

Public Service

Ombudsman

Scheme of Financial Delegation

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Date	Version	Amends	Owner of amends
August 2019	1.0	Delegate approval of minor changes to the document to the Chief Executive Review at least every two years by Board Delegation to Operations ADs for special payments up to £500	Director of Resources
September 2021	2.0	Update to job titles Updated hyper links Update to sign off arrangements for payroll Changes to Contract and Purchasing authorisation limits Amendment to authorisation limits for posts Compensation Payments made consistent with Finance Code and that they are to be reported to ARAC at the end of the Financial Year Responsibility for AME and all Banking delegated to Director of Resources Amendment to the Banking Mandate Other minor changes	Assistant Director of Finance
October 2023	3.0	Update to job titles Updated hyper links AD Finance authorisation limit amendments Amendment to post authorisation limits Removal of £250 self-authorisation for expenses Other minor changes	Assistant Director of Finance
July 2025	4.0	Replace all references to Chief Operating Officer with Director of Resources;	Assistant Director of Finance

		Remove all references to Assistant Director of ICT and Facilities; Update Special Payments under £500 to Chief of Staff; Hyperlinks updated Other minor cosmetic changes Amendment to delegation levels for contracts and purchasing Various position title changes updated	
March 2026	5.0	Replace all references to Director of Resources with Director of Strategy and Resources	Assistant Director of Finance
August 2026	6.0	Update for the organisation name change. No fundamental changes to the policy are proposed	Assistant Director of Finance

1. Introduction

The Scheme of Financial Delegation (SoFD) is a subsidiary document to the Corporate Governance Framework. The Corporate Governance Framework is maintained by the Governance team and references the SoFD. In the event of any conflict, the Corporate Governance Framework will take precedence. All financial delegation limits are managed through this document and manager's individual mandates (Annex 2).

The SoFD will be reviewed at least every two years from the date on which the previous version has been approved by the Board. Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive to make minor amendments to the SoFD, for example reference to job titles etc and other minor changes to text that do not change the underlying intention of the Scheme.

2. Procurement

All procurement must comply with the requirements of the Procurement Code. Managers are assigned limits for the ordering of goods or service based on their grade as listed in Annex 1.

All procurement must be made to cost centres within the authority of the purchasing manager and for the purposes of the organisation as defined by legislation and Parliamentary ambit. The below limits apply to both Revenue (resource) and Capital expenditure.

The following subsections distinguish between the placement of contracts and the raising of requisitions. Contracts may extend across more than one financial year and will frequently involve many deliverables ordered through the requisition process.

2.1. Contracts

Contracts for goods and services may commit us to significant expense over a period of time. These will frequently be authorised through a business case but may also be authorised by the Board through the annual budget setting process. Where a contract is extended or re-competed on similar terms to those already in place it is not necessary to produce a new business case however, all contracts should be reviewed prior to renewal to ensure continued alignment to strategic aims and that

delivery of value for money is assured. The authorisation limits for the total contract value are as set out below:

Limit	Authorised by
Up to £50,000	Assistant Director
Up to £100,000	Assistant Director of Digital for digital related contracts only. Assistant Director of Finance for all contracts.
Up to £250,000	Director
Up to £500,000	Chief Executive Officer
Above £500,000	Board

2.2. Purchasing

Requisitions must be raised for the delivery of all goods and services through the Business Central system. The requisition will be routed for authorisation by the system and when authorised, a purchase order will be raised.

Requisitions may be for 'one-off' or 'call off' orders, in the latter instance these relate to goods or services delivered over a period of time of up to one year. Call off orders should not be placed for more than one year and should not bridge financial years.

Requisitions under £5,000 do not require Assistant Director and above approval but can be made by staff authorised by their Assistant Directors and above to requisition goods and services on their behalf. The form in Annex 2 must be completed and approved by the Assistant Director of Finance. All expenditure above £5,000 requires approval as set out below:

Limit	Authorised by
Up to £5,000	Delegated from Assistant Director
Up to £50,000	Assistant Director
Up to £100,000	Assistant Director of Digital for Digital related purchases. Assistant Director of Finance.
Up to £250,000	Directors
Above £250,000*	Chief Executive Officer

**No upper limit is placed on Chief Executive's approval of requisitions. However, it should be noted that all major purchases will be subject to contracts which will have been authorised at the levels detailed in section 2.1*

3. Establishment Control

Around 80% of our expenditure is salary related and effective management of the staffing establishment is critical to financial management. Two aspects of the establishment processes require approval: the creation, deletion or amendment of posts and recruitment to vacant posts.

