

**Partnership Agreement between the
Department for the Economy and the Health
and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland**

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Introduction

1. The Partnership Agreement

1.1 This document has been drawn up by the Department for the Economy (hereafter “DfE”) in consultation with the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (hereafter HSENI). The document sets out the partnership arrangements between HSENI and its sponsor department DfE. In particular, it explains the overall governance framework within which HSENI operates, including the framework through which the necessary assurances are provided to stakeholders. Roles/responsibilities of partners within the overall governance framework are also outlined.

1.2 The partnership is based on a mutual understanding of strategic aims and objectives; clear accountability; and a recognition of the distinct roles each party contributes. Underpinning the arrangements are the principles set out in the NI Code of Good Practice **‘Partnerships between Departments and Arm’s Length Bodies’** which should be read in conjunction with this document. The principles which are laid out in the Code are:

LEADERSHIP
<i>Partnerships work well when Departments and Arm’s Length Bodies demonstrate good leadership to achieve a shared vision and effective delivery of public services. Strong leadership will provide inspiration, instil confidence, and trust and empower their respective teams to deliver good outcomes for citizens.</i>
PURPOSE
<i>Partnerships work well when the purpose, objectives and roles of Arm’s Length Bodies and the sponsor department are clear, mutually understood and reviewed on a regular basis. There needs to be absolute clarity about lines of accountability and responsibility between departments and Arm’s Length Bodies. In exercising statutory functions Arm’s Length Bodies need to have clarity about how their purpose and objectives align with those of departments.</i>

ASSURANCE

Partnerships work well when departments adopt a proportionate approach to assurance, based on Arm's Length Bodies' purpose and a mutual understanding of risk. Arm's Length Bodies should have robust governance arrangements in place and in turn departments should give Arm's Length Bodies the autonomy to deliver effectively. Management information should be what is needed to enable departments and Arm's Length Bodies to provide assurance and assess performance.

VALUE

Partnerships work well when departments and Arm's Length Bodies share knowledge, skills and experience in order to enhance their impact and delivery. Arm's Length Bodies are able to contribute to policy making and departmental priorities. There is a focus on innovation, and on how departments and Arm's Length Bodies work together to deliver the most effective policies and services for its customers.

ENGAGEMENT

Partnerships work well when relationships between departments and Arm's Length Bodies are open, honest, constructive and based on trust. There is mutual understanding about each other's objectives and clear expectations about the terms of engagement.

A full copy of the NI Code can be found at **Annex 8**.

- 1.3 This document should be read in conjunction with guidance on proportionate autonomy which provides an outline of the principles and characteristics for proportionate autonomy. Guidance on proportionate autonomy has been considered in determining the extent of engagement and assurance to be established between HSENI and DfE and this is reflected in this agreement.
- 1.4 A copy of this Agreement with HSENI should be given to all newly appointed Board Members, HSENI senior management staff and departmental sponsor staff on appointment. Additionally, the Agreement should be tabled for the information of Board Members at least annually at a full meeting of the Board. Amendments made to this Agreement should also be brought to the attention of the full Board on a timely basis.
- 1.5 Subject to the legislation noted below, this Partnership Agreement sets out the broad framework within which HSENI will operate, in particular:

- HSENI's overall aims, objectives and targets in support of the Department's wider strategic aim[s] and the outcomes and targets contained in its current Programme for Government Commitments.
- The rules and guidelines relevant to the exercise of the HSENI's functions, duties, and powers.
- The conditions under which any public funds are paid to HSENI.
- How HSENI is to be held to account for its performance.

1.6 HSENI's mission:

From 2018 - 2023 HSENI's mission has been: Working with others, to reduce work-related serious injury and ill health in Northern Ireland.

This mission will focus on:

- preventing the most serious workplace health and safety issues;
- high risk industries and activities;
- sensible and proportionate risk management;
- effective regulation; and
- supporting businesses and the economy.

1.7 DfE and HSENI are committed to:

- Working together within distinct roles and responsibilities;
- Maintaining focus on successful delivery of HSENI's priorities, the Programme for Government outcomes and Ministerial priorities;
- Maintaining open and honest communication and dialogue;
- Keeping each other informed of any issues and concerns, and of emerging areas of risk;
- Supporting and challenging each other on developing policy and delivery;
- Seeking to resolve issues quickly and constructively; and
- Always acting in the public interest and in line with the values of integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality.

1.8 HSENI, the Department or the Minister, may propose amendments to this document at any time. Any such proposals by the HSENI shall be considered in the light of evolving departmental policy aims, operational factors and the track record of HSENI itself.

- 1.9 The Department shall determine what changes, if any, are to be incorporated in the document. Legislative provisions shall take precedence over any part of the document. Significant variations to the document shall be cleared with Department of Finance (hereafter DoF), after consultation with HSENI, as appropriate. (The definition of "significant" will be determined by the Department in consultation with DoF).
- 1.10 The effectiveness of the partnership and the associated Engagement Plan will be reviewed each year by the Department and HSENI to assess whether the partnership is operating as intended and to identify any emerging issues/opportunities for enhancement. This can be carried out as part of existing governance arrangements. The Partnership Agreement document itself will be reviewed formally at least once every three years to ensure it remains fit for purpose and up to date in terms of current governance frameworks. The formal review will be proportionate to HSENI's size and overall responsibilities and will be published on departmental and HSENI websites as soon as practicable following completion.
- 1.11 A copy of this agreement has been placed in the Assembly Library and is available on both DfE and HSENI websites.

HSENI Establishment and Purpose

2. Statutory Purpose and Strategic Objectives

2.1 HSENI is the lead body responsible for promoting and enforcing health and safety at work standards in Northern Ireland and was established under Article 12 of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 [the Order] as amended by the Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. HSENI is a non-departmental body with Crown status. For national accounts purposes HSENI is classified to the central government sector.

2.2 The Order gives the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland the following:

Functions:

The functions of HSENI are defined in the Order and its subordinate instruments. Under these provisions its functions include:

- generally promoting health and safety at work and issuing guidance;
- arranging for the provision of health and safety information and advice;
- enforcing the provisions of the health and safety legislation;
- submit to DfE proposals to maintain an up-to-date health and safety regulatory framework which includes EU Directives; and
- in accordance with proposals approved by the Department make such arrangements as it considers appropriate for the carrying out of and publication of research and encourage research and provision of training and information in that connection by others.

Duties:

- The responsibility to control risk is placed upon those who create it, mainly employers, but also the self-employed, supplier's designers etc. HSENI is there to inform, stimulate, guide, and where necessary, compel those with duties of care, and others concerned with health and safety at work, in actions leading to higher standards.

