



HM Government

Government Function: Human Resources

Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

This document supports the **Government Functional Standard for Human** which sets expectations for the leadership and management of human resources across government, ensuring people are recruited, developed and deployed to meet the government's needs.

Functional standards cross-refer to each other where needed, so can be confidently used together.

The suite of functional standards, and associated guidance, can be found at **GOV.UK government functional standards** [1].

This assessment framework should be read in conjunction with the government functional standard [2]. The meaning of words is as defined in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, except where defined in the Glossary in Annex B.

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Figure 1 The structure and scope of functional standard GovS 003: Human Resources version 2.0

1. Purpose and scope of the Human Resources Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

1.1 Purpose of this Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

This assessment framework is designed to help drive continuous improvement within and across government, by helping government organisations to assess their adherence to, and practical application of the human resources functional standard [2]. This assessment framework is consistent with assessment frameworks for other functions, so that senior leaders can take a coherent view of performance across all functions in their organisation.

This assessment framework draws on, but does not replace, the human resources functional standard [2], which should be complied with and the assessment framework should be read in conjunction with that functional standard.

This assessment framework is designed for people undertaking assessments of their organisations and for people taking organisational improvement actions as a result of the completed assessment.

1.2 Scope of this Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

This assessment framework applies to how government organisations manage human resources, as defined in human resources functional standard [2]. It can be used as a tool for organisational performance improvement in all departments and arm's length bodies. The structure and scope of the functional standard is shown in Figure 1.

2. Using the HR Standard Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

2.1 How the framework relates to the HR Functional Standard

This continuous improvement assessment framework draws on its related functional standard and includes a set of statements indicating different levels of organisational capability against aspects of the standard, ranging from non-compliance or adopting ('developing'), through 'meeting the minimum' ('good'), to better and best, as shown in Figure 2.

The framework draws attention to how the requirements of the functional standard can be implemented in organisations of different maturities, so that the organisation's leaders can plan improvement initiatives where needed. Not every organisation, or part of every organisation, needs to operate at the 'best' capability level. Good means that all mandatory elements, and the most important advisory elements, are met.

Assessment framework

Assessment framework are based on statements drawn from the functional standard, weighted for importance.

Good means that all mandatory elements, and the most important advisory elements, are met.

<i>Developing</i>	good	better	best

minimum expected = good

2.2 Structure of the Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework

The structure of the assessment framework is designed to give an indicative picture of how well an organisation is doing. It covers:

Theme: the overall topic being addressed

Practice area: what is being assessed

Criteria: the statements to be met

- **Themes.** A theme is the overall topic being addressed in that section of the assessment framework. The context and more information about the themes addressed can be found in the human resources functional standard [2].
- **Practice areas.** Each theme comprises practice areas. Each practice area has an overall statement about what is expected. A practice area might relate to one or more clauses in the human resources functional standard [2].
- **Assessment criteria.** Each practice area is supported by a number of criteria. Criteria help to define what is happening in an organisation (observable in practice, backed up by evidence). Criteria denote 'good', 'better' or 'best' performance. Refer to the human resources functional standard [2] for context and detail. For example, the content of a 'management framework' is described in the governance section of the standard.

2.3 Assessing an organisation

2.3.1 Defining organisational scope

Before starting an assessment, the boundaries of the organisation being assessed need to be defined. A whole government department or arm's length body can be covered, or the assessment can be limited to a defined part. Dividing a large organisation, where performance across the organisation varies, into its major groups can help pin-point where improvements are needed.

To avoid overload in organisations, assessments should be undertaken as part of routine assurance and to suit the organisation, rather than an additional process for accounting officers to engage with.

2.3.2 Positioning of the assessment in an organisation

Attitude is key. This assessment framework is a tool to support organisational improvement, and the assessment will add no value unless there is honesty in response to the criteria. The assessment should be concerned with identifying opportunities to improve the way the organisation operates.

Business leaders should set ambitions for their organisation based on business need, as set out in their strategies and/or plans. For some organisations 'good' might be sufficient. For other organisations, their area of business might dictate that meeting 'best' is necessary.

Most functional standards rely on other functional standards (as listed in clause 1.3 of every functional standard). This interdependency means that for an organisation to be operating effectively it needs to consider such dependencies carefully and their impact on the organisation's operations. Further guidance on assessment frameworks can be found in the Guide to continuous improvement against functional standards [1].

2.3.3 Advice for those leading assessments

Those leading assessments should:

- encourage peer review and comparison within and between organisations
- reassure people that assessment is a continuous improvement initiative, not a threat, and is focused on facilitating honest self-appraisal and improvement action
- balance the need to evidence metrics against the effort required to collect such metrics
- keep track of the trajectory of the organisation in terms of meeting the mandatory and advisory elements of each standard over time
- acknowledge that some people won't have enough experience to recognise their organisation's limitations.

2.4 Characteristics of ‘good’, ‘better’ and ‘best’

This continuous improvement assessment framework sets out different levels of maturity against the most important aspects of the human resources functional standard [2] - from the minimum expected (good), to better and best, as shown in Figure 2.

- **Good:** all mandatory elements (highlighted for ease of the users), and the most important advisory elements, are met. Each human resources activity has a defined way for managing its work in conformance with the human resources functional standard. Lessons are learned and applied locally.

Note: ‘good’ includes the requirements (‘shall’ statements) from the functional standard and the most important advisory elements.

- **Better:** the organisation has a defined and established way of authorising work to proceed and undertaking human resources activities, which can be tailored to be appropriate and proportionate to the work being undertaken. Lessons are reviewed and recorded, performance improvement is embedded in the organisation’s practices through updates to the parts of its management framework, learning and development offerings and by communications. More advanced ways of undertaking some practices are evident. The organisation is capable of managing significant transformational change.
- **Best:** the governance and direction of human resources is fully integrated with the governance and direction of the organisation. Performance improvement is based on quantitative measures and evidence taken from across the organisation. The organisation is capable of managing strategic transformational change. Technology is used to make the undertaking of some practices more reliable, effective and efficient. Learning from experience and organisational improvement is continuous.