3.1. Posts

The creation of a new post is a significant commitment of expenditure which may persist over many years. The approval limits are:

Change	Authorised by
Amendment to one post within an existing budget	Assistant Director
Amendments to more than one post, creation of a post or any changes to posts that are out of budget	Director

Post amendments may relate to changes to a post that are expected to impact on the grade, the number of contracted hours (full or part time) or other changes that have cost implications. A change may also involve the transfer of responsibilities across posts that may result in cost changes. If there is a change to a post that has a cost implication, then both the Assistant Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of People and Talent must be consulted.

3.2. Recruitment

Recruitment to vacant posts may be approved by Assistant Directors and above. When approving a post, consideration must be given to any predicted overspends within the Directorate or in the organisation's overall budget, as well as to the necessity of the post. A predicted overspend will not preclude the approval to recruit, but unless alternative plans are in place to address the overspend, consideration should be given to deferring the recruitment.

3.3. Overtime

The use of overtime may be agreed by an Assistant Director or above within their budget. All overtime claims must be authorised by the claimant's line manager.

4. Virements

The allocation of budgets reflects the resourcing priorities determined annually by the Board. Managers may vary these allocations through the virement of budgets to ensure the priorities are delivered in the most efficient and effective way. Virements must not be made to subvert the priorities determined by the Board.

Virements between resource (revenue) budgets wholly within the authority of a budget manager may be requested without additional approval, except the virement of non-pay budget to pay.

Transfers between budget managers may be requested only with the approval of both budget managers. Transfers across Directorates also require the approval of the Assistant Director of Finance.

Where a virement may create future year's commitments, for instance the transfer of non-pay to pay, the virement requires the authority of the Assistant Director of Finance.

Virements may not be made from Revenue (resource) to Capital (or vice versa) and may not be made from budgets which are predicted to overspend.

5. Government Procurement Cards (GPC)

Government Procurement Cards (GPC) are an efficient method of purchasing low value goods and services and for ad hoc purchases (where a contract is not in place) and are the preferred method for purchasing.

Two forms of GPC cards are available for staff:

- a) For administrative staff involved in the purchasing process.
- b) For senior officers with frequent need for travel, subsistence and accommodation expenses.

Each GPC will be set with a maximum transaction limit of £1,000 and a monthly limit of £5,000. Any deviation from this must be approved by the Senior Financial Accountant or Assistant Director of Finance.

The issue of new GPC cards must be approved by either the Senior Financial Accountant or Assistant Director of Finance.

It is the responsibility of the cardholder to ensure that receipts are retained for all transactions and that these are provided to the Finance team monthly by the due date.

GPC cards should not be used for frequent repeat purchases with the same supplier; in such cases the service should be procured, and a contract put in place.

6. Expenses

All expenses claimed must be incurred on Public Service Ombudsman business and be additional to the normal costs incurred by staff in working from their normal place of business on their usual duties. Further explanation of legitimate expenses is contained in the Travel and Subsistence policy. However, staff should seek prior approval from the cost centre manager before incurring or booking travel.

All expense claims require the authorisation of the claimant's line manager.

7. Losses and Special Payments

Losses and special payments are reported annually through the Parliamentary Accountability report. As exceptional items these require appropriately senior authorisation. As a Parliamentary (non-governmental) body, HM Treasury approval is not required for special payments, however HM Treasury should be consulted on any special payments to ensure there are no unforeseen implications.

There are three forms of losses and special payments which can be anticipated and for which the delegations are:

Change	Authorised by
Write Off of Income/expenditure	Chief Executive
Compensation Payments: - up to £500 - over £500	Chief of Staff or the Head of the Ombudsman's Assurance Team Chief of Staff or Chief Executive
Settlement of Legal Claims	Chief Executive

The number and total value of losses and special payments will be reported to ARAC at the end of the financial year. Any payments over £10,000 will be reported on individually to provide ARAC with information on the reason for the payment.

8. Budget Management

All expenditure and income will be allocated to costs centres under a budget manager, with responsibility for the monitoring and management of all payments and receipts recorded on that cost centre. The budget manager is responsible for both expenditure and income incurred during the current financial year and for consideration of future expenditure and income requirements. Budget managers will be Assistant Directors or above and will annually receive a budget mandate outlining their budget and other financial responsibilities. A mandate template is included at Annex 2.

9. Capital

The Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) control total is agreed as part of the Spending Review (SR) process and modified by the Main and Supplementary Estimate process. Annually the Board will agree a capital programme allocating all or some of the CDEL total to specific schemes. Any unallocated CDEL may be allocated to existing or new schemes and the budget holder for approval purposes is the Director of Strategy and Resources.

10. Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)

Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) relates to the creation, use and write down of provisions. AME is subject to Parliamentary control totals (Resource AME & Capital AME) equivalent to Resource DEL and Capital DEL.

All planned changes to provisions require the approval of the Assistant Director of Finance.

Change	Authorised by
Create a provision	Assistant Director of Finance
Utilise a provision	Assistant Director of Finance
Write down a provision	Assistant Director of Finance

All changes to provisions impact on the AME control totals. The submission of the control totals in the Main and Supplementary Estimates are detailed in section 11 below.

11. Main Estimates and Supplementary Estimates

The Main and Supplementary Estimates processes determine the annual limits on funding available to us to undertake its services; the 'Control Totals'. The control totals for RDEL and CDEL are set in the Spending Review submission and may be amended through the estimates processes.

HM Treasury require the estimates submission to be authorised by the Accounting Officer who is the Ombudsman and as such no delegation is possible. Following submission of the estimates, HMT will respond to state the amounts to be submitted for Parliamentary approval and will seek confirmation that these match the submission of the Accounting Officer, this confirmation requires the authorisation of the Director of Strategy and Resources.

Stage	Authorised by
Submission	Accounting Officer (Ombudsman)
Confirmation	Director of Strategy and Resources

12. Annual Report & Accounts

The annual report and accounts are prepared and published by a multi-disciplinary project team for presentation to Parliament. Elements of the annual report and accounts are required to be signed by the Accounting Officer which may not be delegated. The finalised document is certified by the Auditor and Comptroller General (A&CG) of the National Audit Office (NAO) and must be laid before Parliament prior to publication.

The document requires input from a number of departments who are responsible for the content of their sections and ensuring consistency of information across all sections.

Section	Authorised by
Performance report*	Director of Strategy and Resources
Accountability report**	Director of Strategy and Resources
- Governance statement	Chief of Staff
- Remuneration report	Assistant Director of People and Talent
- Staff report	Assistant Director of People and Talent
- Sustainability report	Assistant Director of Finance
- Parliamentary accountability and audit report	Senior Financial Accountant
Financial statements	Senior Financial Accountant
Report completion	Accounting Officer

* Subsections of the performance report may be delegated further.

** The accountability report includes major subsections which are delegated as above.

The process for authorisation includes review of the accounts and NAO audit completion report by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC) who will recommend signature to the Board. The signed version will be submitted to the A&CG for certification. Any minor or typographical changes prior to certification may be approved by a director or Chief Executive.

13. BACS, Faster Payments, Direct Debits and Standing Orders

All payments to suppliers, external professional advisors and staff expenses must be made by the finance department and authorised by the Senior Financial Accountant, Finance Business Partner or Assistant Director of Finance.

Salaries and associated payments to HMRC, MyCSP and other payroll deductions are made by the payroll supplier. All such payments must be authorised by the Senior Financial Accountant, Finance Business Partner or Assistant Director of Finance.

Process	Authorised by
Payment of suppliers & other expenditure (via BACS or bank payment)	Senior Financial Accountant/Finance Business Partner/Assistant Director of Finance
Payment of salaries	Senior Financial Accountant/Finance Business Partner/Assistant Director of Finance
Payment of salary deductions	Senior Financial Accountant/ Finance Business Partner/Assistant Director of Finance

14. Cash Drawdown

Subject to the Net Cash Requirement (NCR) control total limit set in the estimates process, cash is drawn down monthly to meet our net expenditure needs. Additional amounts may be drawn with 24 hours' notice to HMT during the month to address any unpredicted cash requirements. An emergency procedure also exists to avoid an overdrawn balance situation allowing cash to be drawn during the day it is required. The authorisation limits are as below:

Stage	Authorised by
Monthly or 24 hours' notice	Senior Financial Accountant
Emergency*	Assistant Director of Finance

* The circumstances leading to an emergency drawdown will be reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

15. Financing

Financing arrangements (loans or other credit agreements) are tightly controlled by HM Treasury and are not generally available to us.

No financing arrangements should be entered into without the approval of the Executive Team with advice from HM Treasury.

16. Controls / Processes

All financial processes and their associated controls are documented in the Finance Code. Any changes to those controls require the authorisation of the Assistant Director of Finance and will be reported to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

17. Redundancy / termination

Decisions in respect of the termination of employment or redundancy costing more than £50,000 up to the level prescribed by HM Treasury (currently at £95,000) are to be authorised by the Chief Executive. Decisions in respect of redundancy costing up to £50,000 require authorisation from the Director of Strategy and Resources.