- HSENI's business is to ensure that risks to people's health and safety from work activity are properly controlled, in ways that are proportionate to risk, allow for technological progress and pay due regard to costs as well as benefits; and in all that it does, seek to promote better management of health and safety at work.
- In effect, HSENI, subject to a Minister responsible for DfE, HSENI's parent Department, has primary responsibility under the Order for the regulation of health and safety at work in Northern Ireland. In principle this involves ensuring compliance with the necessary laws, guidance and standards. It also involves undertaking other forms of activity, including the provision of information and advice and the promotion of good health and safety practice.

Powers:

HSENI's powers of action include:

- approving and issuing codes of practice, with the consent of DfE, subject to consultation with appropriate Government Departments and other bodies. These are known as "Approved Codes of Practice";
- making Agency agreements with Government Departments or others for them to perform functions on HSENI's behalf; and with any Minister, Government Department, or other public authority for HSENI to perform functions on their behalf (subject to those functions being, in the opinion of DfE, appropriate to HSENI's responsibilities);
- proposing and keeping under review, arrangements for the allocation of enforcement responsibility as between HSENI and other enforcing bodies with the aim of ensuring satisfactory and consistent standards; and
- investigating accidents or other matters and, subject to regulations made by the Department, directing inquiries to be held.

HSENI has specific responsibility under the Order to make adequate arrangements for enforcement of the relevant statutory provisions and has the power to appoint inspectors, whose powers are defined in the Order.

HSENI is the enforcing authority for health and safety in a range of work situations including:

- Manufacturing.
- Schools and universities.
- Chemical plants.
- Hospitals and nursing homes.
- Construction.
- Disciplined services.
- Transport.
- District councils.
- Gas supply and distribution.
- Government departments.
- Agriculture.
- Fairgrounds.
- Mines and quarries.

2.3 For policy/administrative purposes HSENI is classified as an executive non-departmental public body with Crown Status.

2.4 The Minister for the Economy is answerable to the Assembly for the overall performance and delivery of both DfE and HSENI.

2.5 The Executive's approach to delivery recognises the importance of arm's length bodies and departments working collaboratively and together in a joined-up approach to improve overall outcomes.

2.6 To that end there is strategic alignment between the aims and objectives of HSENI and DfE.

2.7 The work of HSENI helps the government meet the population indicator 'preventable mortality' on Outcome 4 of the Draft Programme for Government, 'We enjoy long, healthy, active lives'.

HSENI Governance Arrangements

3. Organisational Status

- 3.1 HSENI is a legal entity in its own right, employing its own staff and operating at arm's-length from the Department. As a legal entity it must comply with all associated legislation including legislation relating to its employer status.

4. Governance Framework

- 4.1 HSENI has an established Corporate Governance Framework which reflects all relevant good practice guidance. The framework includes the governance structures established within HSENI and the internal control and risk management arrangements in place. This includes its Board and Committee Structure. The Department should be satisfied with the framework.
- 4.2 An account of this is included in HSENI's annual Governance Statement together with the HSENI Board's assessment of its compliance with the extant Corporate Governance Code of Good Practice (NI). Any departure from the Corporate Governance Code must be explained in the Governance Statement. The extant Corporate Governance Code of Good Practice (NI) is available on the DoF website.
- 4.3 HSENI is required to follow the principles, rules, guidance and advice in [Managing Public Money Northern Ireland](#). A list of other applicable guidance and instructions which HSENI is required to follow is set out in **Annex 6**. Good governance should also include positive stakeholder engagement, the building of positive relationships and a listening and learning culture.

5. HSENI Board

- 5.1 HSENI is led by a non-executive Board, members of which are appointed by the Minister for the Economy. The appointment process for non-executive Board members complies with the Code of Practice on Public Appointments for Northern Ireland (CPANI).

HSENI's Board is constituted in accordance with Article 12 of the Order and will consist of a chairman appointed by the DfE Minister and will have not less than six nor more than nine other members similarly appointed.

As per Article 12 of the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, HSENI's Board may regulate its own procedure and business including its quorum. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1978/1039>.

- 5.2 As Public Appointees Board members are office holders rather than employees, they are not subject to employee terms and conditions. Board appraisal arrangements are set out in paras **15.1 and 15.2** and matters for consideration in dealing with concerns/complaints in respect of Board members are provided in **Annex 5**.
- 5.3 The purpose of the HSENI Board is to provide effective leadership and strategic direction to the organisation and to ensure that the policies and priorities set by the Minister for the Economy are implemented. It is responsible for ensuring that the organisation has effective and proportionate governance arrangements in place and an internal control framework which allow risks to be effectively identified and managed. The Board will set the culture and values of the organisation and set the tone for the organisation's engagement with stakeholders and customers.
- 5.4 The Code of Conduct for Board Members provide further detail on roles and responsibilities and should align closely with this Partnership Agreement. The Code of Conduct of Board Members of Public Bodies was drawn up by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) in 2014.
- 5.5 The Board is responsible for holding the Chief Executive to account for the management of the organisation and the delivery of agreed plans and outcomes. The Board should also however support the Chief Executive as appropriate in the exercise of their duties.
- 5.6 Board members act solely in the interests of HSENI and must not use the Board as a platform to champion their own interests or pursue personal agendas. They

occupy a position of trust, and their standards of action and behaviour must be exemplary and in line with the seven principles of public life (Nolan principles). HSENI has a Board Code of Conduct and there are mechanisms in place to deal with any Board disputes/conflicts to ensure they do not become wider issues that impact on the effectiveness of the Board. A Board Register of Interests is maintained, kept up to date and is publicly available to help provide transparency and promote public confidence in HSENI.

5.7 Communication and relationships within the Board are underpinned by a spirit of trust and professional respect. The Board recognises that using consensus to avoid conflict or encouraging members to consistently express similar views or consider only a few alternative views does not encourage constructive debate and does not give rise to an effective Board dynamic.

5.8 It is for the Board to decide what information it needs, and in what format, for its meetings/effective operation. If the Board is not confident that it is being fully informed about the organisation this will be addressed by the Chair of the Board as the Board cannot be effective with out-of-date or partial knowledge.

5.9 In order to fulfil their duties, Board members must undertake initial training, and regular ongoing training and development. Review of Board skills and development will be a key part of biennial reviews of Board effectiveness.

6. Audit and Risk Management Committee

6.1 A further important aspect of HSENI's governance framework is its Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC), established in line with the extant [Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook \(NI\)](#).

6.2 The ARMC's purpose/role is to support the Accounting Officer and Board on governance issues. In line with the handbook the ARMC focuses on:

- assurance arrangements over governance; financial reporting; annual reports and accounts, including the Governance Statement; and
- ensuring there is an adequate and effective risk management and assurance framework in place.

