supported decision making.

We'll encourage freedom of decisions for all who can make decisions, support for all who could, and provide protection for any who cannot.

Our mission

To uphold the principles of the Mental Capacity Act in England and Wales.

Our purpose

We believe everyone has the right to choose.

Where people lack mental capacity, we support decisions in their best interest.

We provide excellent services that suit and reflect the needs of our customers.



The 5 principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005

1

Everyone has the right to make their own decisions and has mental capacity unless proven otherwise.

2

All practical help must be given before someone is treated as not being able to make their own decisions.

3

People have the right to make decisions others might regard as eccentric or unwise. This isn't a reason for lack of capacity.

4

Anything done on behalf of someone who lacks mental capacity must be done in their best interests.

5

Decisions shouldn't restrict the freedom of someone lacking mental capacity more than is necessary.

Our values

We have four values that unite and guide us. We have a **purpose** to deliver excellent public services. We treat others with **humanity** as we would like to be treated ourselves. Through **openness** we innovate, share and learn, and **together** we listen, collaborate and contribute. Our values are at the heart of everything we do.

PURPOSE

Justice matters. We are proud to make a difference for the public we serve.

HUMANITY

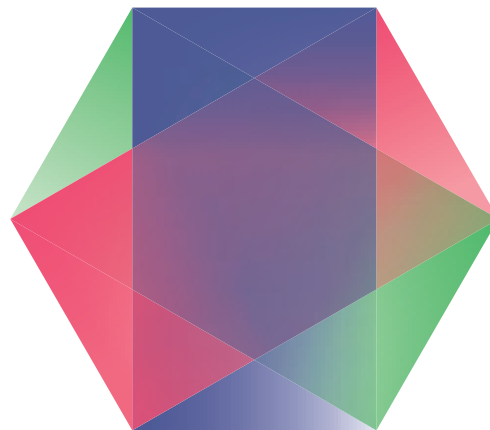
We treat others as we would like to be treated. We value everyone, supporting and encouraging them to be the best they can be.

OPENNESS

We innovate, share, and learn. We are courageous and curious, relentlessly pursuing ideas to improve the services we deliver.

TOGETHER

We listen, collaborate and contribute, acting together for our common purpose.



Our ambition

We want our lasting power of attorney services to be as well-known as driving licences – affordable, portable, flexible and accepted wherever they are used.

As part of its ongoing OPG 2025 transformation work OPG is looking again at its mission, vision and ambition statements – to ensure that they are understandable to both staff and the general public, clearly outline what OPG is here to deliver and provide a compelling vision for the future direction of the organisation.

Foreword from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Alex Chalk MP

Our right to choose.

Our right to a voice.

These are things we take for granted – until we no longer have them.

Whether taken from us through accident or through disease, the Mental Capacity Act (2005) gives those who can't speak for themselves an opportunity to choose the ones they trust to make decisions on their behalf.

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) has the power to protect those most at risk in society, and I am grateful for the work they do to support decision-making in people's best interest.

OPG have continued to provide this service during the COVID pandemic and I want to take this opportunity to thank all the staff – whether they have been in the office or working from home – for their efforts at this time.

At the time of writing the continued impact of COVID on us all is uncertain.

We can't provide a 20th century service in a 21st century world. So, I'm pleased to see the progress OPG have already made towards their transformation programme – OPG 2025.

This vital work will ensure the agency fit for the future – accessible and affordable to all.



Introduction from the Public Guardian for England and Wales, Nick Goodwin

When I was appointed as Public Guardian in July 2019, the OPG faced an exciting future. It is a privilege to help steer the organisation along its transformation journey - OPG 2025.



Much good work has already been done - last July we launched a new service to support the Guardianship (Missing Persons) Act 2017. The successful delivery of a service to people facing great turmoil required close and intensive collaboration with Ministry of Justice colleagues and stakeholders.

More recently responding positively to the COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges and I have nothing but admiration for all the staff who have worked as a team, within OPG, and more widely, and with purpose, passion and drive to maintain our services.

COVID-19 has, however, significantly reduced the OPG's fee income whilst pulling on our resources, as a result, this business plan has to allow us to flex to deal with the uncertainties in the year to come.

Our aim is to deliver our core services well – whilst transforming what we can when we can.

Every single person at OPG puts people at the heart of all that they do - they understand the role they play, and this helps us to provide excellent services to the public. Over 85% of our customers surveyed in 2019 said they were satisfied with our power of attorney services, and over 75% were satisfied with our deputyship services.

But we also have many challenges to consider - the ever-changing needs of society and an ageing population mean that the core services which the OPG offer will continue to be in demand.

But we need to ensure that they remain relevant and that we continue to adapt them to meet the needs of our current and future users and ensure their delivery is as resilient as possible – to deal with all the future may bring.

To meet this ambition it means that we must provide more online services in addition to paper-based LPAs.

A modernised LPA will reform the service and support we can offer customers to meet their needs today and in the future – and I am committed to driving this forward as the importance of this has come even more to the fore in the current circumstances.