Note: In order to be ‘good’, ‘better’ or ‘best’, an organisation needs to meet all the criteria for that level across all the themes. By default an organisation is ‘developing’ if it doesn’t meet at least ‘good’ for all the criteria. For this reason, continuous improvement assessment frameworks do not include criteria for ‘developing’.

An organisation needs to meet all the criteria of any lower level in order to comply with the higher level. For example, an organisation cannot be ‘better’ if it doesn’t meet all the criteria for ‘good’.

Business leaders should set ambitions for their organisation based on business needs, as set out in their strategies and/or plans. For some organisations ‘good’ might be sufficient. For other organisations, their area of business might dictate that meeting ‘best’ is necessary.

2.5 Using the outputs of an assessment

Completed assessments can be used to help identify and share good practices, address perceived weaknesses in the performance of the organisation and provide input to continuous improvement activity.

The completed Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework is for internal government management, designed to facilitate frank and open discussion around performance. Completed assessments are not intended for publication.

2.6 The structure of this assessment framework

The table below sets out the structure of the assessment framework, listing the practice areas addressed in each theme.

Theme 1: Governance	
Practice area 1.1	Human resources governance and management framework
Practice area 1.2	Human resources strategy
Practice area 1.3	Risk and assurance
Practice area 1.4	Decision Making
Practice area 1.5	Human Resources, roles and accountabilities
Practice area 1.6	Senior HR leaders
Theme 2: Organisation Design and Development	
Practice area 2.1	Organisation design
Practice area 2.2	Workforce planning
Practice area 2.3	Supply and demand
Theme 3: Employee life cycle - Joining Work	
Practice area 3.1	Resourcing
Practice area 3.2	Recruitment
Practice area 3.3	Onboarding
Theme 4: Employee life cycle - Building the Workplace	
Practice area 4.1	Talent
Practice area 4.2	Learning and Development
Theme 5: Employee life cycle - Managing the Workforce	
Practice area 5.1	Performance management
Practice area 5.2	Conduct and discipline
Practice area 5.3	Bullying, harassment and discrimination
Practice area 5.4	Employee relations
Practice area 5.5	Working time and attendance
Theme 6: Employee life cycle - Rewarding the Workforce	
Practice area 6.1	Reward and employee benefits
Practice area 6.2	Pay
Practice area 6.3	Pensions
Theme 7: Employee life cycle - Leaving the Workforce	
Practice area 7.1	Leaving work – organisation
Practice area 7.2	Leaving work – employees
Theme 8: Managing Services	
Practice area 8.1	HR Systems
Practice area 8.2	Reporting
Practice area 8.3	Employee contact

3. Assessment Framework

3.1 Theme 1: Governance

Practice area 1.1: Human resources governance and management framework

HR Functional Standard Ref: 4.1

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The human resources governance and management framework is defined and established in an organisation (4.1). 2. The human resources governance and management framework includes the authority limits, decision making roles and rules, degree of autonomy, assurance needs, reporting structure and accountabilities. 3. Roles and accountabilities are defined in the human resources governance and management framework and assigned to people with appropriate seniority, skills and experience. 4. The governance and associated management frameworks and controls are proportionate and appropriate to the work and the level of prevailing risk. 5. The governance framework is referenced from the respective Accounting Officer System Statement. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Compliance with the organisation's defined human resources governance and management framework is monitored, and preventative and corrective action taken if needed. 7. The organisation uses a combination of tiering and categorisation to decide the appropriate and proportionate effort for management, support systems, delivery standards and processes, and reporting structures. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Tailoring guidelines and criteria are defined and established to enable managers to apply the organisation's governance and management frameworks appropriately and proportionately. 9. The organisation uses defined metrics for monitoring compliance with significant aspects of the framework. 10. The organisation's human resources governance and management framework is reviewed periodically to ensure that it is operating effectively and reflects evolving good practice.

Practice area 1.2: Human resources strategy

HR Functional Standard Ref 4.2.1 - 4.2.3

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation has an established human resources strategy which covers governance, objectives, operating model, services and delivery plans. 2. Human resources strategy drives wider government priorities, strategy and direction, including cross-government strategic people priorities. It takes account of the needs, objectives and priorities of the organisation and its arm's length bodies. 3. The human resources strategy is understood by HR professionals and the business and communicated clearly within the organisation through available channels. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The human resources strategy covers the roles of technology, communications, change management and delivery methodologies. 5. A health and wellbeing at work plan and relevant aspects of the prevailing Diversity and Inclusion strategy are included in the human resources strategy. 6. Both human resources strategy and delivery plan are included in and where appropriate, drive the overall organisation strategy and organisation plans (e.g. Organisation Delivery Plans). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Human resources strategy incorporates both short and long-term targets, reflecting leading industry practice. 8. The strategy is regularly maintained for relevance and its implementation is monitored and measured.

Practice area 1.3: Risk and assurance

HR Functional Standard Ref 4.3

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An organisational human resources assurance strategy is defined and aligned to the organisation's integrated assurance strategy (4.3.1). 2. Assurance happens at, at-least three levels: first by human resource managers, operating within established frameworks to the organisation's risk threshold, second by risk, quality and compliance professionals within the organisation and third by cross-government audit experts. 3. Senior officers with accountability for human resources within their organisation regularly assess workforce and human resource related risks (4.3.3). 4. Assurance reviews are planned and take place at appropriate, agreed intervals and in particular, prior to significant decisions. 5. Assurance reviews are carried out by people with relevant skills, experience and expertise. 6. Recommendations identified in assurance reviews are documented and acted upon in a timely fashion. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Risk in an organisation is consistently defined as either low (to be managed and mitigated within the organisation) or high (to be managed and mitigated through cross-government management bodies). 8. Assurance at each level is integrated with the higher level assurance frameworks and has cross-functional representation. 9. Organisation has processes in place to ensure that the level of assurance applied is proportionate to the complexity, value and risk of the work. 10. Assurance is conducted with an emphasis on identifying and acting on early warning indicators. 11. The costs and benefits of human resources assurance activities are both understood and budgeted for at an organisational level. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. The human resources assurance strategy is designed and maintained to reflect the prevailing organisational risks. 13. Lessons learned from reviews are regularly evaluated to draw out wider lessons for the organisation or cross-government human resources function. 14. The effectiveness of the assurance framework is reviewed annually to identify opportunities to improve assurance practices further.

