



Attorney  
General's  
Office

# AGO Business Plan 2021-22



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General's  
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## FOREWORD

The past year at the AGO has been one of great challenge that has tested our small but talented and resilient department. From shifting our operations online to facilitate remote working during the peak of the pandemic, to providing advice on complex and sensitive issues while managing personnel changes at the top of our office and in the wider Government legal profession, I am proud of how the department adapted and continued to deliver high quality support to the Law Officers. So, while 20/21 was characterised by navigating myriad, novel challenges, 21/22 will be a year of renewal and opportunity.

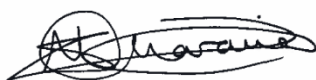


The AGO helps the Government to deliver its democratic mandate. Supporting the Law Officers as they advise the Prime Minister and Cabinet on complex legal issues while protecting UK institutions remains our strategic priority. Following the enactment of ground-breaking legislation that saw Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP go on maternity leave as the first Minister on Leave, former Solicitor General Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP has stepped up into the role of Attorney General, supported by Rt Hon Lucy Frazer QC MP, who returns to the department as Solicitor General. We look forward to helping the Law Officers put their stamp on their new

roles as they in turn help the Government deliver its agenda. To do that we will need to keep working closely and effectively with other Government departments and public bodies – particularly those sponsored by the AGO.

As a department, we are pushing ahead with exciting new changes that will ensure we remain and grow as a high performing and efficient office which meets its legal and performance obligations. We are professionalising our corporate services function, implementing the findings of an internal governance review to bolster our leadership structure, improving our knowledge management systems and will continue to ensure we live the department's values and put people at the heart of our strategy. The department will also move to new premises at Petty France, which will support better collaboration between our teams and with other departments and public bodies and provide our staff with the tools they need to do their jobs effectively in a safe and inclusive working environment.

There will no doubt be challenges in the year ahead, but the AGO will continue to support the Government as the UK redefines its place in the world. We know we will be required to work hard and with integrity, as we always do. We also know that we will deliver and thrive.



Shehzad Charania,  
**Interim Director General and Legal Secretary to the Law Officers**

## OUR ROLE: WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The position of Attorney General dates back almost to the time of Magna Carta and continues to play a unique and pivotal part in the United Kingdom's modern constitution.

The AGO is a small, specialist ministerial department consisting of approximately 50 employees. The AGO staff is comprised of highly talented lawyers, representing some of the very ablest from across Whitehall, skilled policy, private office and communications professionals, and experienced corporate officials who administer the department's day-to-day operations.



### **The Attorney General and Solicitor General (the Law Officers) are Government ministers. They:**

- are chief legal advisers to the Government;
- sponsor and are accountable to Parliament for the Law Officers' Departments, namely:
  - a) The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
  - b) The Serious Fraud Office (SFO)
  - c) Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI)
  - d) The Government Legal Department (GLD)
- perform other functions in the public interest, independent of Government, such as looking at sentences which may be too low.

Together, the AGO works as a high-performing, multi-disciplinary, engaged and resilient team. We prioritise the Law Officers' professional and constitutional functions, our team spirit and values, and our investment in individuals' development and wellbeing.

# OUR STRUCTURE

## Attorney General's Office Structure



## OUR VISION

The AGO makes law and politics work together at the heart of the UK constitution.

## OUR MISSION

We are the stewards of the public interest in the Rule of Law, which is a fundamental principle of the UK's constitution and a guarantee of historic democracy and liberties.

## OUR VALUES



### Our Values

We treat everyone with respect

We value each other and support personal development

We act with integrity in our work and relationships

We work supportively, constructively, and positively

We strive for excellence in everything we do

## OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- A. Helping deliver Government policy in the context of the Law Officers' constitutional role in relation to the Rule of Law.
- B. Defining and delivering the Law Officers' public interest functions in the interests of the administration of justice.
- C. Sponsoring the Law Officers' Departments and connecting the work of the prosecutors with wider criminal justice policy.
- D. Ensuring a high performing and efficient Attorney General's Office which meets its legal and performance obligations.

