

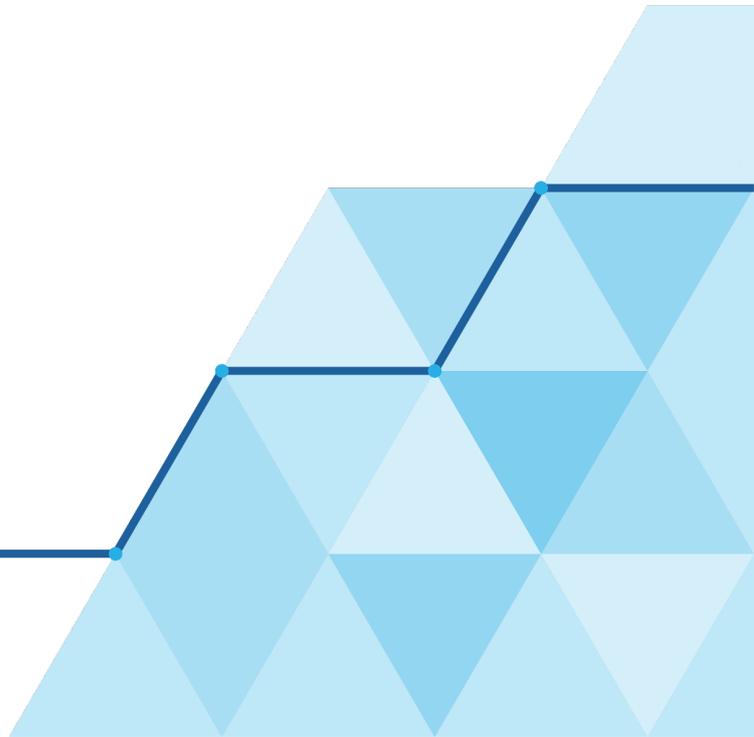


Ministry
of Justice



Framework Document between the Ministry of Justice and the Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses

December 2025



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Introduction and background

1. Purpose of document

- 1.1 This Framework Document has been drawn up by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and the Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses (The Victims' Commissioner), in accordance with HM Treasury's handbook Managing Public Money. It sets out at a high level the role of each organisation in relation to the other.
- 1.2 The Victims' Commissioner (VC) is appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice and is a statutory office holder. In line with the principles of the classification guidance, the VC has been classified as a statutory office holder organisation.
- 1.3 The VC is supported by civil servant staff led by the Chief Executive Officer of the Office of the Victims' Commissioner.
- 1.4 The Framework Document sets out the broad governance framework within which the VC and MOJ operate. It sets out the VC's core responsibilities, describes the governance and accountability framework that applies between the roles of MOJ and the VC, and sets out how the day-to-day relationship works in practice, including in relation to governance and financial matters. This Framework Document does not confer any legal powers or responsibilities and does not detail the work, or work programme, of the VC.
- 1.5 This Framework Document remains in place until a new document has been agreed and replaces it. It must be reviewed at least every three years, or where there is a significant change, and, where appropriate, revised by agreement between the VC and MOJ.
- 1.6 Copies of the document and any subsequent amendments have been placed in the libraries of both Houses of Parliament and made available to members of the public on the VC's website.

2. Statement of independence

- 2.1 The VC carries out their role in accordance with the relevant legislation to independently promote the interests of victims and witnesses.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 MOJ and the VC share the common objective of improving rights and entitlements, and access to support, for victims. In short, the VC's objectives are set out in the legislative provisions referred to in section 4.
- 3.2 To achieve this, the VC and MOJ will work together in recognition of each other's roles and areas of expertise, providing an effective environment for the VC to achieve their objectives through the promotion of partnership and trust and ensuring that the VC fulfils their statutory remit to promote the interests of victims and witnesses.

