

Scottish Government Chair of Audit & Assurance Committee

Applicant Information Pack June 2025



Welcome from the Permanent Secretary

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Scottish Government Non-Executive Director – I'm delighted that you want to use your experience and insight to provide challenge, advice and assurance to me and my team.

In a changing world, the Scottish Government remains committed to building the best future for Scotland and working with sectors and communities to deliver sustainable public services. Our work has a direct impact on the lives and wellbeing of the people of Scotland.

Strong inclusive leadership, teamwork and flexibility remain key to our success. That is why we need people to join our cohort of Non-Executive Directors who have a passion for public service and who role model our organisational values of integrity, inclusion, collaboration, innovation and kindness; upholding the Civil Service values enshrined in the Civil Service Code and the Nolan Principles set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

I am looking for people who will support a focus on our strategic vision and outcomes in an ever-changing environment, and who will share with us their insight and constructive challenge. We value very highly the benefits of different experiences and points of view in our Non-Executive Director cohort, and we hope to receive applications from talented, enthusiastic people from a range of diverse backgrounds.

If the challenge of this role excites you and you think you have the integrity, skills and experience to fulfil it, we look forward to hearing from you.

Joe Griffin
Permanent Secretary



The Scottish Government - Scotland's Civil Service

Scottish Government is at the centre of Scotland's network of public services and institutions, working to make Scotland a more successful country and a better place to live. We are responsible for over £56 billion of expenditure each year. This provides the public services used every day by the citizens of Scotland including health, education, justice, housing and social security.

Working with colleagues across parliament, local government, the third sector, business and communities, the Scottish Government has set four strategic priorities designed to guide decision making and deliver for the people of Scotland. These were set out by the new First Minister in his speech to the Scottish Parliament on 22 May 2024 and include:

- Eradicating Child Poverty
- Growing the Economy
- Tackling the climate emergency
- Improving our public services

The National Performance Framework reports on progress across the set of national outcomes. These outcomes describe the kind of Scotland the framework aims to create and are defined and measured through a set of national indicators.



Senior Management Structure

The Permanent Secretary is the most senior civil servant in Scotland and leads the Executive Team. There are eight Directors-General that make up the Executive Team with strategic responsibilities for: Corporate; Economy; Scottish Exchequer; Health and Social Care; Education and Justice; Communities; Net Zero, and Strategy and External Affairs. They are joined by the Director for People, Solicitor to the Scottish Government, Chief Financial Officer and Director for Communications & Ministerial Support.

A Director-General oversees a number of Directorates and Agencies, headed by Directors. Directorates will in turn be divided into Divisions, led by a Deputy Director. Under Divisions are Teams or Units.

The Executive Team (ET) is responsible for providing leadership and direction to ensure that the organisation can deliver its goals. The team is collectively and individually accountable for the organisation's strategy and performance, ensuring that the staff and resources of the Scottish Government are used efficiently and effectively to respond to ministerial priorities and deliver the best service possible for the people of Scotland.

Further information about the Scottish Government, can be found [here](#)

Mission, Vision and Values

'In the service of Scotland' describes how we work together. It has three parts:

- Our mission: We work together to improve the lives of the people of Scotland.
- Our vision: We put the citizens we serve at the heart of everything we do. We use digital thinking and approaches to strengthen our work and provide a better service for everyone. We are driven by our values, always searching for new ways to learn and improve. All in the service of Scotland.
- Our values: We act with integrity, we are inclusive, we are innovative, we are collaborative and we are kind.

Diversity and Inclusion

“For the Scottish Government properly to serve the citizens of Scotland, it’s vital that we are a welcoming and inclusive organisation. We are actively seeking people committed to that journey, determined to improve diversity and to create a culture where everyone’s experience and perspectives are valued.”

Lesley Fraser, Director General, Corporate



The Scottish Government’s ambition is to be a world-leading, diverse and inclusive employer where people can thrive and be themselves at work. We are committed to building a workforce of people with a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, who are valued for their unique contributions in an environment that is respectful, supportive and free of discrimination, harassment or bullying. That means a workforce that includes people of different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, faiths and beliefs; people who are trans, disabled, and from minority ethnic backgrounds; and people who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual or another sexual orientation. A diverse workforce will help us give Ministers the best possible advice and be more representative of the communities we serve.

We know that to do this, we need an inclusive culture. Work to continually improve our organisational culture has led us to the Scottish Government’s vision, ‘In the service of

Scotland'. Five core values underpin this vision: integrity, inclusivity, collaboration, innovation and kindness.

As a Scottish Government Non-Executive Director, you will play a key role in supporting us to realise this vision and build our inclusive organisation – both as a champion and as a role model. In practice, this means positively valuing different perspectives and skills and challenging us to make sure that we make full use of these unique contributions. It means offering strategic advice, support and challenge to our senior leaders in developing a working environment where all staff at all levels are valued and respected, and where discrimination, bullying, promotion of negative stereotyping and harassment are not tolerated.

