



To: Matthew Briggs, Senior Responsible Owner for the Service Modernisation Programme

From: Peter Schofield, Permanent Secretary of Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); and  
Nick Smallwood, Chief Executive Officer of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority

**20th July 2023**

Dear Matthew,

## **APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR THE SERVICE MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Service Modernisation Programme with effect from October 2022. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from your department and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

As SRO, you are directly accountable to Peter Schofield, as the DWP accounting officer, and the Secretary of State.

Your Service Modernisation Programme forms part of the DWP Departmental Change Portfolio, under the oversight of the Chair of the Change Portfolio Board and is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) – as a Tier A Programme.

You have personal responsibility for the delivery of the Service Modernisation Programme and will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives, with policy intent and outcomes expected. This encompasses securing and protecting its vision, ensuring that it is governed responsibly, reported on honestly, escalated appropriately and for influencing the context, culture, and operating environment of the Service Modernisation Programme. You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the Service Modernisation Programme and recommending its pause or termination if appropriate. It is your responsibility to ensure decisions regarding the Service Modernisation Programme are taken in consideration of the impact they have on and in the best interests of the wider Departmental portfolio and Business Strategy. Where issues arise which, you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to Change Portfolio Board and/or Capacity Board and the DWP Investment Committee as appropriate.

You remain accountable to Ministers, as set out in the Civil Service Code, and should deliver the project in accordance with the objectives and policy intent as set by Ministers.

In addition to your internal accountabilities, SROs for GMPP projects and programmes are personally accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees. This means that, from the date of this letter, you will be held personally accountable to and could be called by Select Committees to account for and explain the decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the Service Modernisation Programme.

It is important to be clear that your accountability relates only to implementation, within the agreed terms in this letter; it will remain for the Minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development.

More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees - Guidance for Civil Servants](#), sometimes known as the Osmotherly Rules. Information on the roles and responsibilities of the SRO are detailed in the Infrastructure and Project Authority's guidance on [the role of the senior responsible owner](#). You should also make yourself familiar with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework, and the guidance and requirements for project delivery as set by DWP Departmental Change Portfolio Office.

### Time commitment and tenure

**This role will require at least 80% of your time initially to enable effective delivery of the role and execute your responsibilities in full.**

You are required to undertake this role until at least the achievement of the first Spending Review timeframe (end of the 2024/2025 financial year). Progress towards this will be reflected in your personal objectives. Any changes to the agreed time commitment or tenure of the role, as set out above, will require both departmental and Infrastructure and Projects Authority consent.

### Objectives and performance criteria

The Departmental objectives that are supported by this Service Modernisation Programme are strategic objective 3 (Delivering excellent services for citizens and taxpayers) and in doing so supporting the delivery of strategic objective 2 (Improving people's quality of life).

Any proposed changes to scope which impacts on this intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by Change Portfolio Board and may be subject to further levels of approval.

The vision of the Service Modernisation Programme is to:

- **Positively transform the customer experience** of approximately 20 million DWP customers.
- Fundamentally **change the role**, and services delivered for approximately **14,000 (16.5%) of our colleagues**.
- Deliver modernisation across Child Maintenance, Working Age, Carers and Disabilities, State Pension/Pension Credit and Disputes.
- Enable **delivery of DWP's strategic objective to deliver excellent services for citizens and taxpayers**, whilst also supporting efforts to achieve the further objectives of improving people's quality of life and maximising employment/in work progression. It will also **contribute to improved DWP efficiency** and **protect AME through reduced error**.