Purposes and aims

4. Purposes and powers

- 4.1 The VC is a statutory office holder. The general functions of the VC are set out in paragraph 49 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, summarised as follows:
- to promote the interests of victims and witnesses
 - to encourage good practice in the treatment of victims and witnesses
 - to keep under review the operation of the Victims' Code of Practice (Victims' Code) and make proposals to the Secretary of State for amendments to the Code (at their own initiative or at the request of MOJ)
- 4.2 The VC may, for any purpose connected with their responsibilities, undertake the following:
- make a report to the Secretary of State for Justice (a report must also be sent to the Attorney General and the Home Office)
 - make recommendations to an authority in their remit
 - consult any person they think appropriate

5. Aims

- 5.1 There are five key strategic aims of the VC:
- work with criminal justice agencies to ensure victims of crime are treated well, with a focus on treatment of victims in the court room, to help them give best evidence and enable them to cope and recover from the impact of crime
 - monitor and report on criminal justice agencies' compliance with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and the Witness Charter, identify areas that are deficient, make recommendations for change based on evidence of best practice, and improve public awareness of entitlements
 - ensure the interests of victims and witnesses are fully considered at all stages in any proposals for development and/or change to the criminal justice system and its constituent agencies, including victim support services and any related or other agencies whose activities may impact on victims
 - through regular contact with victims and practitioners of victims' services, articulate a view of the criminal justice system from the perspective of victims

and contribute to, review and challenge decisions taken by policy makers and those responsible for developing practice

- through gaining first-hand knowledge and understanding of victims' services, identify and actively promote examples of good practice and excellence

Role of the department

6. Ministerial responsibility

- 6.1 The Secretary of State for Justice is accountable to Parliament for all matters for the VC.
- 6.2 The VC has direct access to ministers to advocate in the interest of victims and witnesses, raise any issues of concern, or provide an update on performance and delivery and will hold bilateral meetings with the relevant ministers.
- 6.3 The Public Bodies Centre of Expertise and the relevant policy team should be made aware, where possible, of any contact with ministers and copied in to written correspondence. The ministers' statutory powers in respect of the VC are set out in the Domestic Violence Crime and Victims Act 2004 as amended by the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 as set out at section 142.
- 6.4 Through the exercise of these powers, the Secretary of State:
- is responsible for victims' policy within government
 - is consulted on the VC's corporate plan and business plan
 - has a power of appointment in relation to the appointment of the VC – appointments should reflect the diversity of the society in which we live, and should be made taking account of the need to appoint individuals with a balance of skills and backgrounds
- 6.5 The VC is a statutory appointment made by the Secretary of State for Justice, who must consult the Attorney General and the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Home Office) on the appointment. The appointment is by open competition and is for an initial period of three years with a maximum of two periods of tenure. Appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and must comply with the principles of the Cabinet Office Governance Code on Public Appointments.¹

7. Principal Accounting Officer

- 7.1 The Permanent Secretary of MOJ is the Principal Accounting Officer (PAO). The PAO is accountable to Parliament for the issue of any grant-in-aid to the VC.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-code-for-public-appointments

- 7.2 The accounts of the VC are consolidated within the main departmental annual report and accounts. The PAO has not appointed an accounting officer for the office of the VC. The delegated budget holder accounts to the PAO, through officials of the MOJ Chief Operating Officer's Group, for the appropriate use of resources in accordance with budgetary delegation arrangements. The responsibilities of the PAO are set out in Chapter 3 of Managing Public Money. The budget holder is expected to consult the PAO should any issue arise that engages their budget holder responsibilities in a timely fashion.
- 7.3 The PAO may delegate the exercise of their responsibilities to an appropriately senior official within the department to act as Senior Sponsor to the VC. Where these responsibilities are delegated to a Senior Sponsor, the PAO does so based on the continuing assurances provided by the Senior Sponsor, supported by the policy sponsorship team, the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise and MOJ's functions (where applicable).
- 7.4 The PAO is also responsible, supported by the Senior Sponsor and policy sponsorship team, for advising the responsible minister on:
- an appropriate framework of objectives and targets for the VC in the light of the department's wider strategic aims and priorities
 - an appropriate budget for the VC in the light of the sponsor department's overall public expenditure priorities
 - how well the VC is achieving their strategic objectives and whether they are delivering value for money through annual overview of the VC's performance by the Director General of Policy and Strategy Group
 - the exercise of the ministers' statutory responsibilities concerning the VC as outlined above
- 7.5 The PAO, supported by the Senior Sponsor, the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise team (in collaboration with the MOJ policy sponsorship team) and senior officials accountable for managing each function in MOJ (where applicable), is also responsible for ensuring arrangements are in place in order to:
- monitor the VC's activities and performance
 - in consultation with the VC and their staff, address significant problems with performance, governance or financial management, and make such interventions as are judged necessary
 - periodically, and at such frequency as is proportionate to the level of risk, carry out an assessment of the risks both to the department and the VC's objectives and activities in line with the wider departmental risk assessment process
 - inform the VC of relevant government policy in a timely manner