Practice area 1.4: Decision making

HR Functional Standard Ref 4.4

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation defined and established who is authorised to make each significant decision, who should advise them and when the decision is required. 2. Decision-making criteria and arrangements for escalation are defined and established. 3. Decisions relating to human resource management are made taking account of benefits, risks and alternative options, in accordance with the organisation's human resource governance and management framework. Stakeholders and subject matter experts are consulted. 4. Government policy and the associated human resources strategy, HM Treasury approvals and the Cabinet Office controls for external recruitment, use of external consultants and contingent labour, redundancy and compensation payments and learning and development expenditure are complied with. 5. There is an audit trail for significant decisions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Methods and criteria are defined, established and applied for evaluating alternative options, ranking those options and selecting the preferred solution. 7. Approvals for decisions are given in a timely manner, in accordance with the organisation's human resource governance and management framework. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Assurance information is used at an organisational level to support senior decision making and improve the quality of decisions. 9. Decisions are based on actual outcomes as compared to a reference group of similar decisions to that being addressed.

Practice area 1.5: Human Resources, roles and accountabilities

HR Functional Standard Ref: 4.5.1, 4.6, 5.2.2

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<p>1. Human resources accountabilities and responsibilities are defined in the relevant governance and management frameworks and assigned to people with appropriate seniority, skills and experience (4.5.1).</p> <p>2. Those engaged in human resource management ensure that they comply, and guide their organisation to comply, with prevailing employment law, policies, standards and frameworks (4.6).</p> <p>3. Human resource specialists work alongside business leaders to ensure that business change activity is people-centred (5.2.2).</p>	<p>4. Organisation clearly defines the HR activities, outputs or outcomes they are responsible for, and the person human resource specialists are accountable to as a minimum.</p> <p>5. There is an organisation chart showing the reporting lines for senior human resources roles, with names assigned to each active role.</p> <p>6. Differences between the statutory obligations of the United Kingdom, devolved administrations, and any other jurisdictions are considered, when defining organisational roles.</p>	<p>7. Organisational accountabilities and responsibilities are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet business needs.</p>

Practice area 1.6: Senior HR leaders

HR Functional Standard Ref: 4.3.2, 4.5.6, 6.3.1

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Senior leaders* in an organisation are accountable for defining and delivering the organisation's overall human resources strategy and objectives and human resources governance and management framework. 2. Senior leaders ensure the organisation and its ALBs are in compliance with the HR Standard and the prevailing Global HR Design standards. 3. Senior leaders have skills and experience appropriate to the work assigned to them (4.5.6). 4. The responsibilities outside of the scope of human resources should be explicitly defined and the organisation's senior leaders devote sufficient time to carry out their human resources accountabilities. 5. The organisation's senior leaders adhere to the Civil Service Human Resources Expert Services model policy unless exceptions have been agreed with the senior officer accountable for cross-government human resources management (6.3.1). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Senior leaders act as role models for, and promote, the behaviours which encourage inclusion, openness and team working for successful delivery. 7. Senior leaders act as role models for, and promote, the behaviours which encourage inclusion, openness and team working for successful delivery. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. The organisation's senior leaders are assessed on their contribution to achieving business and people outcomes and realising benefits. 9. Surveys show satisfaction in the organisation's leadership in human resources in the upper quartile.

* the role might be called an HR Director or Director General, Chief People Officer, People Director or Organisation Development Director.

3.2 Theme 2: Organisation Design and Development

Practice area 2.1: Organisation design

HR Functional Standard Ref: 5.1.1

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation's operating design enables effective and efficient delivery of government policy, Civil Service and organisation's objectives and strategy, while delivering high quality customer and employee experience (5.1.1) 2. Organisation's design includes the arrangement of work, roles, structures, tools, inclusive processes, diversity and culture to manage and maintain the operating model. 3. Organisation recognises the value of organisational culture to its design and effectiveness and uses the prevailing CS Culture model as the basis for cultural interventions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Senior business leaders understand the impact of the organisational design on their business unit and are supported by HR experts to embed the design and review this as needed. 5. Senior leaders maintain oversight of the workforce requirements for their business unit and use this insight to shape resourcing plans and decisions. 6. Human resource specialists' work alongside business leaders to ensure cultural work is meaningful and sustainable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The effectiveness of organisational design and business change is evaluated and drawing on feedback structures evolve where necessary to achieve maximum outputs and success. 8. Organisation is tracking cultural patterns over time and outcomes of the analysis are used to inform future organisational design. 9. Organisation is growing cultural awareness through the use of relevant methodologies and appropriate techniques to design and manage cultural intervention.

Practice area 2.2: Workforce planning

HR Functional Standard Ref: 5.1.2

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation uses management and financial information, together with external research to build an evidence base to inform skills framework, workforce strategy and planning. 2. The workforce plan is developed and determines future workforce requirements in an organisation, including size, shape, composition, locations, capabilities and skills (5.1.2). 3. The workforce plan is aligned with the timeframes and covers the same period as the organisation's business plans (e.g. Organisation Development Plan) (5.1.2). 4. Organisation has policies, practices and systems to support workforce planning, identify gaps (including through exits) and any constraints and associated risks to inform decision making. 5. Size, shape, locations, composition, capabilities and skills are tracked and analysed regularly alongside strategic business objectives to ensure the workforce plan remains aligned to the organisation's business strategy and plan. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. The workforce plan follows the public value framework. 7. Senior leaders work with HR experts - including D&I teams - to gather MI to inform robust workforce planning, including identifying diversity and inclusion risks and benefits, with interventions to mitigate or realise these. 8. Workforce plans are consulted by senior leaders to ensure the skills and knowledge needed for current and future business delivery are maintained, so that capacity and/or capability gaps are managed early and do not result from employee exits. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Workforce planning and supply/ demand forecasting activities are assessed for effectiveness on a regular basis and inform future recruitment and succession and talent strategies. 10. The accuracy and effectiveness of workforce planning policies, management information systems and research at business and organisational level is evaluated and improved where necessary. 11. Diversity and inclusion impact of workforce plans is assessed and informs future workforce strategy.