6.3 HSENI and DfE have agreed arrangements in respect of Audit and Risk Assurance Committees which may include:

- attendance by departmental representatives in an observer capacity at HSENI's ARMC meetings;
- Access to HSENI ARMC papers and minutes; and
- Any input required from HSENI's ARMC to the departmental Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

6.4 Full compliance with the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) is an essential requirement. In the event of significant non-compliance with the handbook's five good practice principles (or other non-compliance) discussion will be required with the Department and a full explanation provided in the annual Governance Statement.

6.5 The extant Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook (NI) is available on the DoF website.

7. HSENI Chair

7.1 The Chair is responsible for setting the agenda and managing the Board to enable collaborative and robust discussion of issues. The Chair's role is to develop and motivate the Board and ensure effective relationships in order that the Board can work collaboratively to reach a consensus on decisions. To achieve this, they should ensure:

- The Board has an appropriate balance of skills appropriate to its business;
- Board members are fully briefed on terms of appointment, duties, rights and responsibilities;
- Board members receive and maintain appropriate training;
- The Minister and Department is advised of HSENI's needs when board vacancies arise;
- There is a Code of Practice for Board Members in place setting out the roles and responsibilities of the Board in line with relevant guidance; and
- There is a code of conduct for Board members in place, consistent with relevant guidance.

7.2 The role also requires the establishment of an effective working relationship with the Chief Executive that is simultaneously collaborative and challenging. It is important that the Chair and Chief Executive act in accordance with their distinct roles and responsibilities as laid out in *Managing Public Money* and their appointment letters.

7.3 The Chair has a presence in the organisation and cultivates external relationships which provide useful links for the organisation while being mindful of overstepping boundaries and becoming too involved in day-to-day operations or executive activities.

8. HSENI Chief Executive

8.1 The role of the HSENI Chief Executive is to run HSENI's business. The Chief Executive is responsible for all executive management matters affecting the organisation and for leadership of the executive management team.

8.2 The Chief Executive is designated as HSENI Accounting Officer by the departmental Accounting Officer (**see section 12**). As Accounting Officer, they are responsible for safeguarding the public funds in their charge and ensuring they are applied only to the purposes for which they were voted and more generally for efficient and economical administration.

8.3 The Chief Executive is accountable to the Board for HSENI's performance and delivery of outcomes and targets and is responsible for implementing the decisions of the Board and its Committees. They maintain a dialogue with the Chair on the important strategic issues facing the organisation and for proposing Board agendas to the Chair to reflect these. They ensure effective communication with stakeholders and communication on this to the Board. They also ensure that the Chair is alerted to forthcoming complex, contentious or sensitive issues, including risks affecting the organisation.

8.4 The Chief Executive acts as a role model to other executives by exhibiting open support for the Chair and Board members and the contribution they make. The Chair and Chief Executive have agreed how they will work together in practice,

understanding and respecting each other's role, including the Chief Executive's responsibility as Accounting Officer.

8.5 Further detail on the role and responsibilities of the Chief Executive are as laid out in [Managing Public Money NI](#) and their Accounting Officer appointment letter.

8.6 The Chief Executive's role as Principal Officer for Ombudsman Cases - The Chief Executive is the Principal Officer for handling cases involving the NI Public Sector Ombudsman. They shall advise the departmental Accounting Officer of any complaints about HSENI accepted by the Ombudsman for investigation, and about the proposed response to any subsequent recommendations from the Ombudsman.

Role of the DfE

9. Partnership Working with HSENI

- 9.1 DfE and HSENI are part of a total delivery system, within the same Ministerial portfolio. The partnership between DfE and HSENI is open, honest, constructive, and based on trust. There is mutual understanding of each other's objectives and clear expectations on the terms of engagement.
- 9.2 In exercising its functions HSENI has absolute clarity on how its purpose and objectives align with those of DfE whilst understanding that HSENI must exercise independence in its role as an enforcement body which can include taking enforcement action against other government departments. There is also a shared understanding of the risks that may impact on each other, and these are reflected in respective Risk Registers.
- 9.3 There is a regular exchange of skills and experience between DfE and HSENI and where possible joint programme/project delivery boards/arrangements. HSENI may also be involved as a partner in policy/strategy development and provides advice on policy implementation and/or the impact of policies in practice.
- 9.4 DoF has established, on behalf of the Assembly, a delegated authority framework which sets out the circumstances where prior DoF approval is required before expenditure can be occurred, or commitments entered into. The Accounting Officer of DfE has established an internal framework of delegated authority for the Department and its ALBs which apply to HSENI. Other specific approval requirements established in respect of HSENI are set out at **Annex 3**.
- 9.5 Once HSENI's budget has been approved by DfE [and subject to any restrictions imposed by statute] HSENI shall have authority to incur expenditure approved in the budget without further reference to the Department. Inclusion of any planned and approved expenditure in the budget shall not however remove the need to seek formal departmental approval where proposed expenditure is outside the delegated limits (as laid out in **Annex 3**) or is for new schemes not previously agreed. Nor does it negate the need to follow due processes laid out in guidance

contained in Managing Public Money NI and the [Better Business Cases NI](#) Guidance.

10. Lead Official

10.1 DfE has appointed a lead senior official at Grade 5 level to manage the relationship with HSENI and ensure effective partnership working. Engagement between the Department and HSENI will be co-ordinated, collaborative, and consistent. A clear sense of collaboration and partnership will be communicated to staff in both the Department and HSENI to promote mutual understanding and support. The Lead Official is supported in managing the relationship with HSENI by the Better Business and Finance Branches.

10.2 The Lead Official is the policy lead for the policy area relating to HSENI's business and has a clear understanding of HSENI's responsibilities for policy implementation/operational delivery and the relevant audiences/stakeholders involved.

10.3 The Lead Official will ensure that where there are departmental staff changes, time is taken to ensure they have a full understanding of HSENI's business and challenges.

11. Annual Engagement Plan

11.1 A draft Annual Engagement Plan (**Annex 2**) will set out the timing and nature of engagement between HSENI and the Department. The engagement plan will be specific to HSENI and should not stray into operational oversight.

11.2 Engagement between the Department's Lead Official/their teams and HSENI will be centred on partnership working, understanding of shared risks, and working together on business developments that align with policy objectives.

11.3 In line with relevant guidance¹, HSENI will work in collaboration and partnership with the Department to prepare corporate and business plans. There should be good high level strategic alignment between departmental and HSENI plans.

¹ Guidance issued by TEO on NICS Work Programme which includes guidance on business planning for an outcomes based PfG/ODP

Once approved it will be the Board of HSENI that primarily holds the Chief Executive to account for delivery and performance. The Department will engage with HSENI on areas of strategic interest, linking departmental policy and HSENI delivery of policy intent. HSENI's annual Operating Plan will be approved by the Department.