- in consultation with the VC and their staff, bring any ministerial or departmental concerns about the activities of the VC to the departmental board requiring explanations and assurances that appropriate action has been taken

8. The role of the sponsorship team

- 8.1 The Senior Sponsor, supported by the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise, the policy sponsorship team in MOJ and the department's functions (where applicable), is the primary contact within MOJ for the VC. The Senior Sponsor is the main source of advice to the responsible minister on the discharge of his or her responsibilities in respect of the VC. They also support the PAO on their responsibilities towards the VC. This sponsorship engagement will be guided by the principles set out in the Cabinet Office Code of Good Practice: Partnerships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies.
- 8.2 Officials of the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise, and those from the policy sponsor team in MOJ, will liaise regularly with the VC and staff to review performance against plans, achievement against targets, and expenditure against its departmental expenditure limit and annually managed expenditure allocations. These teams will also work closely together to ensure that the VC effectively carries out their functions under the Act and co-operates with MOJ in doing so.
- 8.3 The victim and witness policy team of MOJ's Policy and Strategy Group will provide policy sponsorship. They will support the PAO and Senior Sponsor in advising the Secretary of State on the engagement of the VC and their office with the department and the performance of the VC and their office in terms of outcomes. They will also liaise regularly with the VC and their office and will take the opportunity to explain wider policy developments that might have an impact on the VC. In particular they will:
- facilitate the VC's engagement and exchange of information and perspectives across MOJ and Whitehall where policy development will have an impact on victim and witness policy
 - inform the VC of wider government policy initiatives that may impact on victim and witness policy in a timely manner so that the VC can contribute constructively to consultations on the matter
 - conduct, on behalf of ministers, with the support of the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise, the annual performance review of the VC
 - maintain regular contact with the VC to ensure that there is ongoing dialogue around policy issues and other initiatives within the VC's remit

9. Resolution of disputes between the VC and MOJ

- 9.1 Any disputes between MOJ and the VC will be resolved in as timely a manner as possible. MOJ and the VC will seek to resolve any disputes through an informal process in the first instance. If this is not possible, then a formal process, overseen by the Senior Sponsor, will be used to resolve the issue. They may then choose to ask the Permanent Secretary to nominate a non-executive member of the MOJ Board to review the dispute, mediate with both sides and reach an outcome, in consultation with the Secretary of State.

10. Freedom of information requests

- 10.1 Where a request for information is received by either party under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or the Data Protection Act 2018, the party receiving the request will consult with the other party prior to any disclosure of information that may affect the other party's responsibilities.

11. Complaints and litigation

- 11.1 The VC shall provide a quarterly update to the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise on the existence of any active litigation and any threatened or reasonably anticipated litigation. The parties acknowledge the importance of ensuring that legal risks are communicated appropriately and in a timely manner.
- 11.2 In respect of each substantial piece of litigation involving the VC, the parties will agree a litigation framework which will include specific provisions to ensure appropriate and timely reporting on the status of the litigation and the protection of legally privileged information transmitted to the Senior Sponsor to facilitate this. Until such time as a framework is agreed, the parties will ensure that:
- material developments in the litigation are communicated to the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise in an appropriate and timely manner
 - legally privileged documents and information are clearly marked as such
 - individual employees handling the legally privileged documents are familiar with principles to which they must adhere to protect legal privilege
 - circulation of privileged information within government occurs only as necessary
 - where complaints are received about the VC or matters within their remit, MOJ will refer these to the VC to deal with – complaints about the personal conduct of the VC or those relating to the sponsorship or mandate of MOJ will be considered by the responsible minister, and if they decide that the complaint

should be investigated, they will appoint an independent person to investigate the issues and make recommendations about resolution

- the VC will manage any litigation arising from its operational activities and will keep the Government Legal Department informed if any proceedings are issued against the VC and of the progress of any such proceedings