Practice area 2.3: Supply and demand

HR Functional Standard Ref: 5.1.3, 5.3

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A comprehensive view of future human resource needs is developed and maintained by the organisation (5.1.3). 2. The supply and demand for human resources is assessed over the time period of the organisation's business plan and constraints, possible shortfalls and associated risks are understood (5.1.3). 3. Critical roles are identified and alongside most senior roles, they have effective succession plans in place, drawing on both organisational and cross-government talent pools. 4. Organisation has a position management approach to structuring their workforce, by creating and maintaining a consistent organisational hierarchy within their HR management system. 5. Attributes are associated with each position to enable reporting and analysis (5.3). 6. As a minimum, attributes include job, skills, profession, location, work schedule, manager, organisation, approval level and level of security clearance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Changes to the workforce structure are subject to an approvals process defined in the HR governance and management framework. 8. Senior leaders ensure they and managers complete the position and attributes data accurately and timely. 9. Senior leaders ensure their business units consider succession and plan for addressing the gaps as part of business planning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Position management and attributes are evaluated for completeness and accuracy at business unit level and action is taken to improve data capture as needed. 11. Organisation tracks the filling of their senior and critical roles, evaluating the impact and effectiveness of their succession plans and uses this to drive further improvement.

3.3 Theme 3: Employee life cycle - Joining Work

Practice area 3.1: Resourcing

HR Functional Standard Ref: 5.1.3, 6.2.1

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resources to meet planned needs and to support the organisation's objectives and government requirements are sourced from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. existing supply within government (including via flexible, managed moves of employees within or between organisations, offering developmental roles on a temporary basis or via expressions of interest), b. recruitment activity or contingent labour. 2. The necessary materials, systems, frameworks and training are provided to attract and retain talent and experience through the method most appropriate for the role. 3. Contingent workforce is managed in accordance with the organisation's recommended practice for managing the contract workforce. 4. Systems, policies and processes are provided to manage staff loans and secondments, reservist commitments, relocations and transfers between Civil Service organisations. 5. Diversity and Inclusion are considered at every stage of resourcing activities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Organisation regularly reviews their use of contingent workforce to balance business needs and value for money, and has policies and recommendations in place on how contingent workforce is utilised in organisation. 7. Senior leaders in an organisation work with HR experts to identify the most appropriate route to meet planned or surge in demand for resources, whilst taking into account value for money. 8. Resourcing solutions are developed in consultation with business and human resource specialists across government. 9. Organisation is committed to a proactive and strategic resourcing planning. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Organisation is compliant with the recruitment spend controls and committed to reducing unnecessary spending. 11. Organisation regularly reviews its resourcing strategies and approaches to ensure they meet business needs and deliver value for money to the organisation. 12. Organisation has robust contingency plans and resourcing models in place for surges in resourcing needs resulting from unanticipated critical resourcing needs. 13. Organisation takes actions to remove barriers and encourage movement between organisations as a strategic resourcing solution and to build capability.

Practice area 3.2: Recruitment

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.1.2 - 6.1.4

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment is conducted on merit on the basis of fair and open competition (6.1.2) and in line with workforce plans, Civil Service Commission Recruitment Principles (6.1.2) and organisational recruitment policies and procedures. 2. Reasonable adjustments are implemented in accordance with prevailing legislation and the recommended practice. 3. Recruitment campaigns are designed using the Success Profile Frameworks, with transparent, inclusive and fair screening and selection methods to test relevant skills, strengths, behaviours and experience (6.1.2). 4. Recruitment panels are diverse, in line with the organisation's policy on diversity and inclusion. 5. Reasonable adjustments are implemented in accordance with prevailing legislation and the recommended practice. 6. Data is collected, stored and handled in line with current data protection legislation (6.1.4). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The organisation has clear policies and procedures to ensure recruitment data is collected on the success rates of job applicants, by protected characteristic, set out as a comparative at key points in the recruitment process. 8. Organisation has a clear policy for anonymising applications at all grades to ensure fairness of the recruitment process. 9. Organisation's recruitment policy requires recruiters to maintain contact and engagement with applicants throughout the recruitment process to facilitate a positive experience. 10. Recruiting managers are trained and confident in applying success profiles. 11. Recruitment takes into account the future needs, organisational strategy and diversity of the organisation, identifying individuals with potential for development. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Organisation's recruitment and related policies and procedures, including workplace adjustments and diversity and inclusion are evaluated and outcomes are used to improve recruitment activities. 13. The cost effectiveness of recruitment campaigns and the value to the business is evaluated and lessons and improvements are fed back into local or organisational recruitment. 14. Recruitment data collected is evaluated across the recruitment process to generate insight for further improvement, including for attracting those with protected characteristics.

Practice area 3.3: Onboarding

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.1.5

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job offers are managed in accordance with the organisation's management processes, including offer confirmation (with draft contract of employment), generation of offer, issue, withdrawal (where necessary) and reserve lists. 2. External hires are vetted pre-appointment in line with the assessed security requirements of their role and location, meeting the Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) at a minimum. 3. Organisation has a range of onboarding activities in place. As a minimum, the organisation ensures the necessary facilities and reasonable adjustments required are in place and new hires are granted appropriate security and systems access. 4. Once in post, induction activity is in place for new hires, including briefing on the work, role, behavioural norms, employee services, necessary policies, processes and training. 5. Where contractual probation is applicable, the new hire is monitored and any shortcomings in performance managed appropriately. The new hires are formally notified of the outcome of the probation period (6.1.5). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. HR specialists support managers in defining the right level of security clearance for the role. 7. HR leaders ensure that their organisation offers a mentor, buddy or other support, including information on available employee networks to those new to a role. 8. Managers request and encourage new hires to provide feedback on their onboarding and induction experience. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Feedback is collected on the onboarding, induction and probation processes, at the business unit and organisational levels. This is used to further improve onboarding, probation and induction activities in organisation and employee experience. 10. The efficiency of the organisation's vetting process is evaluated against data collected on recruitment timelines, with learning from the process driving organisational improvement.

