



To: Angus Gray, Senior Responsible Owner for the Universal Support Programme

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

17 May 2024

Dear Angus

APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR THE UNIVERSAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Universal Support Programme with effect from 19 June 2023. 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 me, as the Accounting Officer for DWP, and are under the oversight of the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work.

Your programme forms part of the Departmental Change Portfolio, under the oversight of the Chair of the DWP Change Portfolio Board and is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You have personal responsibility for the delivery of the Universal Support 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 programme. You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the programme and recommending its pause or termination if appropriate. Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to DWP Change Portfolio Board and/or Investment Committee, which are both sub-committees of DWP Executive Team.

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 programme. More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees - Guidance for Civil Servants](#), sometimes known as the Osmotherly Rules.

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.

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 Departmental Change Portfolio Office.

Time commitment and tenure

This role will require 50% of your time to enable effective delivery of the role and execute your responsibilities in full.

You are required to undertake this role until 31 October 2025 when activity will be handed over to business as usual. 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 my consent and Infrastructure & Projects Authority consent.

Objectives and performance criteria

The policy intent supported by this programme is to meet an announcement in Spring Budget 2023 outlining measures to reduce labour market inactivity, including Universal Support, a supported employment programme which will support disabled people, people with health conditions and people with additional barriers to employment into sustained work.

The Spring Budget announcement focused on inactive disabled people and those with health conditions being the primary target group for Universal Support. Ministers subsequently agreed that disadvantaged groups should also be eligible for Universal Support as the evidence suggests such support would be effective for them.

Any proposed changes to scope which impacts on this intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by the Accounting Officer, who may delegate his decision-making authority to either DWP's Investment Committee (IC), or the DWP Change Portfolio Board (CPB) and may be subject to further levels of approval.

The vision of the programme is to move more of the inactive target groups (disabled people, people with health conditions and people with additional barriers) into sustained work using evidence based supported employment models and its objectives are to:

- Deliver a national supported employment model that enables participants from our inactive and in work target groups to enter into or remain within sustained employment (359,000 individuals supported through a high-quality Supported Employment Fidelity model by the end of FY28/29).
- Support local economic growth through the employment of people from across our target populations (7ppt of additionality is achieved (at a minimum) across the combined Universal Support programme participant group).
- Contribute to a framework for effective, locally driven integrated employment support that can be sustained. Delivered by end point of Programme – March 2029.
- Improve participant general health and wellbeing, including support to build strategies to manage their disability and barriers to work and gain financial independence. Delivered by end point of Programme – March 2029.

Your personal objectives and performance criteria which relate to the programme are:

- provide leadership and direction to the programme to ensure it delivers to its plan, manages the budget effectively, and realises the benefits in the business case
- chair the programme board and ensure that decisions are made in an effective and timely manner
- manage relationships with senior internal and external stakeholders
- provide assurance to the Accounting Officer

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 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 the Universal Support programme. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

Delegated authority

You are authorised to:

- approve total expenditure of £1,417m for the whole life costs with no single transaction over your delegated spending authority limit of £1m.
- agree project rescheduling of agreed milestones, where slippage does not impact on subsequent key milestones and deliverables. Any rescheduling that results in a material change and that would breach agreed tolerance levels must be taken to the Change Portfolio Board for approval.
- recommend to Martin Hill as business owner and the Programme Board, Change Portfolio Board and Investment Committee 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 Martin Hill as business owner and the Change Portfolio Board.

Appointments

You should maintain the appointment of a full-time programme director to support you in the management of this 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 programme, including the establishment of a programme board with appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner, you must ensure that the programme secures business case approval from your Programme Board, DWP Investment Committee and Cabinet Office & HMT. You should also ensure that the 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 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 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 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 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 / your DCPO portfolio manager.

Programme status, reporting and transparency requirements

The programme status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the 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 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 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; and
- A close out report after the programme has completed.

Your Portfolio Manager in DCPO will assist you through any publishing requirements.

Development and support

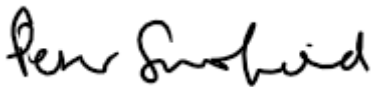
As a graduate of the Major Projects Leadership Academy, you are expected to maintain your continuing professional development as a project leader, including your status as an accredited assurance reviewer. To maintain your accreditation, you will be required to participate in a review at least once every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

The department will assist you in securing the necessary resources to support the 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 programme time on the GMPP.

Following approval of the business case and entry onto the Departmental Change Portfolio, the DWP 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.



Peter Schofield

Permanent Secretary, Department for Work and Pensions



NICK SMALLWOOD

Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure and Projects Authority

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT

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



Angus Gray