VC governance and structure

12. Governance and accountability

- 12.1 The VC, and the staff within the office of the VC, shall operate corporate governance arrangements that, so far as practicable and in the light of the other provisions of this Framework Document or as otherwise may be mutually agreed, accord with good corporate governance practice and applicable regulatory requirements and expectations.
- 12.2 In particular (but without limitation) the VC and the staff within the office of the VC should:
- comply with the principles and provisions of the Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments Code of Good Practice (as amended and updated from time to time) to the extent appropriate and in line with their statutory duties or specify and explain any non-compliance in their annual report
 - comply with Managing Public Money
 - in line with Managing Public Money, have regard to the relevant functional standards as appropriate and in particular those concerning finance, commercial, security and counter fraud
 - take into account the codes of good practice and guidance set out in Annex A of this Framework Document as they apply to the VC
- 12.3 The respective MOJ function lead will engage with the VC budget holder and senior officer accountable for managing each function in the VC to develop functional plans that set out activities, processes and developments that align to the delivery of MOJ outcome priorities to required standards, meet the collective needs across the organisation, and support an inclusive vision and clear prioritisation for all those operating within these activities. The VC shall work collaboratively with MOJ's functions to align processes, systems, knowledge and career pathways.
- 12.4 The VC budget holder may provide their views on the performance of the MOJ function leads to support their continuing personal and professional development.

Annual assessment of the VC

- 12.5 The VC will be assessed once a year against the objectives for each year of the appointment. The appraisal will be conducted by the Senior Sponsor (or as delegated). The Public Bodies Centre of Expertise will support the preparation and co-ordination of the appraisal process.

VC's relationship with the media

- 12.6 As an independent office holder, the VC is free to engage with the media about their activities and participate in relevant debates and events. When dealing with the media, the VC should be guided by the principle of what is compatible with carrying out their role. It is important to remain mindful that the principles covering the use of social and other digital media are the same as those that apply for any other activity.
- 12.7 The VC will share press notices with MOJ in advance of publication and, where practicable, will forewarn MOJ of any contact with the media that they judge may become publicly contentious or on which the Secretary of State or ministers might be asked to comment. Any liaison with MOJ will not be intended to undermine the independence of the VC.
- 12.8 MOJ will, where practicable (given wider government constraints such as No 10 restrictions), forewarn the VC of any planned announcements in the media that impact on the interests of the VC and the victims they advocate for.

13. The Chief Executive Officer

- 13.1 The VC's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a civil servant and employee of MOJ and, as such, is subject to the department's employment contract. The CEO is assigned a line manager from MOJ or its associated bodies for administrative and developmental purposes. The CEO's line manager will conduct their appraisals, drawing on contributions from the VC. The CEO reports to the VC on operational matters.
- 13.2 The CEO is the main delegated budget holder for the office of the VC.
- 13.3 The CEO is responsible for managing each function in the VC and shall provide the department, via the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise and/or MOJ functional leads, with such information about VC operations, performance and capabilities as may reasonably be required. In the event of any significant concerns being identified, the MOJ functional lead will draw these to the attention of the CEO and Public Bodies Centre of Expertise.
- 13.4 The role of the VC's CEO includes:
- working with the VC to ensure the organisation complies with the principles of good governance and the requirements for the use of public funds in accordance with budgetary delegation arrangements within their office
 - working with the VC in delivering their strategic objectives and in delivering value for money

- ensuring appropriate learning and feedback mechanisms are in place
- replying to correspondence to ministers and/or providing advice
- safeguarding the funds for which they have charge and for ensuring propriety, regularity, value for money and feasibility in the handling of those funds as budget holder
- advising and briefing the VC on wide range of issues including meetings with ministers, senior judiciary and heads of criminal justice agencies
- keeping them informed of any relevant government policy in a timely manner
- making them aware of the Civil Service Code in relation to the CEO's obligations and those who work within the office of the VC

Responsibilities to MOJ

13.5 The CEO's responsibilities to MOJ, in particular the PAO, include:

- developing, consulting on and publishing the VC's strategic and business plans – these are developed independently of MOJ
- informing MOJ of progress in helping to achieve the VC's statutory function and demonstrating how resources are used to achieve those objectives
- ensuring that timely forecasts and monitoring information on performance, risk and finance are provided to MOJ
- notifying MOJ and in particular the PAO promptly if over and under spends are likely, and taking corrective action
- notifying MOJ and in particular the PAO of any significant problems, whether financial or otherwise (including legal challenge), in a timely fashion
- notifying the commercial team of any dispute with third party suppliers