3.4 Theme 4: Employee life cycle - Building the Workforce

Practice area 4.1: Talent

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.2.2, 6.2.3

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation developed career frameworks and structured learning and development, aligned to Government and organisational objectives. 2. Appropriate guidance, tools and support are in place to deliver a sustainable and inclusive talent strategy, succession plans, assessment of potential and development programmes in an organisation. 3. Talent planning and talent management strategies in an organisation draw from a range of protected characteristics and geographical, social and career backgrounds across professions and functions. 4. Employees are supported in developing their professional capability, managing their careers and identifying development opportunities across organisations and functions. 5. Organisation has systems and processes in place to collate data on the delivery and effectiveness of talent interventions. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Professions' career frameworks and L&D offer develop breadth, and depth where required, of experience cross-government and within organisation. 7. Mentoring, apprenticeships, internships and outreach programmes are developed to grow and diversify the talent pool and network in organisation. Senior leaders take personal action in this to show their support for the value of this activity and to ensure their business areas take part in the above initiatives to build diversity. 8. There are mechanisms in place to identify future talent and support their development using the tools available. 9. Organisation undertakes targeted, evidence-based outreach with under-represented groups. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Organisation collates data linked to alumni and keeps alumni engaged to evaluate their career development and inform improvements to their own succession planning strategies. 11. Data on delivery, effectiveness and inclusivity of talent interventions and programmes is monitored and analysed regularly in order to continuously improve activities, monitor return on investment and improve inclusivity and diversity. 12. Organisation uses data relating to the most talented employees to evaluate the impact of the talent interventions on driving an inclusive talent strategy.

Practice area 4.2: Learning and Development

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.2.4

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning and development activity is conducted in line with the results of capability, learning needs, and talent and diversity analysis and organisational objectives (6.2.4). 2. Organisation sets clear expectations that all employees have a development plan in place. Development plans are linked to performance management in an organisation and reflect formal and workplace learning, including mandatory learning requirements, leadership and management development, professional and domain-based learning. 3. Content and mode of delivery of learning interventions are inclusive, accessible and effective for the target audience. 4. Learning and development offered to employees is cost-effective, high quality and delivered to meet an identified current or future capability need. 5. Organisation has clear processes for managing external providers of learning content and delivery. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Organisation undertakes regular assessments of content of L&D offer and return on investment to confirm whether the interventions remain appropriate. 7. External providers of learning content and delivery are managed to ensure value for money and to facilitate adoption of new learning methods and technologies. 8. Organisation undertakes activities in order to avoid duplication of effort and spend in relation to the development and provision of learning interventions (e.g. between the organisation and central learning provider). 9. Organisation creates opportunities to develop leaders at every level and location of the Civil Service. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Organisation analysis employee feedback from learning and development activities, to ensure learning and development activity remains relevant to organisational objectives. 11. The effectiveness and impact of the learning content and programmes delivered by the organisation is regularly measured and evaluated from a value for money and customer satisfaction perspective and insight from the evaluation forms the development of the learning offer. 12. Feedback on the number of employees with development plans and their value is gathered and assessed and any lessons learnt to drive improvements in take up and relevance of development plans. 13. Organisation encourages and enables individuals to participate in secondment schemes as a part of the learning and development offer.

3.5 Theme 5: Employee life cycle - Managing the Workforce

Practice area 5.1: Performance management

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.2

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation has performance management policies, procedures and associated systems in place. 2. Managers, supported by human resource specialists, comply with departmental policy and guidance and assess an employee's progress throughout the year against the performance objectives and measures agreed at the beginning of the year (6.3.2). 3. Current policy and recommended practice on equality, diversity and inclusion is complied with (6.3.2). 4. Managers ensure that standards of expected performance are set and clearly articulated for all employees and that regular performance conversations take place, taking appropriate, prompt action to address performance when necessary. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Managers in an organisation consider the effectiveness of workplace adjustments to further support employees' performance and progress. 8. Organisation considers policy and recommended practice on equality, diversity and inclusion when designing their performance management and poor performance policies and processes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Performance management policies and processes are regularly evaluated and any lessons learnt drive improvement. 10. The impact of implementing performance management policies and procedures on employee engagement and productivity is evaluated and changes are made to the system wide approach to reflect that learning.

Practice area 5.1: Performance management (cont.)

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.2

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
5. Development plans are agreed between employees and their managers and actively pursued as part of on-going performance management activity and continuing professional development. 6. Data on performance management outcomes and poor performance measures is collected and analysed, including by protected and other diversity characteristics as appropriate, to generate insight for further improvement (6.3.2).		

Practice area 5.2: Conduct and discipline

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.11

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation has policies and procedures to monitor and manage employee conduct consistently, fairly and sensitively. 2. Organisation has a clearly set out policy on political activity and business appointments and mechanisms in place to ensure employees adhere to this. 3. Organisation's policies and procedures enable employees to raise concerns relating to conduct or legal standards and ensure any concerns, disputes, grievances or appeals are handled responsibly and sensitively, and addressed sensitively, appropriately, proportionately and promptly and in the first stage - informally. 4. Organisation has procedures in place for access to HR expertise, where the situation is complex or contentious or may result in a referral to an employment tribunal. 5. Employment tribunal cases in organisations are escalated to complex casework specialists. 6. Organisation culture facilitates, encourages and promotes speaking up about any issues and ensures it is considered normal and safe for employees to do so. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Senior leaders promote and champion the culture of speaking up. 8. Organisation has mechanisms to assure the effectiveness of processes and procedures for raising, handling and resolving concerns. 9. Organisation ensures that the HR experts have the necessary skills and capabilities to oversee and support the formal investigation process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Organisation analyses employee feedback and addresses any issues related to handling concerns. 11. The effectiveness of the policies and procedures is evaluated regularly and any learning is used to improve the employee experience. 12. The access and value added by HR advice and management of formal investigations is evaluated and any learning is used to improve the approach.