11.4 The Annual Engagement Plan will also reference the agreed management and financial information to be shared over the course of a year. The aim will be to ensure clear understanding of why information is necessary and how it will be used. Where the same, or similar information is required for internal governance information requirements will be aligned so that a single report can be used for both purposes. In addition, the engagement plan should consider opportunities for learning and development, growth and actions which could help achieve better outcomes.

12. Departmental Accounting Officer

12.1 The departmental Accounting Officer is accountable to the NI Assembly for the issue of grant in aid to HSENI. They have designated the Chief Executive of HSENI as HSENI Accounting Officer and respective responsibilities of the departmental Accounting Officer and the HSENI Accounting Officer are set out in Chapter 3 of Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

[Managing Public Money NI - Chapter 3 and associated annex | Department of Finance \(finance-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

The departmental Accounting Officer may withdraw the HSENI Accounting Officer designation if they conclude that the HSENI Accounting Officer is no longer a fit person to carry out the responsibilities of an Accounting Officer or that it is otherwise in the public interest that the designation be withdrawn. In such circumstances the HSENI Board will be given a full account of the reasons for withdrawal and a chance to make representations. Withdrawal of HSENI Accounting Officer status would bring into question employment as Chief Executive and the Chair should engage with the Department should such circumstances arise.

12.2 As outlined in **section 8**, the HSENI Chief Executive is accountable to the HSENI Board for their stewardship of HSENI. This includes advising the Board on matters of financial propriety, regularity, prudent and economical administration, efficiency, and effectiveness.

12.3 The departmental Accounting Officer must be informed if the judgement of the HSENI Accounting Officer (on matters for which they are responsible) is overridden by the HSENI Board. The HSENI Accounting Officer must also act if the HSENI Board is contemplating a course that would infringe the requirement for financial propriety, regularity, prudent and economical administration, efficiency or effectiveness. In all other regards, the departmental Accounting Officer has no day-to-day involvement with HSENI or its Chief Executive.

12.4 In line with DoF requirements, the HSENI Accounting Officer will provide a quarterly declaration of fitness to act as Accounting Officer to the departmental Accounting Officer and will be included as part of existing stewardship reporting arrangements discussed at Departmental Partnership meetings.

13. Attendance at Public Accounts Committee

13.1 The HSENI Chief Executive/Accounting Officer may be summoned to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to give evidence on the discharge of their responsibilities as Accounting Officer (as laid out in their Accounting Officer appointment letter) on issues arising from the C&AG's studies or reports following the annual audit of accounts.

13.2 The Chair may also, on occasion, be called to give evidence to the Public Accounts Committee on such relevant issues arising within the C&AG's studies or reports, in relation to the role and actions taken by the Board, where appropriate.

13.3 In addition, the DfE Accounting Officer may be summoned to appear before the Public Accounts Committee to give evidence on the discharge of their responsibilities as departmental Accounting Officer with overarching responsibility for HSENI. In such circumstances, the departmental Accounting

Officer may therefore expect to be questioned on their responsibilities to ensure that:

- there is a clear strategic control framework for HSENI;
- sufficient and appropriate management and financial controls are in place to safeguard public funds;
- the nominated Accounting Officer is fit to discharge their responsibilities;
- there is suitable internal audit arrangements;
- accounts are prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and any accounting direction; and
- intervention is made, where necessary, in situations where the HSENI Accounting Officer's advice on transactions in relation to regularity, propriety or value for money is overruled by the body's Board or its Chair.

Assurance Framework

14. Autonomy and Proportionality

14.1 DfE will ensure that HSENI has the autonomy to deliver effectively, recognising its status as a separate legal entity which has its own Board and governance arrangements. Guidance on proportionate autonomy has been considered in determining the extent of engagement and assurance established between HSENI and the DfE and is reflected in this agreement.

14.2 A proportionate approach to assurance will be taken based on HSENI's overall purpose, business and budget and a mutual understanding of risk. The approach will include an agreed process through which the HSENI Accounting Officer provides written assurance to the Department that the public funds and organisational assets for which they are personally responsible are safeguarded, have been managed with propriety and regularity, and use of public funds represents value for money.

14.3 Recognising the governance arrangements in place within the organisation, the HSENI Accounting Officer will arrange for their written assurance to be discussed at the HSENI Audit and Risk Management Committee and presented to the HSENI Board prior to submission to the Department where possible. If not possible, or practicable, the Chair of the HSENI Board should have sight of the assurance statement, prior to being submitted to the Department.

14.4 The HSENI Chair will provide written confirmation that the HSENI Accounting Officer's formal assurance has been considered by the Board and is reflective of HSENI's current position.

14.5 In addition to the HSENI Accounting Officer's written assurance, the Department will take assurance from the following key aspects of HSENI's own governance framework:

- Annual Review of Board Effectiveness.
- Completion of Board Appraisals which confirm Board member effectiveness.

- Internal Audit assurance and External Quality Assessment of the Internal Audit function.
- Externally audited Annual Report and Accounts, reviewed/considered by the HSENI Audit and Risk Management Committee.

15. Board Effectiveness

15.1 The HSENI Chair will ensure that the HSENI Board undertakes annual reviews of Board Effectiveness² that encompasses committees established by the Board.

15.2 The Chair will discuss the outcome of the annual reviews of Board Effectiveness with the Grade 5 Lead Official of the sponsor branch to ensure a partnership approach to any improvements identified. This will inform the annual programme of Board training/development and discussions in respect of Board composition and succession.

15.3 In line with the parameters set out in the Health and Safety at Work Order 1978 12(2) (a/b/c), the Chair in conjunction with the Department, and Minister where appropriate, will consider the size and composition of the HSENI Board, proportionate to the size and complexity of HSENI and keep this under review.

15.4 In addition to the annual review of Board Effectiveness HSENI will undertake an externally facilitated review of Board effectiveness at least once every three years covering the performance of the Board, its committees and individual Board members. The Chair will liaise with the Department to identify a suitably skilled facilitator for the external review (this can be a peer review and should be proportionate) and will share the findings/outcome report with the Department on completion of the review.

16. Board Appraisals

16.1 The Chair of the HSENI Board will conduct an annual appraisal in respect of each Board member which will also inform the annual programme of Board training/development. The Chair will engage with the Chief Executive/Lead Official as

² NIAO Good Practice Guide on Board Effectiveness

appropriate on improvements identified through the appraisal process and the annual training/development programme.

16.2 The Chair's annual appraisal will be completed by the Lead Official Grade 5 within the Department. The appraisal will take account of the Key Characteristics of a good chairperson (particularly for the Chair to have well developed interpersonal skills) set out in the NIAO Good Practice Guide on Board Effectiveness.

