

SERVICE CHILDREN'S EDUCATION
(A Ministry of Defence Agency)

FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT

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FOREWORD

BY THE PARLIAMENT UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

It gives me great pleasure to establish Service Children's Education (SCE) as a Defence Agency.

The children of MOD personnel should receive a high quality education and have the same opportunities as their counterparts in the rest of society. This can be difficult to achieve given the mobility of the Armed Forces. Wherever practicable Servicemen should be able to choose the course of action that suits their circumstances and the needs of their children. If they decide to send their children to overseas schools run by MOD they should expect a standard of education that is as good, and if possible better, than an average school in the UK. If they wish to educate their children elsewhere they should have access to impartial advice to help them select the right school. I am confident that SCE will deliver these services to parents in an extremely effective and professional manner.

The new Defence Agency has been formed from Service Children's Schools (North West Europe) and the Service Children's Authority, with its network of schools in other overseas locations. These two predecessors saw momentous changes during recent years and achieved tremendous success. Whilst overseeing a substantial programme of school closures they implemented a wide range of Government education reforms. They continually improved examination results and received a steady flow of complimentary reports from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools. SCE will undoubtedly benefit from the immense experience and expertise of the personnel it inherits from both organisations.

The Chief Executive has been set demanding targets to improve performance and efficiency still further but has also been given certain freedoms in the management of his resources. The aim is to ensure even better value for money within this essential support area.

I wish the Chief Executive and staff of the SCE every success in the future.

THE EARL HOWE

CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	Status and Accountability	5
2.	Aims and Objectives	8
3.	Agency Organisation	10
4.	Planning, Tasking and Resourcing	12
5.	Outputs and Performance Evaluation	15
6.	Reporting, Accounting and Audit	17
7.	Pay, Personnel and Training	18
8.	The Framework Document	20
Annexures		
A.	Membership of the Adjutant General's Board	A-1
B.	Organisational Structure	B-1
C.	Financial Delegations	C-1
D.	MOD and Command Services	D-1
E.	Personnel Delegations	E-1
F.	Contractual Delegations	F-1

1. Status and Accountability

1.1 **Status.** Service Children's Education is an Agency within the Ministry of Defence (MOD). It originally became an Agency on 1 April 1991 when it was known as Service Children's Schools (North West Europe). Following its triennial review its role has been expanded and it was relaunched on 1 April 1996.

1.2 **Role of the Agency.** The role of SCE is to provide an educational service to meet the needs of dependent Service children, including the children of MOD UK based civilians and sponsored organisations serving outside the United Kingdom which, as far as possible, conforms in type, scope and standard to that required by the Education Acts in England and Wales (and takes into account developments in the education systems of Scotland and Northern Ireland). The Agency is also to make available educational advice and support to Service parents and children in the United Kingdom. Additionally the Agency will make provision for Gurkha Children's Schools when required to do so and maintain them in line with the Nepalese Education System.

1.3 **Role of the Secretary of State for Defence.** The Secretary of State for Defence has ultimate responsibility for determining the policy and resources framework within which the Agency operates. In practice he delegates his ownership responsibilities to the Adjutant General (AG).

1.4 **Role of the Adjutant General.** The Adjutant General is accountable to the Secretary of State for the exercise of the functions delegated to him. He is also responsible for providing advice and support to the Chief Executive to ensure that the Agency achieves its aim and objectives. His responsibilities include approval of the Agency's Corporate and Management Plans and its associated budget, setting and revising key performance targets and monitoring and assessing the Agency's performance. He is assisted in this task by an Owner's Advisory Board whose Terms of Reference and composition is set out at Annex A.

1.5 **Relationship with the Department.** The Secretary of State retains responsibility for the determination of policy on the education of service children and children of UK based civilians serving overseas. Within the Department the Principal Personnel Officers (PPOs) advise on this responsibility with the assistance of the Chief Executive.