Practice area 5.3: Bullying, harassment and discrimination

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.3

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation has zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and discrimination. 2. Organisations uses appropriate methodologies to understand its culture and cultural norms that enable or inhibit its approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination (6.3.3). 3. Organisation has the appropriate policies, guidance, learning and communication in place to enable staff to recognise and report bullying, harassment and discrimination. 4. Organisation has arrangements for reporting bullying, harassment and discrimination. Individuals in organisation can safely (and without fear of reprisal) report bullying, harassment, discrimination and other perceived wrongdoings through variety of channels. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Organisation uses its human resources governance and management framework to target remedial action needed when bullying, harassment or discrimination occur as a result of systematic or policy shortcomings. 6. Managers ensure that concerns can be raised, heard, addressed and resolved appropriately, with due care for all parties involved. 7. Organisation collates employee feedback on how cases of bullying discrimination and harassment have been handled by the organisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Bullying, harassment and discrimination policies, guidance and learning are regularly evaluated and employee feedback is used to improve these. 9. Organisation analyses employee feedback and addresses any issues related to handling bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Practice area 5.4: Employee relations

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.10

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation established effective mechanisms and maintained constructive and mutually beneficial working relationships with trade union colleagues. 2. Trade union engagement activity is undertaken on matters affecting the workforce, whether through information sharing, consultation or negotiation, where collective bargaining arrangements are in place. 3. Organisation has a good understanding of the legal, regulatory and socio-economic environment in relation to trade union engagement. Any activities undertaken are compliant with relevant legal requirements. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Organisation is monitoring and analysing intelligence to resolve or pre-empt complex issues which pose risks to the organisation. 5. Senior leaders understand when and how to engage with trade unions to ensure constructive outcomes from discussions for their business unit and the organisation as a whole. 6. Senior leaders understand when and how to identify and highlight issues that need to be escalated for formal trade unions to handle through the agreed mechanisms. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Organisation evaluates the trade union engagement and impact on employee relations from their own and trade unions' perspective. 8. Any identified risks are considered and addressed from both perspectives.

Practice area 5.5: Working time and attendance

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.5

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation has policies and procedures relating to working time, attendance management and return to work, including flexible working, special leave and annual leave. 2. Organisation has systems to record time spent on authorised activities in accordance with organisation's policies and procedures, including overtime periods and absences. 3. Issues relating to working time and attendance management are handled timely and sensitively in an organisation, with consideration for the wellbeing and specific needs of the individual. 4. Organisation supports flexibility in working time that has been agreed as a workplace adjustment for disability, health, caring responsibilities or faith observance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Organisation conducts regular reviews of the impact of attendance management policies on all staff with particular consideration for protected groups and diversity characteristics. 6. Organisation consults stakeholders, including trade unions and employee networks, on the application of attendance policies, and assesses the feedback and concerns raised. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Organisation identifies and takes corrective action to improve the effectiveness of attendance management policies and processes where needed. 8. Absence data is collated and the business, supported by the HR specialists, work together to identify patterns, design and evaluate interventions to address issues.

3.6 Theme 6: Employee life cycle – Rewarding the Workforce

Practice area 6.1: Reward and employee benefits

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.5

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation has pay and reward strategy and policies, aligned with Civil Service reward principles and benchmarked against wider industry comparisons and trends. 2. The reward strategy is developed with consideration of a wider employee value proposition and reflects the organisation's purpose and employees' needs. 3. Pay and benefits offered by an organisation are transparent to employees and are designed to attract, retain and motivate a diverse workforce, contributing to the CS being an attractive and competitive employer. 4. The aims of each element of the reward package, and any changes to it are accessible to all employees and communicated clearly. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Organisations developed a bespoke employee benefits package, taking into account the cross-government offer and employee needs. 8. Reward packages are regularly reviewed by relevant HR and business professionals and updated, where appropriate. 9. Organisation has mechanisms for gathering and sharing employee feedback on the impact of the strategies on their business. 10. Pay and reward diversity data disparities are analysed and organisation has mechanisms in place to address these. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. The impact of the elements of pay and reward strategies on organisation's priorities and employees, including on health and well-being are evaluated and learning feeds into future strategies. 12. The timeliness and accuracy of the distribution of pay, allowances, salary increases, adjustments, and bonuses is assessed and evaluated to improve performance.

Practice area 6.1: Reward and employee benefits (cont.)

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.3.2

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<p>5. Organisation has clear mechanisms/ processes/ procedures in place to ensure that pay, allowances, salary increases and adjustments, and bonuses are distributed to employees according to organisational policy and within stated timescales.</p> <p>6. Pay and reward for the protected characteristic of gender (and other diversity characteristics deemed appropriate) is monitored and published by the organisation.</p>		

Practice area 6.2: Pay

HR Functional Standard Ref: 3, 6.4.2, 6.4.3

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation follows a senior civil service pay policy set at cross-governmental level. 2. Pay policies for employees below the senior civil service grades are set by an organisation. These align with HM Treasury requirements of public sector pay and approval is sought for any novel or contentious spend (6.4.2). 3. Pay review bodies, where applicable, and trade unions are consulted before making changes to employee pay, with any such changes communicated clearly to employees (6.4.2). 4. Assessment tools are used to evaluate the appropriate compensation level for a particular job. 5. Pay and reward for the protected characteristic of gender (and other diversity characteristics deemed appropriate) is monitored and published by the organisation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Pay and reward diversity data disparities are analysed and the organisation has mechanisms in place to respond to and improve these. 7. Organisation has mechanisms for communicating changes to reward and opportunity given for teams to discuss the impact of the pay strategies on their business. 8. The organisation follows the statutory Civil Service Compensation Scheme when deciding to pay their employees compensation for loss of office, for example in the event of redundancy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. The impact of the elements of pay strategy on organisation's priorities and employees, including on health and well-being are evaluated and learning feeds into future strategies. 10. The timeliness and accuracy of the distribution of pay, allowances, salary increases, adjustments, and bonuses is assessed and evaluated to improve performance.

Practice area 6.3: Pensions

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.4.2

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation undertakes responsibilities relating to the administration of the scheme, including automatic enrolment in the Civil Service Pension Scheme, in line with relevant legislation (6.4.3). 2. Organisation promotes the value of the Civil Service Pension Scheme to employees (6.4.3). 3. Organisation participating in the Civil Service Pension Scheme complies with the responsibilities set out in the Civil Service Pension Scheme Stakeholder Charter (6.4.3). 4. A workplace pension is offered to employees. 5. There are mechanisms and procedures in place to notify employees about their pension provision or any changes to provision in a timely, clear and accurate manner, including guidance to employees on managing pension arrangements leading up to retirement. 6. Organisation has processes and/or policies in place for obtaining approval for arrangements alternative to automatic enrolment in the Civil Service Pension Scheme. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Organisation has mechanisms in place to monitor and measure performance of the scheme administration. 8. Organisation collates and analyses customers' feedback on the scheme administration and performance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. The mechanisms for providing information and support with regards to the Civil Service Pension Scheme are evaluated regularly and adjusted based on learning and feedback. 10. Organisation responds to customer's feedback and makes improvements in the scheme administration where appropriate.