THE ROLE OF SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Our Non-Executive Directors provide **challenge, advice and assurance** to the Permanent Secretary and leadership team based on their experience and insight. They promote good governance and the improvement of Scottish Government performance, encouraging diverse and innovative ways of working, thinking and problem solving, drawing on their unique perspectives. All Non-Executive Directors are members of the Scottish Government Audit and Assurance Committee.



The role of Scottish Government Non-Executive Director is different from acting as a Board member for a business or charity, where you are collectively accountable for the strategic decisions that govern the organisation. Our Non-Executive Directors are not responsible for or directly involved in decision-making. As Principal Accountable Officer (PAO), the Permanent Secretary is ultimately responsible for how the SG discharges its responsibilities.

Our Non-Executive Directors provide advice, support and challenge to inform the Permanent Secretary and executive leadership team's thinking in the following areas:

- **risk management** – ensuring risk is managed, monitored and evaluated
- **audit** – providing assurance in relation to finance, risk and performance management
- **performance** – evaluating and supporting organisational performance improvement through effective use of systems, management, staff engagement, resources and policies
- **strategy and policy delivery** – scrutinising how policies are communicated, implemented and evaluated.

Our Non-Executive Directors provide their advice, support and challenge in several strategic spaces. They participate in the quarterly Corporate Board, which focuses on strategic decision making concerning organisational strategy and performance. The NXDs bring a focus on managing risk and improving performance by ensuring clarity and rigour in measurement and evaluation against our strategic outcomes, and the alignment of financial resources with policy intentions.

Our Non-Executive Directors are members of the Scottish Government Audit & Assurance Committee and support the Assurance process through quarterly Director General Assurance meetings. They also work across strategic themes and provide mentoring and development support. They meet regularly as an informal Network to provide peer support and promote engagement and knowledge sharing across the group.

Our Non-Executive Directors need to take a whole-system approach to their role, recognizing that complex, dynamic issues require collaborative and innovative responses. They need to be comfortable challenging and being challenged, sharing their unique experiences and perspectives, and supporting and encouraging others to do the same. By taking an open, values-based and constructive approach, our Non-Executive Directors win and keep the confidence of senior leaders and, in doing so, help to create space for creative thinking, fresh ideas and challenge within the Scottish Government.

Audit & Assurance Committee Chair role: Key details about the appointment

We seek a CCAB-qualified accountant to chair the Scottish Government Audit & Assurance Committee, to commence in early/mid-August 2025.

Time commitment: Up to 40 days per year.

Remuneration: The role will attract an annual fee of £19,920 paid quarterly.

Location: In line with the Scottish Government's hybrid working policy, meetings will be convened in hybrid mode and accessible via Microsoft Teams most of the time. On occasion, meetings will be arranged in person only. In person meetings usually take place in St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG.

Appointment term: The initial term of appointment is 3 years with the possibility of reappointment.

Person Specification

We set out below the qualifications, skills, experience, and qualities we are looking for and how we intend to test these. We want you to tell us about your experience and how this has been gained in your **written application**. We will also be having a discussion with you about this during the **interview**.

We expect that the evidence you provide throughout the assessment process will draw out how your behaviours and approach are guided by and demonstrate a commitment to the values instilled in the In the Service of Scotland mission, vision and values.

Our values are;

- we act with integrity;
- we are inclusive;
- we are collaborative;
- we are innovative;
- we are kind.

We use our values to;

- shape our organisational policies and processes;
- inform team behaviours and ways of working;
- guide us on how we, as individuals, behave and operate - even in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity.

You will be expected to meet all criteria, and the priority criteria will be considered first in the assessment process.

Knowledge, experience and skill	What does this mean in practical terms?	How will this be tested?
PRIORITY CRITERIA		
Chair of Audit & Assurance Committee	<p>We are seeking a CCAB qualified accountant with a broad range of governance experience.</p> <p>You will have chaired an Audit and Assurance Committee in a comparably large, complex environment of at least 6,000 people. You may have gained this experience in either public, private or third sectors.</p> <p>You will possess a robust understanding of public finance accounting and reporting and will be experienced in the oversight of budgeting and forecasting.</p> <p>We are looking for an individual with demonstrable understanding and commitment to embedding robust corporate governance holding the Executive to account for the effective management of strategic planning, risk and performance management and seeking assurance regarding rigour of controls.</p>	<p>Tell us in your tailored CV how your experience fits this requirement.</p> <p>At interview you will be asked to give a presentation that will highlight your experience and expertise.</p>
GENERAL CRITERIA		
Experience in a governance role	<p>Candidates will possess:</p> <p>Experience of ensuring effective governance within the public or private sector or through involvement within a charity or as a member of a committee.</p> <p>Ability to demonstrate a successful track record overseeing financial</p>	<p>Tell us in your application letter how you meet this criterion.</p> <p>At interview you will be asked to provide specific example(s) that demonstrate this criterion.</p>