1.6 **Role of the Chief Executive.** The Chief Executive is recruited through Open Competition for a specific period of service with the Agency. The Chief Executive is responsible for the day to day management of the Agency and the provision of policy advice on Service Children's Education to the Adjutant General and PPOs within the terms of this Framework Document and the approved Corporate and Business Plans. The Chief Executive is responsible specifically for:

- a. The efficient conduct of Agency business.
- b. The delivery of services specified by the Adjutant General on behalf of the PPOs within the approved plans, to prescribed standards and within allocated resources.
- c. Proposing the strategic direction of the Agency through its Corporate Plan and ensuring its implementation through the annual Agency Management Plan.
- d. The achievement of objectives and key performance targets on schedule and within budget.
- e. Provision of regular financial and performance reports, on an agreed basis, to the Adjutant General so that he can effectively discharge his responsibilities.
- f. Advice, as necessary, to Ministers, PPOs, the Adjutant General, the single Services and parents on child education policy and its delivery in the Service environment.
- g. Ensuring that the requirements of Government Accounting and the Treasury Accounts Direction are met and that the Agency observes general guidance issued by HM Treasury or the Cabinet Office and that it implements recommendations accepted by the Government from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Parliamentary Select Committees or other Parliamentary Authorities.
- h. The Agency's relationship with other Government Departments including the Department for Education and Employment (DFEE), Local Education Authorities (LEAs), equivalent Scottish and Northern Ireland Authorities and other statutory bodies.

1.7 **Accountability to Parliament.** The Secretary of State for Defence is accountable to Parliament for all matters concerning the Agency. Ministers will not normally become involved in the day-to-day management of the Agency, but may exceptionally, need to intervene for broader defence or policy reasons.

1.8 The Permanent Under Secretary (PUS) MOD, as the Principal Accounting Officer, has overall responsibility to the Secretary of State for matters concerned with the management of voted funds, in particular for ensuring propriety and regularity of expenditure and prudent and economical administration. The Chief Executive is accountable to the Principal Accounting Officer for the propriety and regularity of the Agency's expenditure, the adequacy of financial systems and for the discharge of specific responsibilities for the efficiency and economical conduct of the Agency's services under the terms of this Framework Document and his letters of delegation.

1.9 The Chief Executive may be required to appear before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), to account for the discharge of his/her responsibilities. The PAC have indicated that in these circumstances they would probably wish to take evidence from the Principal Accounting Officer also. The Secretary of State remains responsible for deciding which official should represent him at other Parliamentary Committees. It is expected that the Chief Executive may be required to appear before other Parliamentary Committees when the Agency's affairs are being discussed.

1.10 Members of Parliament (MPs) may continue to raise matters concerning the Agency with Defence Ministers. They are however encouraged to deal directly with the Chief Executive on matters within his authority; as he/she is best placed to handle such matters. Defence Ministers will deal with policy issues and where an MP specifically requests a Ministerial reply, the Chief Executive will advise Ministers in such cases. Normally the Chief Executive will reply to Parliamentary Questions and Enquiries or letters from the public or service families concerning the Agency's responsibilities.

1.11 The Agency is subject to the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. The Principal Accounting Officer remains the principal officer for this purpose but delegates to the Chief Executive responsibility for the preparation of replies on any matter concerning the operation of the Agency and for replying in the majority of cases.

2. Functions, Aim and Objectives

2.1 The Agency is responsible for both the provision of educational services and the provision of advice on the education of Service Children in the United Kingdom and overseas. In providing a service overseas, the Agency will endeavour to provide the range of educational services provided by a LEA in the United Kingdom. These services should include teaching in accordance with the national curriculum, provision for special needs children within main stream education, a child guidance service and a careers service. The Agency should also provide support, guidance and advice on independent and maintained schooling facilities in the United Kingdom. In order to perform these functions the Agency should maintain close contact with LEAs, the independent schools sector and the DFEE.

2.2 The aim of the Agency is to provide or ensure an efficient and effective education service for dependent children residing with MOD personnel serving outside the United Kingdom and to provide advice and support to Service parents on the provision of LEA, grant maintained and independent education to Service children in the United Kingdom.