The programme is a 6-year (2 SR) journey. It has already **undergone significant scrutiny** within DWP and is **deliverable, with continued Ministerial and Departmental support**.

and its objectives are to:

- Create the conditions for colleagues to thrive, do their jobs effectively and serve customers well
  - Empowered colleagues with all the right skills, able to join up and tailor services to meet individual customer needs, being supported by confident leaders that are landing change effectively
- Give our customers fast, efficient services – and effective routing to the right support – through the most appropriate channels
  - More intuitive data-driven systems, automation and self-service, enabling customers to do simple things at a time that suits them without having to wait to speak to someone, and giving colleagues more time to help customers that need more support.
- Provide the right support to our customers at the time they need it
  - Simplified and accessible services, rooted in user insight, making a clear contribution to the department's strategic objectives to maximise employment, improve people's quality of life, and deliver excellent services for citizens and taxpayers.
- Create the environment, tools and capabilities for the services in scope and continually modernise beyond the timeframe of the Programme.

Your personal objectives and performance criteria which relate to the Service Modernisation Programme are:

- To support the Department in closing the SR funding gap through identifying further opportunities within the scope of the Service Modernisation Programme team
- To support the Department in meeting its ambitions to improve quality, customer experience and reduce fraud and error
- To effectively manage the operating environment around the Service Modernisation Programme
- To improve the communications relating Service Modernisation so that it engages the whole Department in one effort
- To develop and deliver a change management approach that ensures that colleagues are effectively engaged in making a difference and realising the benefits of modernisation
- To build, buy and make the appropriate capabilities to effectively deliver the scope of the Service Modernisation Programme
- To lead the development of the Programme Business Case so that it can feed effectively into a future DWP Spending Review bid
- To ensure organisational ownership of all aspects of data strategy and its implementation across all service lines in support of Service Modernisation achieving its ambitions safely and securely, including specifically ownership of the migration of data from legacy systems to the new infrastructure and ensuring organisation commitment to its success
- To note whilst, the Service Modernisation Business Case includes the case for the Department's Strategic Reference Architecture, the Department has agreed that its design, development and

deployment planning is the accountability of the Departments Chief Digital and Information Officer, not the SRO.

You are expected to run your project in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the other [Functional Standards](#) as applicable to this programme and the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework.

## **Extent and limit of accountability**

### Finance and Controls

HM Treasury spending controls will apply on the basis set out within the department's delegated authority letter. Where the Service Modernisation Programme exceeds the delegated authority set by HM Treasury, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply, and the details of each approval process must be agreed with your HM Treasury spending team. You should consult departmental finance colleagues on how to go about this.

You should note that where expenditure is considered novel, contentious, repercussive, or likely to result in costs to other parts of the public sector, HM Treasury approval will be required, regardless of whether the programme expenditure exceeds the delegated authority set by HM Treasury. If in doubt about whether approval is required you should, in the first instance, consult departmental finance colleagues before raising with the relevant HM Treasury spending team.

The overall estimated budget, resourcing requirements and tolerances for your project/programme will be agreed as part of the approval process. You will be expected to deliver within these tolerances and report quarterly on these as part of GMPP reporting.

You should operate at all times within the rules set out in [Managing Public Money](#). In addition, you must be mindful of, and act in accordance with, the specific HM Treasury delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to Service Modernisation Programme. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

### Delegated authority

You are authorised to:

- approve expenditure of £10m;
- agree project rescheduling of agreed milestones, but rescheduling beyond that must be agreed with Service Modernisation Programme Board and maybe subject to further levels of approval at Change Portfolio Board, if delays to critical milestones are material to delivering the outcomes within the business case; and
- recommend to Service Modernisation Programme Board and Change Portfolio Board the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner.

These authority limits are subject to change and other conditions, or tolerances may be set as part of the business case approval and ongoing monitoring processes which you should then operate within.

Where issues arise which take you outside of these authority limits which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to the senior business owner, Amanda Reynolds, and the Change Portfolio Board.

## Appointments

You should appoint a full time Programme Director to support you in the management of this Service Modernisation Programme and make other appointments as required for the control and delivery of your programme within your delegated authority.