	<p>strategy, planning, scrutiny, audit and risk management, and accountability.</p> <p>Direct experience of ensuring effective governance at senior management or board level.</p> <p>Ability to articulate what board responsibilities are from a fiscal and legal perspective and can demonstrate direct involvement in implementation of good governance principles.</p>	
<p>Constructive challenge, advice and influencing skills.</p>	<p>We are looking for individuals with outstanding communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to conduct and develop diverse partner relationships at all levels.</p> <p>Candidates will be able to demonstrate:</p> <p>Evidence of the ability to get to grips with a range of issues to provide effective challenge and assurance within a diverse team or committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct evidence of challenging effectively within a diverse team or committee. • Evidence of where challenge has changed the views of others and influenced decisions without causing harm to long-term relationships. • Skill to draw on a range of influencing strategies to reach shared goals. • Ability to communicate effectively to successfully influence a wide range of audiences and deliver shared goals. 	<p>Tell us in your application letter how you meet this criterion.</p> <p>At interview you will be asked to provide specific example(s) that demonstrate this criterion.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of where an in-depth understanding of issues and others' perspectives has enabled effective questioning of a proposal. 	
Understanding of diversity and equality as business-critical issues	<p>Direct experience of championing diversity and equality in a large organisation or network.</p> <p>An understanding of the benefits of diversity and inclusion in the context of performance improvement, better decision making, new perspectives and innovation.</p>	<p>Tell us in your application letter how you meet this criterion.</p> <p>At interview you will be asked to provide specific example(s) that demonstrate this criterion.</p>
Commitment to the values of the Scottish Government	<p>Ability to demonstrate the values of the Scottish Government, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> we act with integrity we are inclusive we are collaborative we are innovative we are kind <p>We use our values to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shape our organisational policies and processes Inform team behaviours and ways of working Guide us on how we, as individuals, behave and operate - even in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity 	<p>We expect that the evidence you provide through the assessment process will draw out how your behaviours and approach have been guided by these values.</p>

How to apply

Executive Search firm GatenbySanderson has been appointed to partner with Scottish Government on this key appointment.

To apply for this post, you will submit your application no later than 23.55pm on Friday 6th June 2025.

All applications must be submitted using the following link:

www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe121313

You will be asked to submit the following:

1. A **CV** (no longer than two pages) setting out your career history, with key responsibilities and achievements. Please ensure you have provided reasons for any gaps within the last two years. Please also ensure that you clearly indicate the scale of organisation (turnover and headcount) of the organisation(s) where you have been an ARAC Chair.
2. A **Statement of Suitability** (no longer than two pages) explaining:
 - a. Your motivation for applying for this role.
 - b. How you consider your qualifications, experience, skills and personal qualities provide evidence of your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the criteria sought in this pack. The evidence offered in your letter should also draw out how your behaviours and approach demonstrate your commitment to the values of the Scottish Government.
3. The **diversity monitoring form**, which will not be shared with the selection panel, should be completed online as well as a short form setting out any other involvement in public life or potential conflicts of interest.

Failure to submit these documents will mean the panel only have limited information on which to assess your application against the criteria. Please ensure that both documents 1 and 2 contain your full name.

Should you encounter any issues with your online application or are unable to apply online please contact devon.coates-leaning@gatenbysanderson.com

For a confidential discussion please contact:

Rosemary Baylis-West, Principal Consultant – rosemary.baylis-west@gatenbysanderson.com or Delicia Coutinho, Principal Researcher – delicia.coutinho@gatenbysanderson.com

Reasonable Adjustments

If you require a reasonable adjustment at any stage of the process, please contact Kirsty Walker (Kirsty.Walker2@gov.scot)

Selection

A sift of applications will take place during the first half of June.

If you are successful, you will take part in a 20-minute initial discussion with Gatenby Sanderson to explore motivation and experience. You will also be invited to an interview with the Appointments Panel which will take place in late June. Interviews will take place in person at St. Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh.

In addition to being asked questions about how you meet the criteria, we will also ask you to give a presentation that will highlight your experience and expertise, (details will be provided in advance of interview); and we will have a follow-up discussion with you during the interview.

You will also have the opportunity to meet the Permanent Secretary post final panel interview.

Selection Panel

Jackie McAllister, Chief Financial Officer, will chair the selection panel. Panel members are Belinda Oldfield, Lead Non-Executive Director with Scottish Government and Jonathon Curry, Deputy Director, People Directorate.

Eligibility & Conflicts of Interest

Applicants must have the right to work in the UK.

As part of the application process, you will be asked to complete a short online form providing details of any other involvement in public life or potential conflicts of interest, which will be explored further with you at interview if selected.

If you are unsure whether you have a conflict of interest and would like to discuss this, please contact Kirsty Walker (Kirsty.Walker2@gov.scot).

Fit and Proper Person

A 'fit and proper person' is an individual who meets the requirements of the role and whose past or present activities and/or behaviours do not render them unsuitable to be a Scottish Government Non-Executive Director.

As part of the selection process, all applicants invited to interview will be subject to a social media review. In addition, at interview you will be asked to confirm that you understand the nature of the role and that you are not aware of having committed any offence or performed any act incompatible with it.

Applicants successful at interview will be required to undergo security clearance prior to appointment.

Unsuccessful Applicants/Feedback

Applicants who are not shortlisted for interview will be advised of the outcome of their applications in writing by Gatenby Sanderson. Feedback will be offered to all applicants who are interviewed.