2.3 The principal objectives of the Agency are:

- a. sustain an effective education service overseas which is comparable to sound practice in the United Kingdom.
- b. deliver the services in an efficient and cost effective manner.
- c. benefit pupils by their temporary residence outside the UK.
- d. ensure that children of Service personnel abroad receive advice on future career and post 16 education opportunities.
- e. support parents with guidance and advice on independent and maintained schooling facilities in the United Kingdom.

2.4 To meet these principal objectives the Agency will:

- a. staff the Agency appropriately with qualified, trained and experienced personnel.
- b. promote the involvement of parents and the local Service community in Agency activities and their awareness of current developments in schooling.
- c. participate in the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) programme for school inspection.
- d. maintain a register of Service children with special educational needs and provide advice on the availability of special provision both overseas and in the United Kingdom.
- e. provide special educational services overseas, including the completion of statements of special educational needs in line with the requirements of The Education Act 1993, to pupils with special needs providing the child is capable of main stream education with additional help.
- f. maintain links with Department for Employment and Education (and Scottish and Northern Ireland equivalents) and Local Education Authorities in the United Kingdom.
- g. secure the provision of a Careers Service.

2.5 **Customers.** The above services are to be provided to:

- a. children and parents who are supported by the Agency through provision of schooling, assistance with education arrangements, advice or information.
- b. the Adjutant General who funds Agency activity.
- c. Ministers, MOD, PPOs and Commands who receive advice.

3. Agency Organisation

3.1 The Agency organisational structure is shown at Annex B. The Chief Executive is assisted by an Agency Management Board which includes the following Agency senior managers:

- a. An Assistant Chief Executive who is responsible to the Chief Executive for advice on educational policy and for the day-to-day line management of schools and professional services, including the overall management of the teacher force.
- b. A Director of Finance, Personnel and Administration who is the Chief Executive's Senior Financial and Personnel Advisor in accordance with the arrangements set out in Government Accounting. Duties include the preparation of the Agency's Corporate and Management Plans and associated costings, preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts, the scrutiny of expenditure against budget and the integrity of the financial and personnel systems.
- c. An Assistant Chief Executive, who is Head of the Inspection and Advisory Service, advises the Chief Executive on the quality of service delivery in schools, the quality of schools management and the measures necessary to maintain standards.

3.2 **Staffing.** As at 1 April 1996 the Agency employed 1540 full time equivalent (FTE) staff which includes 790 FTE locally entered personnel.

3.3 **Location and Assets.** Like all British Forces, the Agency operates in overseas theatres under various treaties and agreements between the British Forces and the Host Nations. In Germany, the arrangements are set out in the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). Under SOFA, buildings and land utilised by the Agency are not owned by the Agency and on cessation of MOD use revert to Host Nation ownership but a maintenance liability rests with SCE. Capital assets (MOD funded buildings and equipment) in Germany are valued at £5.600m. In Cyprus the Agency operates under the Treaty of Establishment giving an Agency liability for estate maintenance only. The book value (of MOD funded equipment) in Cyprus at 1 April 1996 is assessed as £0.060m. However in Gibraltar the school premises are assets of the MOD with ownership vested in the Secretary of State for Defence. Here the book value at 1 April 1996 is assessed as £1.000m. Varying other agreements apply in the smaller locations of Belize, Falkland Islands, Viborg and Naples where their combined 1 April 1996 book value is assessed at £0.250m.

4. Planning, Tasking Resourcing

4.1 The Chief Executive will prepare and agree annually with the Adjutant General a Corporate Plan setting out the strategic direction of the Agency over the next 5 years and how this will be achieved. The plan will be reviewed and rolled forward annually, and will include:

- a. Judgements about the development of the Agency, and the demand for its services.
- b. The quality and standard of services to be provided.
- c. Proposed manpower and accommodation requirements and any organisational or structural changes.
- d. Forecast efficiency improvements and performance against cost, productivity and manpower targets.
- e. Proposed development programmes, training and information systems strategies.
- f. Proposed capital investment programmes.
- g. An Efficiency Plan.
- h. Financial projections, moving towards a full cost accruals basis as soon as possible. The plan will develop in line with the Department's wider plans towards full output costing and the integration of the Long Term Costing and management processes.