3.7 Theme 7: Employee life cycle - Leaving the Workforce

Practice area 7.1: Leaving work - organisation

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.5

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organisation has policies and processes to manage employees leaving the organisation, including for payroll, security and information technology. 2. Exit schemes and voluntary and compulsory redundancy initiatives are defined and conducted in accordance with the Cabinet Office 2016 Protocol: Civil Service Redundancy Principles and the accompanying guidance. 3. Organisation adheres to the Civil Service Compensation Scheme when determining the level of compensation for their employees leaving under voluntary or compulsory redundancy (6.5). 4. Organisation has policies that set out the requirement for all civil servants to follow the rules on accepting business appointments and mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with conditions or restrictions imposed by the organisation (6.5). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Workforce plans are consulted to ensure the skills and knowledge needed for current and future business delivery are maintained, so that capacity and/or capability gaps do not result from employee exits. 6. Senior leaders and line managers are aware of business appointment rules and initiate appropriate action when needed. 7. Managers are confident using the exit policies and implement these in a timely manner. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Feedback is collected and analysed to ensure individuals feel satisfied with the organisation's exit process and action is taken on lessons learnt to improve the process. 9. Any issues arising from applying the rules on accepting business appointments are considered and any lessons learnt for future practice are put in place.

Practice area 7.2: Leaving work - employees

HR Functional Standard Ref: 6.5

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employees exiting the organisation are treated fairly, with respect and dignity, regardless of whether the exit is voluntary or otherwise. 2. Exit schemes and redundancy exercises are communicated clearly to employees. 3. Employees preparing to leave the organisation through retirement exit schemes are provided with and offered pre-retirement learning. 4. Exit interviews are conducted for senior civil servants leaving the organisation and data is collected on the reasons for leaving (6.5). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Employees leaving the organisation are encouraged to provide feedback on the organisation's handling of the exit process. 6. Organisation conducts exit interviews for grades below SCS. 7. Exit interviews data is disaggregated by protected and other relevant diversity characteristics for analysis. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Communications to support exit schemes and redundancy exercises are frequently reviewed and assessed to ensure they are effective and are improved for future exercises based on any learning. 9. Processes for managing exits, the accuracy and timeliness of action is evaluated and action taken to improve exit processes as required. 10. Data from exit interviews is informing improvements in HR practice.

3.8 Theme 8: Managing Services

Practice area 8.1: HR systems

HR Functional Standard Ref: 4.2.3, 6.4.4, 7.5

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Operational human resource services are delivered by dedicated teams, with a focus on customer service, inclusion, employee experience, operational excellence and continuous improvement. 2. Organisation has processes and guidance to ensure all outsourced, in-house and cross-government HR activities are measured through defined key performance indicators (KPIs) and the adoption of service level agreements (SLAs). 3. Organisation has effective systems for collecting and managing payroll data, and administering end-to-end payroll processing and exception payments. 4. Where provision of human resources services is outsourced, relevant HR processes, Shared Services Strategy and Global HR Design are followed. 5. Any third-party payroll providers are closely managed through effective contract management to carry out the above responsibilities (6.4.4). 6. Organisation has an accurate and secure, user-centric online system to submit, maintain and extract employee data. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. The effectiveness of the systems is monitored end-to-end in order to maintain a focus on user experience and achieving the desired business outcomes within agreed timescales. 8. The employee data system deployed ensures the organisation's needs for data and insight against organisational objectives are met. 9. Senior leaders, managers and employees are confident they understand the payroll process and can input and access timely, relevant and accurate data when needed. 10. Organisation has strategies to ensure HR increasingly adopts technological advancements and automates activity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Technological advancements and automation of activities drive efficiency and accuracy of people data and support organisation's decision making and consistency across government. 12. The effectiveness of the management and delivery against the payroll contracts, including KPI and SLA data is regularly collected and evaluated to realise value for money and improved customer service. 13. The quality and accuracy of payroll processing is evaluated and improvements made.

Practice area 8.2: Reporting

HR Functional Standard Ref: 7.2

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A reporting framework, including a report catalogue, schedule and reporting system, is in place to meet the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders. All reporting is conducted in line with this framework (7.2). 2. The reporting framework is used for statutory and Parliamentary reporting, regulatory compliance, cross-government and organisational management reporting and for ad-hoc report requests. 3. Reports are produced timely and address the organisation's needs for analysis and insight against organisational objectives. 4. Organisation complies with the cross-government data standards for reporting, including Global HR Standards. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Reporting processes and systems are able to visualise data in real time. 6. Senior leaders contribute to effective reporting by providing timely and accurate responses. 7. Senior leaders have visibility of the outcomes of relevant reports and use this data to assess and improve delivery in their units. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Reporting systems and processes are evaluated regularly to ensure they continue to align with organisational objectives and business needs and changes are introduced as necessary. 9. Organisation has arrangements in place to establish reporting systems and processes which will enable collection and analysis for comparable data across government organisations.

Practice area 8.3: Employee contact

HR Functional Standard Ref: 7.3

Good Criteria denoting good performance	Better Criteria denoting better performance	Best Criteria denoting best performance
1. Employees can easily raise HR queries and complaints through straightforward, confidential and accessible channels. 2. All employee contact channels are performance managed.	3. Employee contact channels include digital, telephony and in person services, to meet the needs of varied groups of employees. 4. Senior leaders ensure they and their teams understand and can access the routes to raise HR queries and provide support where issues need to be escalated.	5. All employee contact channels are evaluated for their effectiveness. 6. Customer satisfaction levels are monitored and lessons learnt are extrapolated to drive continuous improvement.