<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY (A): Helping deliver Government policy in the context of the Law Officers' constitutional role in relation to the Rule of Law</b>		
<b>Key Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>
<b>The AGO helps the Law Officers support the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and Government more widely in collective decision-making</b>	Ensure the views of the Law Officers as Chief Legal Advisers to the Government are represented at cross-Whitehall meetings, forums and reviews	<b>Helping the Government deliver its policy priorities within the rule of law</b>
	Provision of timely, high quality Law Officer advice, including as requested by other Government departments	
	Strategic engagement with heads of legal teams across Government, including chairing the National Security Council (Officials) (Legal) meeting	

<b>The AGO promotes the Rule of Law within Government and publicly and acts as steward of the Law Officers' Convention</b>	Ensuring that legislation proposed at the Parliamentary Business and Legislation Committee is clear and lawful	<b>Protecting and strengthening the Rule of Law</b>
	Publicly affirming Law Officer commitment to their role in relation to the rule of law, and the rule of law itself	
<b>The AGO supports the Government Legal Profession</b>	Supporting Law Officer engagement with legal teams and their work across Government	<b>The Law Officers are able to oversee legal work across departments as part of their role as Chief Legal Advisers to Government</b>

<b>STRATEGIC PRIORITY (B): Defining and delivering the Law Officers' public interest functions in the interests of the administration of justice</b>		
<b>Key Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>
<b>The AGO helps the Law Officers deliver their statutory and common law public interest functions including as Advocate General for Northern Ireland</b>	Provision of timely, quality advice which identifies and critically analyses options	<b>Maintaining public confidence in the Law Officers as guardians of the public interest</b>
<b>The AGO helps deliver criminal justice through the ULS scheme</b>	Identifying appropriate opportunities to correct sentencing errors where sentencing law may at the same time be clarified more broadly	<b>Increasing public confidence and appropriate sentencing for the most serious offenders</b>

<b>The AGO monitors the scope of the Attorney General's criminal and civil public interest functions</b>	Working closely with the Law Commission and other Government departments to exploit opportunities for reform/improvement	<b>Improving criminal and civil public justice results</b>
<b>The AGO drives improvement in its casework systems</b>	Reviewing casework systems, division of administrative, legal and paralegal tasks and implementing effective feedback and training	<b>Safeguarding the reputation of the Law Officers and AGO for delivering high quality casework efficiently</b>
<b>The AGO communicates the Law Officers' public interest functions to the public.</b>	Proactive press campaigns on the back of high-profile ULS cases, engaging local, regional trade and national print and broadcast media	<b>Increasing public awareness of how to participate in the ULS scheme; its contribution to criminal justice; and the Law Officers' role in safeguarding delivery of criminal justice</b>

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE (C): Sponsoring the Law Officers' Departments and connecting the work of the prosecutors with wider criminal justice policy**

<b>Key Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Output</b>
<b>The AGO represents the interests of the Law Officer Departments across Whitehall</b>	Establish MoU with LODs on the management of write rounds	<b>The interests of the Law Officer Departments are considered and represented in the formation and implementation of Government policy</b>
	Feed timely operational insight from the LODs into policy development	



<p><b>The AGO has robust sponsorship arrangements in place for the CPS, SFO, GLD and HMCPSI as the Law Officer Departments</b></p>	<p>Ensure proper operation of all Framework Agreements and Protocols with Law Officer Departments</p>	<p><b>AGO sponsorship is transparent and conducted in line with best practice</b></p>
	<p>Strengthen AGO engagement with Law Officer Department audit functions</p>	
	<p>Support LODs in developing spending review proposals, ensuring alignment with Government priorities</p>	<p><b>The LODs receive necessary funding to deliver their functions</b></p>
	<p>Ensure CPS performance in priority areas such as rape and serious sexual offences, disclosure and support for victims and witnesses is reflected in agenda for sponsorship meetings</p>	<p><b>Helping the Government deliver its CJS recovery priorities</b></p>
	<p>Embed additional regular reports on CPS performance in priority areas</p>	
	<p>Oversee SFO performance in priority areas such as case progression and digital capacity is reflected in agenda for sponsorship meetings</p>	