14. Conduct

14.1 In addition to adhering to the Nolan Principles of Public Life (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership), the VC shall operate in accordance with the following principles:

- independence of any political partiality²
- inclusivity representing all victims and witnesses, including the most vulnerable members of our community
- transparency in the way that decisions are made, business is conducted, and the office operates

² As set out in their terms of appointment and the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies: www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies-june-2019#fn:5

- encouraging responsibility through work with all criminal justice and local agencies to ensure the voices of victims and witnesses are heard and that each organisation takes responsibility for victims and witnesses

15. Conflict resolution

- 15.1 Conflict resolution is an important part of maintaining a healthy working environment, and the options available are applicable to all grades within the Civil Service.
- 15.2 Conflict resolution can include mediation as an alternative to the formal grievance process or may form part of an action plan following formal action.

Management and financial responsibilities and controls

16. Managing Public Money and other government-wide corporate guidance and instructions

- 16.1 The CEO is the delegated budget holder for the VC and the office of the VC. The VC's CEO is delegated their budget by the Chief Financial Officer. The CEO is the senior manager for the office and has a responsibility to provide advice and support to the VC on specific aspects of the VC's operation, recruitment issues and data protection. The CEO has accountability for the VC's finances and is ultimately responsible to the Principal Accounting Officer via the Senior Sponsor.
- 16.2 Unless agreed by MOJ and, as necessary, HM Treasury, the VC and the budget holder shall follow the principles, rules, guidance and advice in Managing Public Money, referring any difficulties or potential bids for exceptions to the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise in the first instance. A list of guidance and instructions with which the budget holder should comply is at **Annex A**.

17. Spending authority

- 17.1 Once the budget has been approved by MOJ (and subject to any restrictions imposed by statute, the responsible minister's instructions, this Framework Document, HM Treasury settlement or budget/delegation letters), the VC's CEO, as budget holder, shall have authority to commit expenditure with third party suppliers as approved in the budget without further reference to MOJ, on the following conditions:
- the VC's CEO, as budget holder, shall comply with the delegations and financial transaction limits set out in the prevailing budget variation letter – these delegations shall not be altered without the prior agreement of the sponsor department and as agreed by HM Treasury and Cabinet Office as appropriate
 - the VC's CEO, as budget holder, shall comply with Managing Public Money regarding novel, contentious or repercussive proposals
 - inclusion of any planned and approved expenditure in the budget shall not remove the need to seek formal departmental approval where any proposed expenditure is outside the delegated limits or is for new schemes not previously agreed

- the VC's CEO, as budget holder, shall provide the sponsor department with such information about its operations, performance, individual projects or other expenditure as the sponsor department may reasonably require
- the oversight of expenditure against budget delegation is the responsibility of the finance business partnering team, who support the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise with this

18. Budgeting procedures

18.1 Each year, MOJ will send to the VC's CEO, as budget holder, as close to the end of the financial year as possible a formal statement of the annual budgetary provision allocated by MOJ and of any forecast income approved by MOJ, including funding from other departments, and a statement of any planned changes in policies affecting the VC. MOJ operates in line with HM Treasury guidance on managing cash and procurement, and the VC draws on these systems.

19. Annual report

19.1 Sub-section 2 of clause 3 of paragraph 49 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 stipulates that the VC must prepare and publish an annual report highlighting the work undertaken in the role during the year. The report must be sent to the Secretary of State, the Attorney General and the Home Secretary. The VC presents their annual report to the Secretary of State for Justice after the end of each financial year, and typically in July. The VC's accounts are consolidated into MOJ's accounts.

19.2 The VC will share wider draft written reports with MOJ and other relevant government departments five working days in advance of publication, or as far in advance as possible to allow for fact-checking and provide an opportunity to discuss if necessary, where practical. MOJ will reciprocate this as much as possible, subject to wider government restraints.