[Board Effectiveness - A Good Practice Guide | Northern Ireland Audit Office \(niauditoffice.gov.uk\)](https://niauditoffice.gov.uk)

There will be close engagement between the Chair and the Lead Official on improvements identified through the appraisal process.

17. Internal Audit Assurance

17.1 HSENI is required to establish and maintain arrangements for an internal audit function that operates in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). DfE must be satisfied with the competence and qualifications of the Head of Internal Audit and that the requirements for approving appointments are in accordance with PSIAS.

17.2 HSENI will provide its internal audit strategy, periodic audit plans and annual audit report, including the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on risk management, control and governance to the Department. HSENI will ensure the DfE's internal audit team have complete right of access to all relevant records. This applies whether the internal audit function is provided in-house or is contracted out.

17.3 HSENI will ensure regular, periodic self-assessments of the internal audit function in line with PSIAS and will share these with the Department. HSENI will also liaise with the Department on the External Quality Assessment (EQA) of the internal audit function which (in line with PSIAS) is required to be conducted in the first year of any contract awarded to any new provider.

17.4 HSENI will alert the Department to any less than satisfactory audit reports at the earliest opportunity on an ongoing basis. HSENI will also alert the Department to

a less than satisfactory annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit at the earliest opportunity. HSENI and the Department will then engage closely on actions required to address the less than satisfactory opinion in order to move HSENI to a satisfactory position as soon as possible.

17.5 The Department will take assurance from the fact that HSENI has met the requirements of PSIAS and has a satisfactory annual opinion from the Head of Internal Audit as part of its overall assurance assessment.

18. Externally Audited Annual Report and Accounts

18.1 HSENI is required to prepare an Annual Report and Accounts in line with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance (DoF) and the specific Accounts Direction issued by DfE, and in accordance with the deadlines specified.

18.2 The Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) will arrange to audit HSENI's annual accounts and will issue an independent opinion on the accounts. The C&AG passes the accounts to HSENI who shall lay them before the NI Assembly together with HSENI's annual report.

18.3 The C&AG will also provide a Report to Those Charged with Governance (RTTCWG) to HSENI which will be shared with the Department.

18.4 HSENI will alert the Department to any likely qualification of the accounts at the earliest opportunity. In the event of a qualified audit opinion or significant issues reported in the RTTCWG the Department will engage with HSENI on actions required to address the qualification/significant issues.

18.5 The Department will take assurance from the external audit process and an unqualified position as part of its overall assurance assessment.

18.6 The C&AG may carry out examinations into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which HSENI has used its resources in discharging its functions. The C&AG may also carry out thematic examinations that encompass the functions of HSENI.

18.7 For the purpose of audit and any other examinations, the C&AG has statutory access to documents as provided for under Articles 3 and 4 of the Audit and Accountability (Northern Ireland) Order 2003.

18.8 Where making payment of a grant, or drawing up a contract, HSENI should ensure that it includes a clause which makes the grant or contract conditional upon the recipient or contractor providing access to the C&AG in relation to documents relevant to the transaction. Where subcontractors are likely to be involved, it should also be made clear that the requirements extend to them.

Signatories

HSENI and the DfE agree to work in partnership with each other in line with the NI Code of Good Practice ***‘Partnerships between Departments and Arm’s Length Bodies’*** and the arrangements set out in this Agreement.

DoF Supply will approve the initial Partnership Agreement between HSENI and the DfE and any subsequent variations to the Agreement if they are significant.

Signed (HSENI Chair)

Date

Signed (HSENI Chief Executive)

Date

Signed (Department – (Senior Lead Official)

Date

Annex 1 - Applicable Legislation

List the founding legislation and other key statutes which provide HSENI with its statutory functions, duties, and powers.

1. Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978.
2. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.

Annex 2 – Annual Engagement Plan

Good engagement is one of the key principles in the Partnership Code, underpinning the other principles of: Leadership; Purpose; Assurance; and Value.

As laid out in the Code, partnerships work well when relationships between departments and HSENI are open, transparent, honest, constructive, and based on trust and when there is mutual understanding of each other’s objectives and clear expectations about the terms of engagement.

The template provided outlines the key areas of engagement between Departments and HSENI. The template is not intended to be prescriptive and should be completed collaboratively and agreed between the Department and HSENI.

Annual Engagement Plan		
Policy Development and Delivery		
Policy Area	Frequency/Timing	Lead Departmental/HSENI Officials
EU Exit	As necessary	Departmental Grade 5 and HSENI Assistant Chief Executive
Strategic Planning		
Activity	Date	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
HSENI Strategic Planning – encompassing strategic planning and risk identification. Informed by input on departmental priorities/plans and risk areas	6 months in advance of the Business Year to inform development of the Business Plan for the year ahead.	Not attended by departmental officials but the Department will have to approve the Corporate and Operating plans before they are finalised. Risk identification is discussed with departmental officials (G3 and G5 at quarterly Departmental Partnership meetings).
Engagement on the draft Business Plan and identification of areas of	No later than 4 months in advance of the business year	Discussed with departmental officials (G3 and G5 at

strategic interest to the Department to inform further scheduled engagement during the year		quarterly Departmental Partnership meetings).
Submission/presentation of the HSENI Business Plan	This should happen April/ May of each year following approval by Board (at April Board meeting) before going to Dept.	Corporate Support Group will submit to Department Permanent Secretary via Grade 5 and 3 in the Department.
Approval of the HSENI Business Plan	This should happen as early as possible in the financial year.	Department Permanent Secretary
Engagement on areas of strategic interest iro the HSENI Business Plan during the year	Quarterly Departmental Partnership meetings	Discussed with departmental officials (G3 and G5 at quarterly Departmental Partnership meetings).
Joint Working		
Activity	Frequency/Timing	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
None currently		
Board Appointments		
Activity	Date	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
Competition for new Chair to be launched in October. Competition Initiation Meeting was held with PAU, the Department and CPANI Rep.	Competition launched October 2023. Competition Initiation Meeting 19 th October 2023. Consultation process launch November 2023. Post to be advertised November 2023.	Departmental Grade 5 and HSENI Board Chair. Interview panel members will be Departmental Grade 5, Better Business Branch Grade 7 and representative appointed by CPANI. CPANI appointed representative was Joan Ballantine from Ulster University.

	<p>Interviews to be held February 2024.</p> <p>New Chair to take up post 1st April 2024.</p>	
<p>Sponsor Branch have completed an exercise to extend all the current Panel Member appointments to 31st March 2024.</p> <p>Responsibility for this Appeals Tribunal function will be transferred to the Department of Justice to take effect from 1st April 2024.</p>	<p>Completed March 2022.</p> <p>Due completion 1st April 2024.</p>	Departmental Grade 5
Chief Executive Recruitment		
Activity	Date	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
N/A at this time.		