OPG 2025 will transform the way we deliver our services as well as the way our people work – creating a smarter-working more agile workforce which is both effective and mobile will help us on our journey – COVID 19 has shown the art of the possible.

It will not be easy, but I believe with a strong and diverse workforce and our customers at the centre of our work, we can continue to improve on the services we deliver.

We need to deliver our services and work in a way that drives inclusion for all – our staff and our users.

Customer testimonial



"A power of attorney should be a standard consideration, along with a pension, bus pass and making a will"

**Johanna Roberts, Peterborough
#YourVoiceYourDecision**

Our year in numbers





As at 31 March 2020 we were supervising **60,793 deputyship orders**, an **increase of 1,385** from the end of 2018/19 (59,408).



The number of applications to register LPAs and EPAs received in 2019/20 was **917,550** an increase of 81,600 on 2018/19 (**835,950**).



We ended the year with **over 4.7 million** current PoAs on the register.

Our achievements



Average actual clearance time for power of attorney applications
Target: 40 days



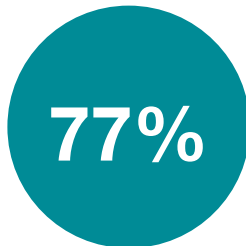
Average time to obtain annual reports
Target: 40 days



Average time to review annual reports
Target: 15 days



Customer satisfaction survey % with PoA services (very or fairly satisfied)
Target: 80%



Customer satisfaction survey % with deputyship services (very or fairly satisfied)
Target: 80%



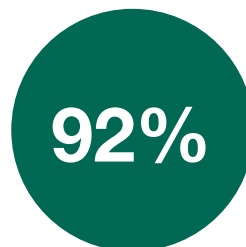
Customer satisfaction survey % with digital services (very or fairly satisfied)
Target: 80%



% of safeguarding risk assessments carried out within 2 days
Target: 95%



Average time to conclude investigations
Target: 70 days



% of calls answered within 5 minutes
Target: 95%



% of complaints fully responded to within deadline
Target: 90%

OPG 2025

Transforming our services



“OPG 2025 is paving the path for the future - we know our society is changing, we are ageing, we are more digital, and want to make decisions about our future. So, LPAs should fit more easily into the everyday lives of our customers so that more people can benefit and plan ahead. This will also provide us with resilience for the future.”

**Nick Goodwin
Public Guardian**



Changing how we provide our services. Improving lives together.

As the needs of society continue to change, so must our business. In 2018 we announced our transformation programme - OPG 2025.

OPG 2025 will help us to better empower people to plan ahead and create high quality services that are accessible and affordable. Central to our vision is greater digitisation of our services. Making better use of digital tools, and smarter ways of working will free up our time to offer better support and advice to everyone.

It will provide resilience for both OPG and our users to deal with issues such as COVID-19.

In 2020-21 we will:

Our services

Promote lasting powers of attorney to all parts of society – with a pilot of the public-facing ‘your voice, your decision’ campaign in Wales - working closely with local authorities to support this work.

Launch a public beta of ‘Use an LPA’ - an online service to allow attorneys and third parties to use a lasting power of attorney quickly and conveniently.

Develop a proposal to modernise the LPA to fit society’s needs and look at ways to reduce the large volume of paper we receive in the organisation.

Continue our research to find out why more people do not take out LPAs, what support our customers need and how we can support them.

Establish what impact LPAs have had on society and what this means for future services.

Our partners

Providing greater support to our customers in using their LPA by working across sectors such as finance, legal and health to make the process easier and LPAs more recognised.

Our people

Review our organisation effectiveness and what we do today, to help us make sure we have a model which allows us to deliver our ambitions.

Harness the ideas of our people to drive innovation in the way we develop our services and organisation for the benefit of our customers.

Build on the smarter working we have embedded to deal with COVID-19 across our business areas and support our people in adopting this in the new "normal".

Continue work to move our Birmingham staff to new offices in 2021/2022.

Customer testimonial



"When I did a lasting power of attorney for myself, I was able to do it online, and all on a Sunday morning"

**Roger Payne, Huddersfield
#YourVoiceYourDecision**

Providing
excellent
services



“While we look to the future, we must continue to provide an excellent service today. Our services – registering LPAs, supervising deputies and investigating safeguarding concerns, are more important than ever. We are proud that our people have a great sense of purpose in providing an essential service which is seeing increasing demand.”

Julie Lindsay
Chief Operating Officer



Providing an essential service today. Preparing for the future.

We are committed to providing an excellent service for all our customers now and in the future.

Our role in registering powers of attorneys, supervising court-appointed deputies and guardians and investigating concerns remains our focus.

We will deliver excellent services to our customers ensuring they receive a top class service at the same time that we are looking to transform the service and also deal with all the additional issues as a result of COVID-19.