20. Functional leadership

20.1 MOJ may provide functional services to the VC and their office. The PAO may seek to change the precise nature of the delivery model for these functions during the lifetime of the Framework Document to support better delivery of the VC's objectives, more consistency, increased innovation and enhanced efficiency. Where significant change is proposed in the way functions are delivered, the VC and the CEO will be consulted.

21. Risk management

- 21.1 The VC will ensure that the risks it faces are dealt with in an appropriate manner, in accordance with relevant aspects of best practice in corporate governance. The VC will also develop a risk management strategy, in accordance with HM Treasury's Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (The Orange Book).³

22. Counter fraud and theft

- 22.1 The VC, via their office, should adopt and implement policies and practices to safeguard themselves against fraud and theft, in line with guidance as issued by the Counter Fraud Function, and in compliance with the procedures and considerations as set in Managing Public Money Annex 4.9.⁴ They should also take all reasonable steps to conduct due diligence checks and appraise the financial standing of any firm or other body with which they intend to enter a contract or to provide grant or grant-in-aid in order to minimise fraud risks.
- 22.2 The VC, via their office, should keep records of and prepare and forward to the department an annual report on fraud and theft suffered by the VC and notify the sponsor department of any unusual or major incidents as soon as possible. The VC should also report identified loss from fraud, bribery, corruption and error, alongside associated recoveries and prevented losses, to the Counter Fraud Centre of Expertise in line with the agreed government definitions as set out in the Counter Fraud Functional Standard.⁵

23. Commercial and contract management

- 23.1 The VC, via their budget holder, shall ensure that they operate within the delegated authorities set out in the delegation letter(s), which will include their delegated commercial authority as well as their spending authority to incur expenditure approved in the budget. They shall ensure that their procurement policies are aligned with and comply with any relevant UK Procurement Regulations, government policies and procedures or other international procurement rules.
- 23.2 The VC, via their office, shall follow the same guidance in relation to procurement as MOJ, which is available on the MOJ intranet.⁶

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/orange-book

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-functional-standard-govs-013-counter-fraud

⁵ www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-functional-standard-govs-013-counter-fraud

⁶ <https://intranet.justice.gov.uk/guidance/procurement/common-goods-services>

23.3 The VC, via their office, shall comply with the commercial standards and grants standards. These standards apply to the planning, delivery and management of government commercial activity including management of grants in all departments and arm's length bodies regardless of commercial approach used. They form part of a suite of functional standards that set expectations for management within government.⁷

24. Staff

24.1 Staff supporting the VC are civil servants on the department's employment contract. Performance management is a core business process with open, honest and frequent dialogue. An essential part of this process is defining expectations, outcomes and how these will be assessed and rewarded.

24.2 Performance expectations for staff members at Grades AA to 6 is set out in the MOJ Performance Management Policy. Reward and recognition for the VC's CEO and all their staff will be in line with the current MOJ Performance Management Policy framework.

24.3 Civil servants working within an arm's length body remain employees of their parent department. As such they are accountable to and are the responsibility of the department.

24.4 The standards of behaviour and conduct expected from civil servants are set out in the Civil Service Code of Conduct. These are:

- integrity – putting the obligations of public service above personal interests
- honesty – being truthful and open
- objectivity – basing advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence
- impartiality – acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving governments of different political parties equally well

24.5 MOJ maintains a responsibility towards its staff, whether working in the department or in an arm's length body, and ensures that appropriate support is available in areas including career development, personnel issues and corporate functions.

24.6 Where a post holder wishes to call on support for issues outside of their line management chain, they should address queries to:

- the Head of the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise for queries relating to risk or performance management

⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/commercial-operating-standards-for-government and www.gov.uk/government/publications/grants-standards

- the HR Business Partner for personnel matters
- the head of the relevant MOJ function for corporate support (for example around finance or commercial and contract queries), ensuring that the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise is made aware of the issues at the same time