Assurances		
Action	Date	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
<p>Departmental Partnership Meetings</p> <p>Departmental Partnership meetings are planned and scheduled by departmental Sponsor Branch staff and are held in Adelaide House.</p>	<p>Meetings are held 3 times per year typically during February, June, and October.</p>	<p>Department officials at G3 and G5 attend as well as 2 representatives from the Sponsor Branch.</p> <p>HSENI are represented at meetings by Chief Executive, members of senior management team and the HSENI Board Chair.</p>

<p>Outcome of the Review of Board Effectiveness</p> <p>Board Effectiveness Review was carried out March/April 2023. The review and its recommendations have been accepted by the Board.</p>	<p>Annual reviews with an externally facilitated review should be held at least once every three years</p>	<p>Department will be informed at Departmental Partnership meetings where appropriate.</p> <p>Review completed by an external consultant and shared with departmental Sponsor Branch.</p>
<p>Planning for the externally facilitated review of Board Effectiveness</p>	<p>Externally facilitated review is recommended at least once every three years</p>	<p>Department will be informed at Departmental Partnership meetings where appropriate.</p>
<p>Board Appraisals and planned training/development for Board members</p>	<p>Following the end of the Business year.</p> <p>March/April each year</p> <p>6 new Board Members took up posts on 1st May 2021 and have received their necessary training</p>	<p>Department will be informed at Departmental Partnership meetings where appropriate.</p>
<p>Chair Appraisal</p>	<p>Following the end of the Business year. After Board Appraisals have been completed by the Chair and the annual Review of Board Effectiveness has concluded no later than April.</p>	<p>Department will be informed at Departmental Partnership meetings where appropriate.</p> <p>Completed by departmental Lead Official/Grade 5 no later than April.</p>
<p>Departmental Attendance at Audit and Risk Management Committee (ARMC)</p>	<p>There will be 3 departmental staff in attendance including 2</p>	<p>Department sponsor team officials attend HSENI ARMC meetings which are held 4 times per year typically in</p>

Meetings are held at Ladas Drive.	members of the sponsorship branch and the divisional accountant.	April, June, October, and January. HSENI officials are responsible for preparing and distributing the relevant papers in advance of the meeting.
Assurance Statement	Bi-annually.	Requested by Department in October and April each year.
Draft Governance Statement	Issued to Dept. reps with ARMC papers in advance of June ARMC meeting	
Annual Report and Accounts	Sent to Dept. in advance of finalising. Accounts revised by DfE Accountant. No later than 1 st October each year	
Report to those Charged with Governance	Usually received by both the Dept. and HSENI in June in advance of the June Board meeting	
Engagement on other planned NIAO reports	As necessary	
Head of Internal Audit Annual report/Opinion	Sent to DfE HIA to be included on DfE's Internal Audit Annual Report (usually in May each year)	
Internal Audit Strategy and Plans	As with Governance Statement and Annual Report, issued to Dept. reps no later than 2 weeks in advance	HSENI Senior Management Team Risk registers have been developed for each significant area of HSENI activity and describe the significant

	of relevant ARMC meeting for review quarterly each year.	risks and how the risks are managed. They are also used as a basis for regular reviews of the risk profile and reporting to the Audit and Risk Management Committee. The status of risk is discussed at HSENI management meetings including the review of risk information and risk indicators, any early warning signs of risks materialising and / or escalating, and any significant control failings or weaknesses.
Internal Audit External Quality Assessment	To be conducted at least once every five years	
Budget Management		
Item and Purpose	Date	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
Engagement on budget requirements and Forecast Expenditure for the Financial Year	DfE Financial Management Branch to determine – typically Q1	HSENI Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) and departmental Grade 5
Departmental approval of the annual budget	DfE Financial Management Branch to determine – typically Q1	HSENI Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) and departmental Grade 5
Monthly Financial Management Returns	DfE Financial Management Branch to determine – second working day of each month except April month end.	HSENI Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) and departmental Grade 5
Monthly Cash Forecast	DfE Financial Accounting Branch to determine	HSENI Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) and departmental Grade 5

Monitoring Round Returns	DfE Financial Management Branch to determine – typically April for June monitoring, August for October monitoring and October for January monitoring.	HSENI Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) and departmental Grade 5
Provisional Outturn	DfE Financial Management Branch to determine – typically February	HSENI Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) and departmental Grade 5
Final Outturn	DfE Financial Management Branch to determine – typically draft April and final June	HSENI Accounting Officer (Chief Executive) and departmental Grade 5
Other		
Item and Purpose	Submission Date	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
Accounting Officer - Fitness to Act as Accounting Officer	Periodic request from the departmental Accounting Officer	Stewardship Statement signed by HSENI Accounting Officer and Departmental Partnership meetings typically held February, June and October each year.
Fraud Reporting	HSENI will report these to both G7 over BERD and DfE Fraud & Raising Concerns Unit immediately after fraud is reported.	Department will report frauds immediately to DoF and C&AG.
Fraud Reporting	As per DfE Fraud & Raising Concerns Unit, this is reported by the Unit on behalf of HSENI and will take account of all frauds reported by HSENI throughout	

	the year.	
Media management protocols – independence of HSENI to engage with media/announcements of corporate and policy communications significant to HSENI - arrangements to share press releases where necessary – ensure no surprises.	Submissions will be made to the Department where necessary to approve any press releases.	
Whistleblowing cases/ Speaking Up/Raising Concerns.	Reported to G5 over BERD and Fraud & Raising Concerns Unit as cases are reported to HSENI	
Review of the Partnership Arrangement		
Item and Purpose	Date	Lead Departmental/HSENI Official
Light touch review of the Partnership Agreement	Schedule following the end of the Business Year	Each March
Formal review of the Partnership Agreement.	To be conducted once every three years. Next formal review will be in 2025.	

Annex 3 - Delegations

Delegated authorities

HSENI shall obtain the Department's prior written approval before:

- entering into any undertaking to incur any expenditure that falls outside the delegations, or which is not provided for in the HSENI's annual budget as approved by the Department;
- incurring expenditure for any purpose that is or might be considered novel or contentious, or which has or could have significant future cost implications;
- making any significant change in the scale of operation or funding of any initiative or scheme previously approved by the Department;
- making any change of policy or practice which has wider financial implications that might prove repercussive, or which might significantly affect the future level of resources required; or
- carrying out policies that go against the principles, rules, guidance, and advice in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland.

HSENI shall observe the procurement control limits set out in Procurement Guidance Note 04/12 – Procurement Control Limits and Basis for Contract Awards.