In 2020 to 2021 we will:

Our customers

Achieve our performance and customer service targets to deliver the best possible service to our customer (within the bounds of the impact of COVID-19) - and in the current pandemic ensure that our users can still access our services.

Work with others to provide greater clarity on the role of the OPG within the safeguarding landscape to ensure we, and others, are clear on our roles and responsibilities.

Encourage the use of different ways to pay for our services with less use of cheques.

Our People

Promote mental wellness activities for all staff and support all our staff in dealing with COVID-19 and the many ways this has affected individuals.

Learn from COVID-19 home working to improve the offering to our staff in the new “normal” – including more flexible use of IT and continued ability to work from home (where the activities allow it).

Encourage our diverse workforce to share and develop their skills through mentoring, shadowing and sharing best practice.

Take forward a programme of work in OPG to achieve greater inclusivity and social mobility – using such schemes as sector based work academies. Make OPG a brilliant place to work.

And we will...

Publish data and research to help inform wider considerations, across government and society, of an ageing population and risk of losing mental capacity



Performance indicators



“Like with anything, your output is dependent on your initial input. Being on the Bridges programme gives me a goal and a vision to succeed within OPG. It allows me to be creative, and feel included – especially coming from a BAME background”

Palminder Ghai



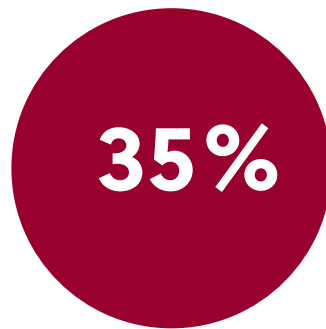
Whilst it is the OPG's intention to meet all its performance indicators in the year 2020/21, the current COVID situation and its impact on things such as the number of staff present in the office is likely to significantly impact on our ability to do so.

Our customers

Our targets:



Calls answered within 5 minutes



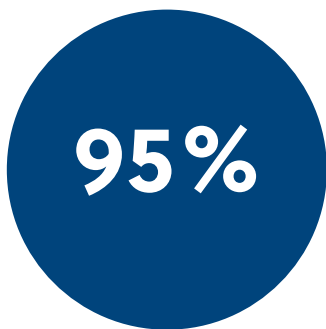
Annual reports received digitally



Complaints responded to within deadline

Our operational delivery

Our targets:



LPAs registered without error



Average time taken to obtain annual report



Deputy reports outstanding for over 98 calendar days



Average time taken to review annual report

Our people

Our targets:

60%

Staff engagement

<11%

Staff who have personally experienced bullying or harassment in last 3 months

<11%

Staff who have personally experienced discrimination in last 3 months

90%

Staff who have participated in a learning or development opportunity in last 3 months

10%

Staff turnover

7.5 days

Average working days lost due to sickness

There are currently 1,689 people working at OPG

About us

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) helps people in England and Wales to stay in control of decisions about their health and finance and make important decisions for others who cannot decide for themselves.

We are a government body and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ). We support MOJ in ensuring access to justice in a way that best meets people's needs.

We carry out the legal functions of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Guardianship (Missing Persons) Act 2017.

We're responsible for:

Registering lasting and enduring powers of attorney, so that people can choose who they want to make decisions for them.

Investigating reports and concerns about abuse by registered attorneys, deputies or guardians.

Maintaining the registers of attorneys, deputies and guardians.

Supervising deputies and guardians appointed by the courts, and making sure they carry out their legal duties.



Glossary

Donor

Someone who has created either an enduring or lasting power of attorney. They are referred to as donors because they have donated certain decision-making powers to someone else.

Attorney

The person chosen to act for someone else on a lasting power of attorney (LPA).

Client

Refers to the person you have been appointed to act on behalf of.

Deputy

A person appointed by the Court of Protection to support someone (the client) who lacks the mental capacity to make certain decisions themselves. A deputy is appointed if someone loses mental capacity and does not have a lasting power of attorney in place.

Lasting power of attorney (LPA)

A legal document which is used to appoint someone to support you should you lose the mental capacity to make certain decisions yourself. There are two types of LPA: health and welfare, and property and financial affairs. Both types of LPA must be registered with OPG before they can be used.

Enduring powers of attorney (EPAs)

Replaced by lasting powers of attorney (LPAs) in October 2007. Like an LPA, it is a legal document used to appoint someone to make decisions on your behalf should you lose mental capacity. EPAs signed and dated before 1 October 2007 are still valid and can be registered with OPG when the donor starts to lose, or has lost, mental capacity.

Mental capacity

The ability to make a specific decision at the time that the decision needs to be made. You can find a legal definition of mental capacity in section 2 of the MCA.

Best interests

Any decisions made, or actions taken, on behalf of someone who has lost mental capacity must be in their best interests. There are standard steps to follow when deciding on someone's best interests. These are set out in section 2 of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA) code of practice.

User

Anyone who makes use of OPG services. This could be LPA or EPA donors, attorneys, deputies, clients or partners, intermediaries. It also covers staff using OPG systems.

Contact details

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