

First Day Brief

February 2025



Department of

Finance

An Roinn

Airgeadais

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Welcome to the Department of Finance

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The Department of Finance (DoF) provides the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and other public bodies with money, staff, professional services and business support systems, helping them to deliver excellent, value-for-money public services.

We do this by:

- Managing public money – effectively allocating resources to where they are most needed to support the delivery of public services;
- Supporting our people – recruiting, developing and supporting the best people for the Civil Service and providing opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential;
- Transforming and innovating – improving effectiveness across the public sector by transforming the way we work;
- Providing evidence and insights – supporting evidence-based policy and informing public debate, through high quality, trusted, meaningful data, evidence and research; and
- Delivering public services – collecting rates revenue to provide funding towards public services such as health, education and infrastructure, as well as council services.



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Role of Ministers

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Ministers, at all times, are accountable to the Assembly for the decisions and actions of their departments and agencies.

- Departments are separate legal entities.
- Individual civil servants are accountable to their Department's Minister, who in turn is accountable to the Assembly. All civil servants have a shared responsibility to support the work of the Executive as a whole, including the contribution of their Minister to the Executive and within the [NICS Code of Ethics](#) and [Seven Principles of Public Life](#).
- The [Ministerial Code](#) sets out the rules and procedures to which all ministers must adhere. It includes the Pledge of Office, the Ministerial Code of Conduct, and the Seven Principles of Public Life, as well as provisions governing the functioning of the Executive Committee.
- Ministers must declare any personal or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities.



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Departmental Permanent Secretary

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Neil Gibson

Permanent Secretary

Each department has a Permanent Secretary, who is the most senior civil servant and the Minister's most senior adviser.

- The Permanent Secretary is also the Departmental Accounting Officer, personally responsible for ensuring that public money is being spent and accounted for properly in line with the obligations of [Managing Public Money NI](#) (MPMNI).
- The Permanent Secretary works to ensure that the Department delivers the Minister's policy objectives.
- Each Permanent Secretary ensures their Minister works with the civil service to fulfil the obligations upon their Department as a whole.
- While permanent secretaries work under the direction and control of their Minister, they are also personally answerable to the Public Accounts Committee of the Assembly on their responsibilities as Accounting Officers. [Specific guidance](#) is in place to cover situations where a Minister's instructions could bring the Accounting Officer into conflict with their personal responsibilities.



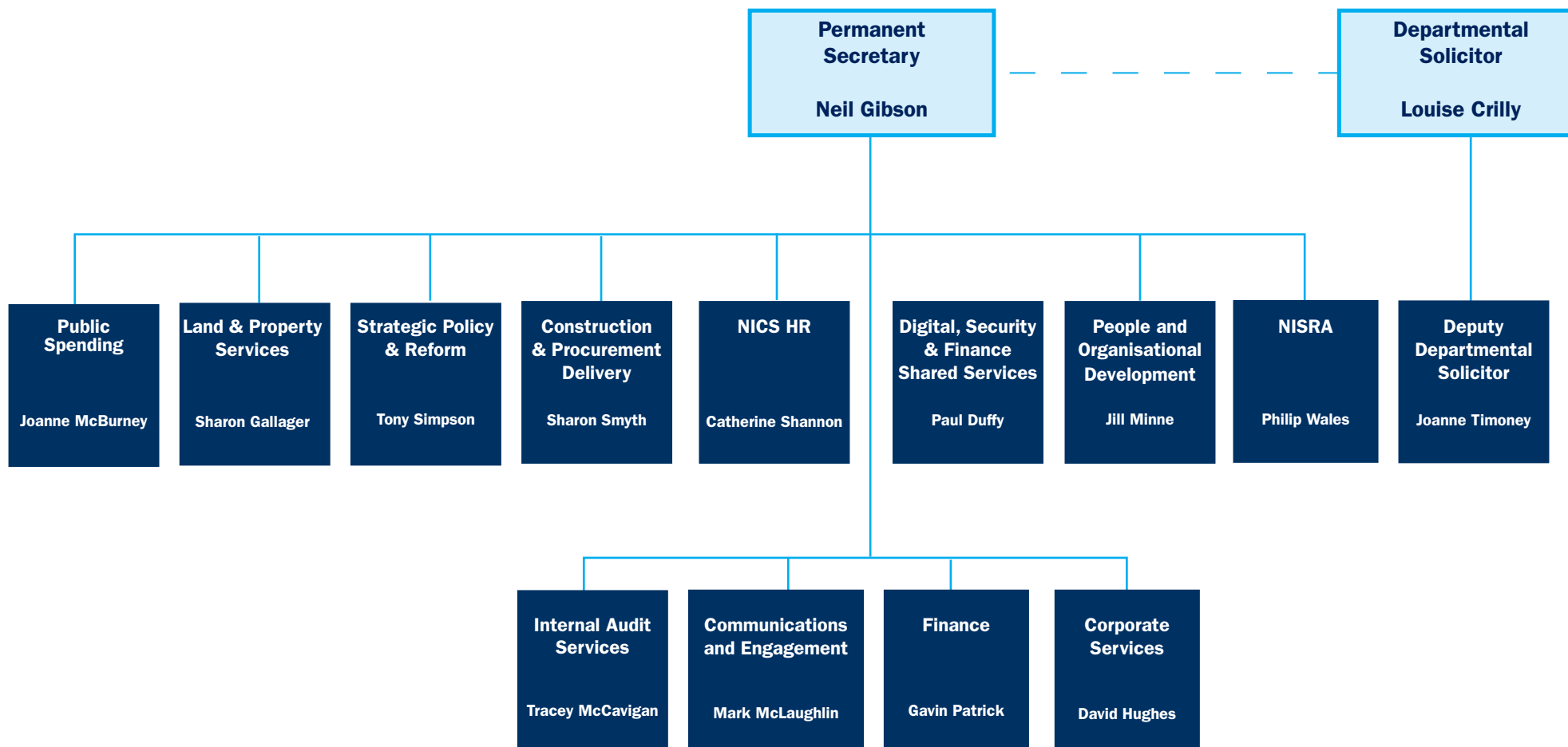
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Leadership Team