The principles of economic appraisal should be applied in all cases where expenditure is proposed, whether the proposal involves capital or current expenditure, or both. The principles of appraisal should be applied with appropriate and proportionate effort.

HSENI Specific Delegated Authorities

Capital Projects

These revised Delegated Authorities in this section of the Partnership Agreement have been agreed following discussions between the Senior Sponsor Official Grade 5, HSENI Reporting Officer, and BERD divisional accountant. The Chief Executive may authorise capital expenditure on discrete capital projects of up to £250,000.

PA A Delegated Authority for the Purchase of Capital	
THRESHOLDS	AUTHORISATION
Up to £50k	The Chief Executive of HSENI
£50k to £250k	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval
£250k to £500k	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval and with prior approval from the Department for the Economy.
£500k to £5m	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval and with prior approval from the Department for the Economy and DoF.
Projects over £5m	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval and with prior approval from the Department for the Economy, DoF and the Minister.

These delegations shall not be altered without the prior agreement of the department and, where applicable, DoF.

IT Projects

The appraisal of Information Technology (IT) projects should include the staffing and other resource implications. The Chief Executive may authorise IT project spend on discrete IT projects of up to £50,000.

PA B Delegation Arrangements for Information Technology Projects, Systems and Equipment	
THRESHOLDS	AUTHORISATION
Up to £50k	The Chief Executive of HSENI
£50k to £250k	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval
£250k to £500k	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval and with prior approval from the Department for the Economy.
£500k to £5m	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval and with prior approval from the Department for the Economy and DoF.
Projects over £5m	The Chief Executive of HSENI with HSENI Board Approval and with prior approval from the Department for the Economy, DoF and the Minister.

Engagement of Consultants

HSENI has authority to appoint consultants for a **single contract** without recourse to the Department up to a **total** cost of £10,000, excluding VAT, and subject to any guidance as may be issued by DoF or the Department. A full business case should be prepared for all consultancy assignments expected to exceed £10,000. A proportionate business case should be prepared for all assignments below this threshold.

THRESHOLDS	AUTHORISATION
Up to £10,000	The Chief Executive
> £10,000 - £75,000	The Chief Executive and HSENI Board, with prior approval from the Department and the Minister
> £75,000	The Chief Executive and HSENI Board, with prior approval from the Department and the Minister

Delegated Authority for the Purchase of Goods, Services and Works (All costs exclude VAT).

IPG D Delegated Authority for the Purchase of Goods, Services and Works (All costs exclude VAT).		
THRESHOLDS	REQUIREMENTS	AUTHORISATION
Up to £5,000	Demonstrate value for money by seeking minimum of two quotations plus economic appraisal.	At least Grade 7
£5,000 to £30,000	Seek a minimum of two tenders, using CPD's eTendersNI system plus an Economic Appraisal.	At least Grade 7
£30,000 to £50,000	Engage full services of CPD for a competitive tender plus an Economic Appraisal.	At least Grade 6
> £50,000	HSENI Board Approval, engage full services of CPD for a competitive tender plus an Economic Appraisal (and subject to the delegations detailed above).	Chief Executive and Board

These delegations shall not be altered without the prior agreement of the department and, where applicable, DoF.

Lease and Rental Agreements

HSENI shall consult the Department at the earliest opportunity prior to negotiating a lease or rental agreement and shall seek the approval of the Department's Accounting Officer prior to completing a lease or rental agreement. DoF must be consulted in relation to any Office Accommodation leases, both new and existing, extension or renewal beyond breakpoints.

Losses and Special Payments

The Chief Executive, with prior approval from the Department, will have the authority to write off losses and make special payments up to £5,000 in the categories specified below.

- (a) Cash losses.
- (b) Stores/Equipment losses.
- (c) Constructive losses and fruitless payments.

- (d) Compensation payments:
 - i. Made under legal obligation, e.g., by Court Order plus reasonable expenses. Departmental approval is required in respect of amounts above this amount and DoF approval is required where the amount exceeds £10,000.
 - ii. For damage to personal property of staff.
- (e) Claims abandoned or waiver of claim. Departmental approval is required in respect of claims waived or abandoned above this amount and DoF approval in writing is required where the loss exceeds £100,000.
- (f) Extra contractual payments. Departmental approval is required in respect of amounts above this amount and DoF approval is required where the amount exceeds £100,000.
- (g) Ex gratia payments (Pensions payments are not covered by this threshold). Departmental approval is required in respect of amounts above this amount and DoF approval is required where the amount exceeds £100,000.

The Chief Executive, with prior approval from the Department, will have the authority to make compensation payments up to £50,000 where written legal advice is that HSENI should not fight a court action because it is unlikely that it would win. DoF approval in writing is required where the loss exceeds £100,000.

The prior approval of the Department must be obtained for amounts above these values and DoF approval is needed in writing as indicated above.

HSENI does not have authority to make extra statutory or extra regulatory payments. All such proposals must be submitted to the Department for approval.

Where total losses exceed £20,000 in any financial year, an explanatory note should be included in HSENI's accounts.

Details of all losses and special payments should be recorded in a Losses and Special Payments Register, which will be available to auditors. The Register should be kept up-to-date and should show evidence of the approval by the Chief Executive as notified to the Department, and the Department where appropriate.

Gifts

HSENI may authorise gifts to be made up to a value of £100.