Pay and conditions of service

- 24.7 The VC's staff are subject to levels of remuneration and terms and conditions of service (including pensions) within the general pay structure approved by MOJ and HM Treasury. The VC or their office has no delegated power to amend these terms and conditions.
- 24.8 Staff are eligible to join the Civil Service Pension Scheme, alpha, with the alternative to join the partnership scheme, which is a defined contribution scheme and also known as a money purchase pension, provided by a third-party provider, Legal and General. Staff are able to opt out of the pension scheme if they wish. However, under automatic enrolment legislation, departments must re-enrol all employees and workers who are not currently in a pension scheme every three years from their initial starting date.
- 24.9 Civil Service terms and conditions of service apply to the rates of pay and non-pay allowances paid to the staff and to any other party entitled to payment in respect of travel expenses or other allowances. Payment shall be made in accordance with the Civil Service Management Code and the annual Civil Service pay remit guidance, except where prior approval has been given by the department to vary such rates. Staff terms and conditions should be set out in relevant sections of the MOJ intranet.
- 24.10 The VC and staff within their office shall abide by public sector pay controls, including the relevant approvals process dependent on the organisation's classification, as detailed in the senior pay guidance and the public sector pay and terms guidance.⁸
- 24.11 The travel expenses of the VC shall be tied to the rates allowed to senior staff of the VC or departmental rates (whichever is applicable). Reasonable actual costs shall be reimbursed.

Staff recruitment

- 24.12 The VC's CEO has delegated authority to:

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-civil-service-pay-and-reward and www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-pay-and-terms-guidance-note

- recruit civil servants through the normal process abiding by MOJ and Civil Service rules on recruitment and subject to any spending control restrictions – all new staff will have security clearance and pre-employment checks
- recruit staff on loan or secondment for an agreement term from an organisation outside of MOJ – such staff will have contracts agreed with their parent organisation
- subject to their delegated authorities, ensure that the creation of any additional posts does not incur forward commitments that will exceed the ability to pay for them

24.13 The VC, via their CEO, will ensure that:

- the rules for recruitment and management of staff create an inclusive culture in which diversity is fully valued, appointment and advancement are based on merit, and there is no discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, or sexual orientation
- the VC and their office is subject to the Security Policy Framework and complies with its requirements
- the level and structure of their staffing, including grading and staff numbers, are appropriate to their functions and the requirements of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- the performance of their staff at all levels is satisfactorily appraised and the performance measurement systems are reviewed from time to time
- staff are encouraged to acquire the appropriate professional, management and other expertise necessary to achieve the VC's objectives
- proper consultation with staff takes place on key issues affecting them
- adequate grievance and disciplinary procedures are in place
- whistle-blowing procedures consistent with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 are in place

Business plans and management information

25. Strategic and business plans

- 25.1 The VC shall submit annually to MOJ a draft business plan of the year ahead. The VC will share the issues to be addressed in the plan with MOJ and the timetable for its preparation. The plan shall reflect the VC's statutory duties.
- 25.2 The business plan shall include key targets and milestones for the year immediately ahead and shall be linked to budgeting information so that resources allocated to achieve specific objectives can readily be identified by MOJ. Subject to any commercial considerations, the business plan should be published by the VC on the government's website and separately made available to the office of the VC's staff.
- 25.3 The following key matters should also be included in the plans:
- key objectives and associated key performance targets and the strategy for achieving those objectives
 - key non-financial performance targets
 - a review of performance in the preceding financial year, together with comparable outturns for the previous year and an estimate of performance in the current year
 - alternative scenarios and an assessment of the risk factors that may significantly affect the execution of the plan but that cannot be accurately forecast
 - other matters as agreed between MOJ and the VC
 - information sharing
- 25.4 MOJ will have a right of access to all office of the VC records and personnel as required to discharge the obligations of MOJ and the PAO, including sponsorship audits and operational investigations.
- 25.5 The VC and their office shall provide MOJ with such information about their operations, performance, individual projects or other expenditure as MOJ may reasonably require.
- 25.6 MOJ and HM Treasury may request the sharing of data held by the VC and their office in such a manner as set out in central guidance except insofar as it is prohibited by law. This may include requiring the appointment of a senior official to be responsible for the data sharing relationship.

26. Relationship with Parliament

Parliamentary Questions

26.1 Parliamentary Questions about the work of the VC will be sent by the Parliamentary Branch to the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise who will inform the VC and agree whether the question is about government policy or about the work or operation of the VC. If the question is about the government's policy in relation to the VC, the MOJ victim and witness policy team will draft the response. If the question is about the activities and the administration of the VC, the VC will draft the response.