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Key contacts

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Communications and Engagement Division



Mark McLaughlin

**Director of Communications
and Engagement Division**



Ciarrai Conlan

**Deputy Director of Communications
and Engagement Division**

Private Office

The Private Secretary is the first point of contact for Minister and Special Adviser.



Paula Dawson

Private Secretary

Media & External Communications

The Head of Media & External Communications is the first point of contact for media related matters.



Leander Harding

Head of Media & External Communications



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Our Resources

Money

2024-25

Net Resource*



Net Capital



* Excludes £48.9m depreciation and impairment.

People

3,651 staff



As at 1 April 2024, the Department had 3,402 full time equivalent staff. This was made up of 3,227 permanent staff and 175 agency workers.



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Our Priorities

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A copy of the DoF 2024-25 Business Plan can be found online on the [DoF website](#).

This plan sets out the key activities the Department will undertake to deliver against strategic priorities for the 2024-2025 financial year.

The delivery of the Business Plan will be led by the Permanent Secretary. This will include agreement of the strategic aims and a series of check points and quality review of progress at DoF Board.

It is underpinned by more detailed divisional plans which will contain a suite of operational targets.



Our Business Areas

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Public Spending Directorate (PSD) is responsible for the management of the public expenditure regime in Northern Ireland, setting the ground rules for the administration and use of public funds, advising on the effective use of available resources through the Executive's Budget and In-year Monitoring processes, seeking Assembly authority for expenditure through the Budget Bill/Estimates process and issuing cash to departments from the NI Consolidated Fund. PSD also provides oversight of the NI City and Growth Deal programme.

NICS HR is responsible for the operational delivery of a comprehensive range of HR services for the NI Departments including resourcing, employee relations, learning and development, occupational health and wellbeing, pensions and business partnering.

People and Organisational Development (People & OD) has policy responsibility for all the NI Civil Service's HR, industrial relations and pay policies and provides strategic HR advice and support to the NICS Board, the NI Departments and the Public Prosecution Service in its commitment to make the Civil Service an inclusive, well-led, high-performing civil service, which is focused on outcomes.

Land & Property Services (LPS) collects, processes and manages land and property information, which underpins the collection of rates. LPS is also the home of Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI) the official producer of high quality, accurate and current geographic mapping data for Northern Ireland.

Digital, Security and Finance Shared Services (DSF) provides a range of shared services, including digital technology, cyber and information security and financial processing for the NI Departments. It also includes nirect the official government website for Northern Ireland citizens and the nirect contact centre. It also incorporates the Integr8 Programme which will enable the transformation of Finance and HR services through the delivery of a new target operating model and technology.

Construction and Procurement Division (CPD) is responsible for providing procurement services to the NI Departments, agencies and associated public bodies and supporting the Minister in the development of public procurement policy. CPD is the hub for the Civil Service Project Delivery Profession and provides assurance to Accounting Officers on the delivery of public sector projects and programmes. CPD is also responsible for the management of the Government Estate which comprises around 95 buildings.



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Our Business Areas

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Strategic Policy and Reform (SPaR) shapes Executive policy and interventions that contribute to a broad range of Programme for Government outcomes. This includes delivering strategic economic and fiscal policy and analysis; providing advice and support to departments to improve government policies and public services; leading the Departmental response to meet obligations under the Climate Change Act and to the UK Covid-19 Inquiry; Funding Policy; oversight of the PEACE PLUS Programme; and legacy EU Exit issues including the Windsor Framework.

Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) is responsible primarily for the provision of impartial legal counsel to the Northern Ireland Ministers, departments, their agencies and non-departmental public bodies. It also has policy responsibility for Civil Law Reform.

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is an Agency within DoF, which supports decision makers in the formulation of evidence-based policy and informs public debate through the production and dissemination of high-quality, trusted and meaningful analysis; facilitates research and delivers the decennial population census and everyday civil registration services.

Finance Division is responsible for the management, monitoring and reporting of the Department's budget. The Division also contains the Audit Authority responsible for auditing of EU programmes.

Corporate Services Division (CSD) is responsible for information management, data protection, Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Regulations, security, health and safety, public appointments, handling concerns and complaints raised about the work of the department.

Communications and Engagement Division (CAED) is responsible for Ministerial Private Office, the office of the Permanent Secretary, Media and External Communications, Internal Communications and Engagement and Events.

Internal Audit provides internal audit and investigation services to NICS departments, executive agencies and arm's length bodies. While located in DoF, it is accountable to individual departmental accounting officers. Any fraud investigations or audit activity undertaken are done so on behalf of the relevant department and reported to the relevant department – there is no reporting line on these matters to DoF.



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Stay connected with the Department of Finance

Department of Finance

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