## Governance and assurance

You should pay attention to ensuring effective governance for your Service Modernisation Programme, including the establishment of a Programme Board with appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner, you must ensure that the Service Modernisation Programme secures business case approval from DWP Investment Committee and HMT. You should also ensure that the Service Modernisation Programme remains aligned to the strategic outcomes, costs, timescales, and benefits in line with the approved business case as well as monitoring the context within which the Service Modernisation Programme is being delivered to ensure it remains valid.

Where a change impacts the scope, costs, benefits, or planned delivery milestones agreed as part of an agreed business case, you are responsible for following the agreed change request approval process and setting a new, approved, business case baseline.

You should ensure that an accounting officer assessment is completed alongside the approval of the Outline Business Case or Programme Business Case and that this is published on GOV.UK as part of the government's transparency requirements on major projects. You are responsible for bringing to the attention of the accounting officer any material changes in the Service Modernisation Programme which could require a new accounting officer assessment to be completed and published. [Guidance on completing accounting officer assessments](#) for major projects is available from HM Treasury.

Although you are directly accountable for this Service Modernisation Programme, you are also expected to support delivery of the department's overall strategic objectives. This means that you are expected to work collaboratively with other SROs and project directors in adjacent projects and programmes and with the Departmental Change Portfolio Office and Chief Portfolio Officer to manage dependencies, resources, schedules, and funding to support delivery of the overall change the department needs to achieve its strategic objectives.

You should ensure that appropriate and proportionate assurance is in place and agree on the level and frequency of assurance reviews through the maintenance of an integrated assurance and approvals plan. You should develop this plan and its maintenance in collaboration with the Departmental Assurance Coordinator and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

## Service Modernisation Programme status, reporting and transparency requirements

The Service Modernisation Programme status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the Service Modernisation Programme to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and is the agreed position as you assume formal ownership of the programme.

You are responsible for ensuring the honest and timely reporting on the position of the Service Modernisation Programme to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority while it remains on the GMPP and for providing reports and information to the Departmental Change Portfolio Office as required. Reporting

should include carbon measurement, and other sustainable development goals demonstrating evidence that the project contributes to an overarching environmental strategy and is aligned with defined Net Zero pathways. Information on the Service Modernisation Programme will be published annually by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

As part of the government's commitment to transparency on major infrastructure projects, you are responsible for publishing on GOV.UK:

- A summary of the accounting officer assessment completed in line with the approval of the Outline Business Case and summaries of any subsequent assessments should they be required
- A summary of the HM Treasury approved Full Business Case, and
- A close out report after Service Modernisation Programme has completed.

## Development and support

As a graduate of the Major Projects Leadership Academy (cohort 11), you are expected to maintain your continuing professional development as a project leader, including your status as an accredited assurance reviewer. To maintain your accreditation, you will be required to participate in a review at least once every 12 months.

The Department will assist you in securing the necessary resources to support the Service Modernisation Programme, and will set clear guidance, requirements and standards, which align to the [Government Functional Standard on Project Delivery](#), to enable good governance and effective delivery. You will be part of the department's cohort of major project leaders who will be expected to support each other, share good practice and lessons learned and to collectively develop solutions. You should liaise with the department's Head of Profession for project delivery to discuss the maintenance and development of your delivery and leadership skills.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority will be available to you for support, advice, and assurance throughout the Service Modernisation Programme time on the GMPP.


Following approval of the business case and entry onto the DWP Change Portfolio, the Change Portfolio Board will provide ongoing oversight and support and will take steps to help resolve and escalate risks, issues or constraints that are acting as a blocker to successful delivery.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your role as SRO.

Yours sincerely,



**PETER SCHOFIELD**



**NICK SMALLWOOD**

Permanent Secretary, Department for Work and  
Pensions

Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure and  
Projects Authority

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## CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT

I confirm that I accept the appointment of Senior Responsible Owner for the Service Modernisation Programme including my personal accountability for implementation, as set out in the letter above.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm Briggs', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Briggs