Ministerial correspondence

26.2 MPs will be encouraged to write directly to the VC about specific activities and the administration of the VC. When ministers receive correspondence from MPs on these matters, they will normally ask the VC to reply (sending a copy to the Public Bodies Centre of Expertise and the MOJ victim and witness policy team). Where a minister decides to reply personally, for example, where the correspondence involves wider policy considerations, advice will be sought from the VC.

Parliamentary select committees

26.3 Where a select committee decides to take evidence on the specific activities of the VC, the VC will usually attend the select committee, or nominate a representative to attend in their stead, with support and/or attendance from staff as needed. Where a representative of the VC has been called to give evidence, ministers may also attend or require MOJ officials to attend. In all cases it is entirely at the discretion of the select committee to decide from whom they shall hear evidence. The VC may be required to give evidence to the Public Accounts Committee, normally with the PAO, on the stewardship and use of public funds by the VC.

Annex A: Compliance with government-wide corporate guidance and instructions

Corporate governance

- This Framework Document
- Corporate Governance Code for Central Government Departments (relevant to arm's length bodies) and supporting guidance:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-governance-code-for-central-government-departments-2017
- Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies
- Code of Practice for Partnerships between Departments and Arm's Length Bodies:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/partnerships-with-arms-length-bodies-code-of-good-practice

Financial management and reporting

- Managing Public Money: www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money
- Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM):
www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-financial-reporting-manual-frem
- Relevant Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) letters:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/dao-letters
- Relevant guidance and instructions issued by HM Treasury in respect of whole of government accounts: www.gov.uk/government/collections/whole-of-government-accounts
- The most recent letter setting out the delegated authorities, issued by the parent department

Management of risk

- Management of risk: www.gov.uk/government/publications/orange-book and www.gov.uk/government/publications/management-of-risk-in-government-framework
- HM Treasury approval processes for major projects above delegated limits:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/treasury-approvals-process-for-programmes-and-projects
- The government cyber-security strategy and cyber security guidance:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-cyber-strategy-2022/national-cyber-

[security-strategy-2022](#) and www.gov.uk/government/collections/cyber-security-guidance-for-business

Commercial management

- Procurement policy notes: www.gov.uk/government/collections/procurement-policy-notes
- Cabinet Office spending controls: www.gov.uk/government/collections/cabinet-office-controls
- Transparency in supply chains – a practical guide: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040283/Transparency_in_Supply_Chains_A_Practical_Guide_2017_final.pdf

Public appointments

The following are relevant where public bodies participate in public appointments processes.

- Guidance from the Commissioner for Public Appointments: <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk>
- Governance Code on Public Appointments: www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-code-for-public-appointments
- Procurement Policy Note 08/15 – Tax Arrangements of Public Appointees: www.gov.uk/government/publications/procurement-policy-note-0815-tax-arrangements-of-appointees

Staff and remuneration

- HM Treasury guidance on senior pay and reward: www.gov.uk/government/publications/senior-civil-service-pay-and-reward
- Civil Service pay guidance (updated annually): www.gov.uk/government/collections/civil-service-pay-guidance
- Public sector pay and terms: www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-pay-and-terms-guidance-note
- Whistleblowing guidance and code of practice: www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-guidance-and-code-of-practice-for-employers
- The Equalities Act 2010: www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance

General

- Freedom of Information Act guidance and instructions: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/contents and <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/>
- The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman’s Principles of Good Administration: www.ombudsman.org.uk/about-us/our-principles

- Other relevant instructions and guidance issued by the central departments (Cabinet Office and HM Treasury)
- Recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee, or by other parliamentary authority, that have been accepted by the government and are relevant to the VC
- Guidance from the public bodies team in Cabinet Office: www.gov.uk/guidance/public-bodies-reform
- The Civil Service diversity and inclusion strategy (outlines the ambition, to which arm's length bodies can contribute): www.gov.uk/government/publications/civil-service-diversity-and-inclusion-strategy-2022-to-2025
- Guidance produced by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority on management of major projects: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/infrastructure-and-projects-authority
- The Government Digital Service: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-digital-service
- The Grants Functional Standard: www.gov.uk/government/publications/grants-standards
- Code of Practice for Official Statistics: <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk>
- Accounting Officer System Statements (these are produced by departments with input from arm's length bodies): www.gov.uk/government/publications/accounting-officer-system-statements



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