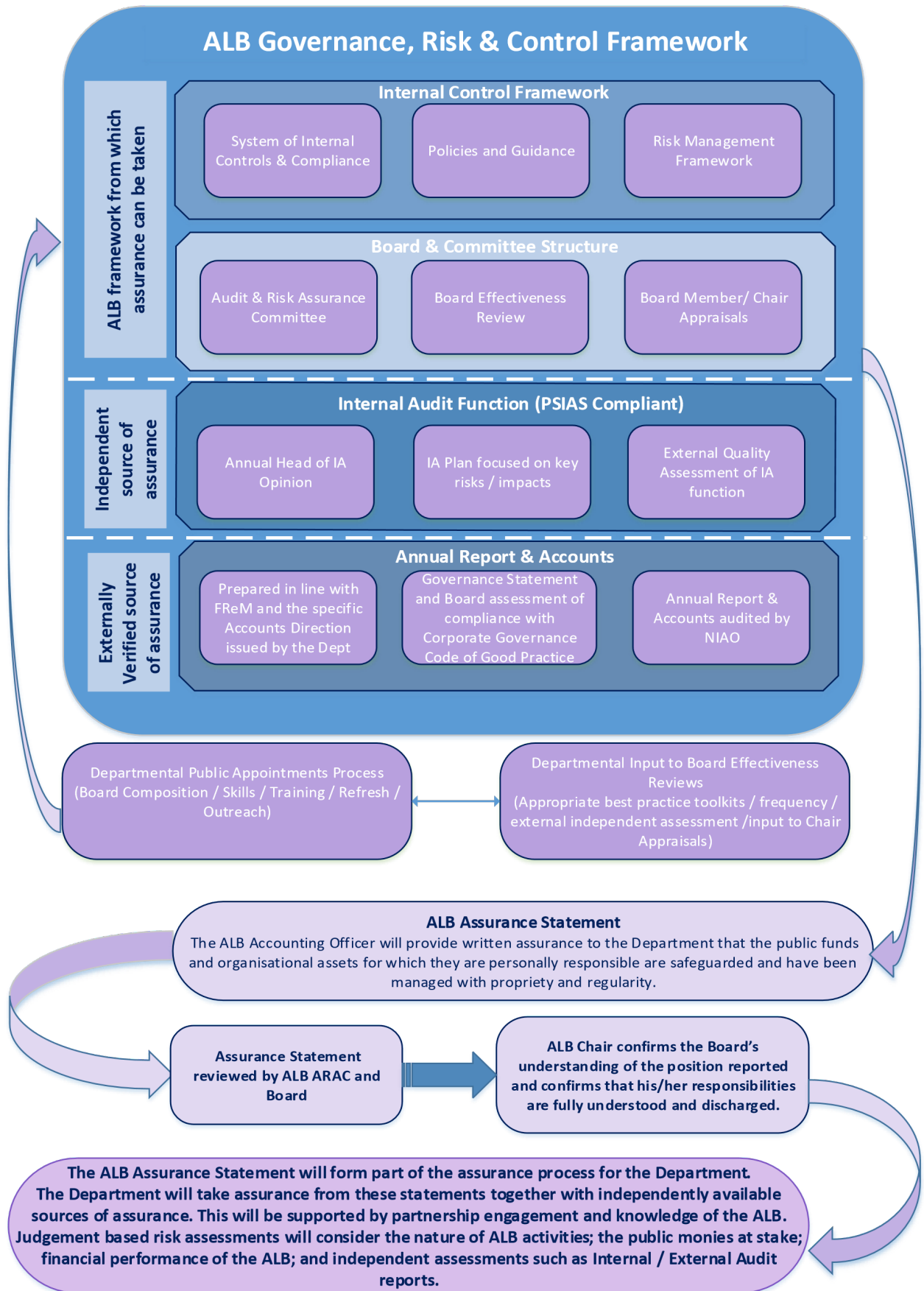
Assets

DfE and DoF approval is required where HSENI proposes to retain receipts from the sale of assets funded by grant or grant in aid from the Department. Where total losses exceed £10,000 in any financial year, an explanatory note should be included in the Agency's accounts.

HSENI should consult the Department (which may in turn contact the Department of Finance) if it identifies losses and write-offs (irrespective of any delegated authorities or the amount of money concerned) which are found to:

- involve important questions of principle;
- raise doubts about the effectiveness of existing systems;
- contain lessons which might be of wider interest;
- are novel or contentious;
- might create a precedent for other Departments in similar circumstances; or
- arise because of obscure or ambiguous instructions issued centrally.

Annex 4 – Illustrative System of Assurance



Annex 5 – Concerns/Complaints in respect of Board members

In line with the NI Code of Good Practice and the arrangements in this Partnership Agreement the approach to concerns/complaints raised in respect of HSENI Board members should be transparent and collaborative. The principle of early and open engagement is important, with the Department made aware of any concerns/complaints as soon as practicable.

While Board Members are Public Appointees/office holders rather than HSENI employees a HSENI employee may utilise HSENI's grievance procedure/other HR procedure to raise a complaint against a Board member. The HSENI employee raising the grievance should expect this to be handled in line with HSENI's HR procedures.

Concerns/complaints might also be raised through:

- raising Concerns/Whistleblowing arrangements;
- complaints processes; and
- directly with HSENI or the Department.

Where a concern/complaint is received within HSENI in respect of an individual Board Member this should be provided to the HSENI Chair who should notify the Department at the outset in order that lead responsibility for handling the complaint/concern is clear in advance.

Where a concern/complaint relates to the HSENI Chair, HSENI should notify the Department at the outset for the Department to determine the approach to handling the complaint/concern.

Differences of view in relation to matters which fall within the Board's responsibilities are a matter for the Board to resolve through consensus-based decision making in the best interests of the HSENI.

Exceptionally a concern/complaint may be raised by a Board Member about a fellow Board Member or a senior member of HSENI staff. The HSENI Chair should notify the

Department at the outset to ensure that arrangements for handling the concern/complaint are clear. The Department may determine that it should make arrangements to deal with the concern/complaint. This will be agreed at the outset.

Arrangements for concerns/complaints in respect of Board members should be reflected in all relevant procedures, including Standing Orders, Board Operating Frameworks, and the Code of Conduct for HSENI Board Members.

Annex 6 - Applicable Guidance

The following guidance is applicable to HSENI

Guidance issued by the Department of Finance

- Managing Public Money NI
- Public Bodies – A Guide for NI Departments
- Corporate Governance in central government departments – code of good practice
- DoF Risk Management Framework
- HMT Orange Book
- The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Handbook
- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
- Accounting Officer Handbook – HMT Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money
- The NI Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation
- Better Business Cases (NI)
- Dear Accounting Officer Letters
- Dear Finance Director Letters
- Dear Consolidation Officer and Dear Consolidation Manager Letters
- The Consolidation Officer Letter of Appointment
- Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM)
- Guidance for preparation and publication of annual report and account
- Procurement Guidance Notes and Procurement Policy Notes

Other Guidance and Best Practice

- Specific guidance issued by the Department
- EU Delegations
- Recommendations made by the NI Audit Office/NI Assembly Public Accounts Committee
- NIAO Good Practice Guides
- Guidance issued by the Executive's Asset Management Unit
- NI Public Services Ombudsman guidance
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Annex 7 – Role of the Minister

Role of the Minister

The Chair of HSENI is responsible to the Minister. Communication between the Board and the Minister should normally be through the Chair.

The departmental Accounting Officer is responsible for advising the relevant Minister on a number of issues including the HSENI objectives and targets, budgets and performance.

In addition to being answerable to the Assembly as laid out in paragraph 2.4, the Minister is also responsible for:

- Setting the strategic direction and overall policies and priorities for the HSENI by approving HSENI's Corporate Plan;
- Approving HSENI's budget; and
- Appointment of non-executive board members. The Minister may also be involved in considering the size and composition of the HSENI Board.

Annex 8 – Partnerships between Departments and Arm’s Length Bodies: NI Code of Good Practice

NI Code of Good Practice



Code of Good
Practice 2023 - print