Limit	Authorised by
Up to £50,000	Director of Strategy and Resources
Above £50,000	Chief Executive

Decisions in relation to settlement agreements are to be authorised by the Chief Executive. In the absence of the Chief Executive, approval is delegated to the Director of Strategy and Resources

18. Bonuses

Bonuses include annual Performance Related Pay and ad hoc rewards for particular pieces of work. Eligibility for PRP is restricted to Directors and the Chief Executive.

Minor ad hoc bonuses may be awarded to staff from time to time subject to the annual limit imposed by HMRC [2025/26: £50] on the authorisation of an Assistant Director or above. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Director making the award to ensure that the HMRC limit is not breached. It should be noted that bonuses include cash, vouchers and physical gifts.

19. Bank accounts

All bank accounts are administered by the Finance Department. Bank accounts may only be opened or closed on the authority of the Assistant Director of Finance or Director of Strategy and Resources. The bank mandate will consist of the following:

- Director of Strategy and Resources (A signatory)
- Chief of Staff (A signatory)

- Senior Financial Accountant (B signatory)
- Finance Business Partner (B signatory)

An A and B signatory are required to amend the bank mandate.

20. Insurance

The Director of Strategy and Resources has responsibility for all insurances ensuring the adequacy of the sums insured and that value for money is achieved in the placement of policies.

No insurance policies may be taken out without the express agreement of the Director of Strategy and Resources.

Annex 1: Procurement Matrix

Annex 2: Mandate Template

Annex 1: Procurement Matrix

Post holder	Department	Unlimited	£500,000	£250,000	£100,000	£50,000	GPC Card	BACS/Bank payment Approval
Board		X (Contracts only)						
Ombudsman							X	
Chief Executive		X (Purchasing only)*	X (Contracts only)				X	
Deputy Director of Strategy & Chief of Staff	Executive Office, Governance and Strategy					X	X	X
Director of Strategy and Resources	Strategy & Resources			X				X
Assistant Director of Finance	Finance and Accommodation				X			
Executive Assistant (2 posts)	Executive Office and Governance						X	
Senior Financial Accountant	Finance							X
Finance Business Partner	Finance							X
Service Desk Manager	Digital						X	
Facilities Assistant (2 posts)	Facilities						X	
Assistant Facilities Manager London	Facilities						X	
Assistant Director of People and Talent	People and Talent					X		
Senior Manager Organisation Development	People and Talent						X	
Assistant Director of Transformation	Digital and Transformation					X		
Director of Operations, Legal and Clinical	Operations, Legal and Clinical			X				

Our values:

**Excellence****Independence****Fairness****Transparency**

Post holder	Department	Unlimited	£500,000	£250,000	£100,000	£50,000	GPC Card	BACS/Bank payment Approval
Deputy Director of Operations	Operations, Legal and Clinical					X		
Assistant Director of Intake and Resolutions	Operations, Legal and Clinical					X		
Assistant Director of Casework (3 posts)	Operations, Legal and Clinical					X		
Senior Lawyer	Legal Services					X		
Deputy Director of Legal	Legal Services					X		
Assistant Director of Digital	Digital and Transformation				X (For Digital procurement)	X		
Chief Digital and Transformation Officer	Digital and Transformation			X				
AD of Strategy, Policy and Stakeholder Engagement	Strategy					X		
AD of Communications, Public Affairs & Public Engagement	Strategy					X		
Head of Content	Communications						X	
Head of Internal Communications	Communications						X	
Shared Services Manager	Operations, Legal and Clinical						X	
Head of Outreach and Public Engagement	Strategy						X	
Solutions Architect	Digital						X	
Research Manager	Strategy						X	

Unless stated otherwise, limits of authority applies to both contracts and purchases.

Only roles named in this Matrix have delegated authority.

**No upper limit is placed on Chief Executive Officer approval of requisitions however it should be noted that all major purchases will be subject to contracts which will have been authorised at the levels detailed in section 2.1*

Annex 2: Mandate Template

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

To: *AD Finance*

This mandate formally evidences my appointment of the people named below as Purchase Authorisers up to the specified limit(s), and evidences the delegation of my authority and responsibilities to them in respect of expenditure committed under this delegation mandate to ensure that all purchases are valid and in line with the Procurement Code, Finance Code and Scheme of Financial Delegation and within agreed budget.

Financial Authority

Budget holder area:

Cost Centre(s):

I am delegating authority to commit expenditure from the above cost centre(s) to the people named below:

Name	Role in system	Limit £000	Budget code
	Requestor with auto approval up to £5K	5,000	
	Requestor with auto approval up to £5K	5,000	

Signature of Budget Holder

Name

Date

Signature of AD Finance

Name

Date