	Support the new HMCPSI Chief Inspector to deliver their functions	<p><b>AGO sponsorship is transparent and conducted in line with best practice</b></p> <p><b>Strengthening AGO oversight of LOD performance</b></p>
	Participate in HMCPSI stakeholder advisory meetings and input into consultations on inspection plans	<b>Ensuring HMCPSI inspectorate plan is informed by Government priorities</b>
<b>The AGO constructively engages with the legal professions, including the Bar Council and the Law Society</b>	Regular engagement with the Professions in the Attorney's capacity as Head of the Bar on a variety of issues affecting the justice system	<b>Increasing ministerial understanding of the operational impact of Government decisions on the functioning of the system</b>
<b>The AGO constructively engages with Government and external stakeholders to deliver criminal justice policy priorities</b>	Working collaboratively on clearing the Crown Court backlogs and on improving the performance of the criminal justice system	<b>Direct Ministerial engagement in developing ambitious Action Plans to improve criminal courts' performance</b>

<p><b>The AGO fully engages with the cross — Government Rape Review</b></p>	<p>Working collaboratively with other Government departments and stakeholders to present an ambitious review and informed action plan to improve systemic handling of rape cases</p>	<p><b>A comprehensive report that fully takes into account the role of the CPS in the prosecution of rape cases</b></p>
<p><b>The AGO implements the Attorney General’s Disclosure Guidelines</b></p>	<p>Guidelines are implemented, reviewed after a year and opportunities to improve best practice identified</p>	<p><b>Clearer and more practical guidance for prosecutors to discharge disclosure responsibilities</b></p> <p><b>Guidelines becoming embedded, delivering cultural change and driving improvements in disclosure obligations</b></p>

<p><b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE (D): Ensuring a high performing and efficient Attorney General’s Office which meets its legal and performance obligations</b></p>		
<p><b>Key Objective</b></p>	<p><b>Action</b></p>	<p><b>Outcome</b></p>
<p><b>The AGO has robust and transparent governance structures informed by Cabinet Office best practice</b></p>	<p>Implement the recommendations of the AGO internal governance review as agreed by the Executive Board</p> <p>Development of new management information linking to delivery of the department’s Business Plan</p>	<p><b>Improving compliance with best practice resulting in increased scrutiny and transparency</b></p>

<p><b>The AGO delivers effective financial planning, budgetary management and fiscal reporting in line with Government accounting rules and best practice</b></p>	<p>Implement new accounting methods and reporting metrics, building up financial expertise and knowledge within the Corporate Services Team and across the department</p>	<p><b>Effective review, planning and use of resources available to the AGO as well as robust preparation for future spending reviews and delivery of business priorities</b></p>
<p><b>The AGO provides staff with necessary resources and a secure environment</b></p>	<p>Complete move to new premises at 102 Petty France on time, on budget</p>	<p><b>Meeting targeted professional standards and legal obligations</b></p>
<p><b>The AGO effectively recruits and develops a talented and diverse staff</b></p>	<p>Develop recruitment practices that link into professions and offer clear career development options to all colleagues</p>	<p><b>Proactively planned recruitment, circulated widely, attracting a range of talented individuals to the AGO</b></p> <p><b>All AGO staff engage in making the AGO the place of choice to work</b></p>
	<p>Strive to attract a diverse selection of candidates applying to work at the AGO</p>	
	<p>Use corporate working groups to foster an inclusive working environment, embed smarter working and other lessons learned through remote working</p>	

<p><b>The AGO strives to improve existing information management systems</b></p>	<p>Implement Knowledge Management Strategy and develop a role within Corporate Services to support the AGO in maintaining effective systems to manage and retain its corporate memory and compliance with DPA and GDPR</p>	<p><b>The AGO's processes are effective and meet statutory requirements as well as ensuring that departmental memory is maintained</b></p>
	<p>Implement new guidance on effective records management and oversight of handling of cases of historic interest</p>	
	<p>Developing a digital records management system, implementing new practices and developing measures to provide assurance that processes are effective</p>	<p><b>Using available IT to its fullest effect, providing effective support to meet the department's records management aspirations</b></p>



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