A. References

ID	Description
Government references	
1	Cabinet Office, Government functional standards and associated guidance (Collection) Note: this collection includes the common glossary for functional standards and guidance on conducting continuous improvement assessments
2	HM Government, <i>GovS003: Human Resources</i> , Version 2 (2021)

B. Glossary

Term	Definition
arm's length body	Central government bodies that carry out discrete functions on behalf of departments, but which are controlled or owned by them. They include executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies, and government owned companies.
assessment framework (continuous improvement)	In the context of government standards, an assessment framework defines levels of maturity against the most important aspects of the corresponding standard, to make it easy for organisations to understand how well they are meeting the standard, and what practices they should aim to improve.
assurance	A general term for the confidence that can be derived from objective information over the successful conduct of activities, the efficient and effective design and operation of internal control, compliance with internal and external requirements, and the production of insightful and credible information to support decision making. Confidence diminishes when there are uncertainties around the integrity of information or of underlying processes.
commercial	Commonly used term in central government to define broad procurement activity, but does not include wider commercial activity including income generation for the purposes of this document.
contingent worker	A contingent worker is a temporary worker contracted for a particular project or period of time; they are not on the payroll but provide services to the organisation. There are different types of contingent worker, including agency worker or independent contractor, each of which have different legal rights and status.
control (expenditure)	Cabinet Office expenditure controls are part of HM Treasury's scheme of financial delegations. They apply to proposals to procure certain goods and services, to ensure the expertise and insight of government functions is utilised. Such proposals fall outside departments' delegated authority and require Cabinet Office approval, without which expenditure is irregular.
control (organisational)	Any action taken by management, the board and other parties to manage risk and increase the likelihood that established objectives and goals will be achieved.
defined (way of working)	In the context of standards, 'defined' denotes a documented way of working which people are expected to use. This can apply to any aspect of a governance or management framework for example processes, codes of practice, methods, templates, tools and guides.

Term	Definition
diversity	Diversity provides a focus on championing a broad range of backgrounds and opinions - including those protected by prevailing equality legislation - with the merit principle front and centre and drawing on the talents of the widest possible range of geographical, social and career backgrounds. All diversity and inclusion people policies, processes and practices should be data-driven, evidence-led and delivery-focused.
employee assistance programme	An employee assistance programme or EAP is an impartial service for all employees, offering counselling and other types of support.
employee engagement	Employee engagement activity seeks to develop and encourage a workforce that is committed, supports one another, is loyal and has job satisfaction.
employee experience	Employee experience is about creating a great work environment for people. It involves understanding the role that trust plays in the employment relationship and making sure people are listened to and have a voice in issues that impact them.
employee life cycle	The employee life cycle is a common, informal way of describing the key moments, experiences and interactions with services at different points in employees' journeys and careers with an organisation. Another way of describing this is 'hire to retire'.
employee relations	Employee relations focus on both individual and collective relationships in the workplace, with an emphasis on establishing trust-based relationships with employees.
established (way of working)	In the context of standards, 'established' denotes a way of working that is implemented and used throughout the organisation. This can apply to any aspect of a governance or management framework for example processes, codes of practice, methods, templates, tools and guides.
function plan	A plan detailing how a function strategy is to be implemented in practice.
function strategy	A strategy for developing and improving the operation of a government function.
governance	Governance defines relationships and the distribution of rights and responsibilities among those who work with and in the organisation. It determines the rules and procedures through which the organisational objectives are set, and provides the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance. Importantly, it defines where accountability lies throughout the organisation.
governance and management framework	A governance and management framework sets out the authority limits, decision making roles and rules, degrees of autonomy, assurance needs, reporting structure, accountabilities and roles and the appropriate management practices and associated documentation needed to meet this standard.

Term	Definition
government function	A grouping aligned across government, embedded into departments and arm's length bodies. For activities within its scope, each function: sets cross-government strategies, sets and assures standards, develops capability, gives expert advice, drives continuous improvement, and develops and delivers commonly required services.
government profession	A grouping aligned across government to increase the professionalism and engagement of people with particular skills, knowledge or expertise. A profession sets professional standards, supports professional development and career progress, and provides a consistent way to attract and retain people.
inclusion	Inclusion describes how we ensure that all staff feel valued, supported and have a sense of belonging to their organisation and team, supporting them to drive organisational performance through improved innovation, creativity, productivity and utilisation. All diversity and inclusion people policies, processes and practices should be data driven, evidence-led and delivery-focused.
issue	A relevant event that has happened, was not planned and requires management action. It could be a problem, benefit, query, concern, change request or risk that has occurred.
lessons learnt	The practice of continuous improvement based upon organisational learning in a risk management context.
organisation	An organisation, in the context of government functional standards, is the generic term used to describe a government department, arm's length body, or any other entity that is identified as being within scope of a functional standard.
organisation design	Organisation design involves taking decisions about how to organise the work and people in an organisation in order to best achieve its purpose (its goals, aims or strategy).
outcome	The result of change, normally affecting real-world behaviour or circumstances. Outcomes are desired when a change is conceived. Outcomes are achieved as a result of the activities undertaken to effect the change; they are the manifestation of part or all of the new state conceived in the target operating model.
plan	A plan sets out how objectives, outcomes and outputs are to be delivered within defined constraints, in accordance with the strategy.
position management	A position is a specific occurrence of one job, fixed within one business unit or organisation. Position management involves maintaining all of the positions identified within the business unit or organisation, usually within a digital resource planning system.

Term	Definition
quality	The degree to which the features and inherent or assigned characteristics of a product, person, process, service and/or system bear on its ability to show that it meets expectations or stated needs, requirements or specification.
stakeholder	Any individual, group or organisation that can affect or be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by an initiative (programme, project, activity, risk)
standard	A standard is an agreed document that provides requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose.
strategy	A strategy outlines longer term objectives, outcomes and outputs, and the means to achieve them, to inform future decisions and planning.
user needs	User needs are the needs that a user has of a service, and which that service must satisfy for the user to get the right outcome for them.
value for money	The process under which organisation's procurements, projects and processes are systematically evaluated and assessed to provide confidence about suitability, effectiveness, prudence, quality, value and avoidance of error and other waste, judged for the Exchequer as a whole.