4.2 The Agency also produces an Annual Management Plan. This is based on the Corporate Plan and defines the immediate objectives of the Agency for the year ahead and for a further two years in outline. The Plan sets out the work programmes and the initiatives to be pursued together with specific targets against which performance will be judged; this forms the basis for annual budget planning.

4.3 **Approval of Plans.** The Agency's Corporate and Management Plans and budget bid to meet approved tasks are submitted to the Adjutant General annually for approval. If the resources allocated to the Agency do not equal those agreed in the Management Plan the Chief Executive will negotiate the priority and level of service as necessary. The Adjutant General also advises the Chief Executive on the preparation of future plans, in the light of performance reflected in the annual report. In the event of an in-year reallocation of resources, any consequential changes in task levels or performance will be agreed with the Adjutant General.

4.4 **Tasking.** The Management Plan agreed between the Adjutant General and the Chief Executive forms the tasking authority for the Agency.

4.5 The Chief Executive may seek commercial customers or to enter into partnerships where this offers the prospect of increasing value for money by utilising unavoidable spare capacity without adversely affecting the principal outputs. All repayment service work will be undertaken in accordance with the Departmental and Treasury guidelines on selling into wider markets.

4.6 **Resourcing.** The Agency operates a full cost budget, the SCE Higher Level Budget, and the Chief Executive is the Budget Holder. He will manage the budget in accordance with his letter of financial delegation from the senior budget holder, his letter of designation from the PAO and MOD financial policy and procedures.

4.7 He will operate in accordance with the freedoms and delegations set out in Annex C and will draw the attention of the Adjutant General to any matters which hinder the effective performance of the Agency.

4.8 The Agency will continue to receive services from other parts of MOD, as set out at Annex D. The Agency's share of these services will be shown in its full cost budget. The Chief Executive may seek alternative sources of supply where this offers the opportunity for better value for money.

4.9 The Chief Executive is responsible for the definition and funding of Agency major and minor works programmes and for advising the appropriate authority on the requirements for all work services and maintenance in respect of the Agency's estate.

4.10 The Chief Executive may propose, on educational grounds and in the interest of efficiency, package deals to rationalise the use of land and buildings. Such proposals are to be made to the appropriate Director of Lands who will assess the overall implications for the Defence Estate. Final decisions on land and buildings matters rest with the appropriate Director of Lands and the relevant Commander.

5. Outputs and Performance Evaluation

5.1 **Outputs.** The principal outputs of the Agency are:

- a. Pupils educated to a high level in terms of academic performance, personal development and career employment potential in accordance with the National Curriculum.
- b. Provision of an inspection, advisory and other support services, including those to voluntary pre-school groups and to children of school age and below with special needs.
- c. Information and publicity to parents and other customers.
- d. Pupils with knowledge, skills and experience appropriate to their age and ability, based on the opportunities provided by residence abroad and additional to those normally obtainable in the United Kingdom.
- e. Young people stimulated by social development outside the formal school environment.
- f. Cost effective, efficient and affordable services.

5.2 **Inspections.** Independent external monitoring and evaluation of all schools is undertaken by HMIs under the auspices of OFSTED every 4 years in accordance with UK requirements and practices for maintained schools. Following the inspection, OFSTED reports will be circulated to the Adjutant General and members of his Board and made available to parents and local Commanders. Internal monitoring of standards is also undertaken by the Head of the Inspection and Advisory Service who will advise the Chief Executive.

5.3 Results of pupil performance at Key stage tests, GCSE, GCE 'A' level examinations and GNVQs will be available to the Adjutant General's Board and parents in accordance with current guidelines.

5.4 The Adjutant General will set the Chief Executive key targets covering the delivery and quality of the Agency's outputs and the efficient management of its resources. These key targets and their related performance indicators will form part of the Agency's Corporate and Management Plans.

5.5 The Agency's performance in meeting its objectives will be judged against the key targets, together with the advice of the Adjutant General's Board.

5.6 The Agency will operate a management information system capable of measuring output and performance against the agreed plans which will allow periodic reporting to the Adjutant General.

6. Reporting, Accounting and Audit

6.1 **Annual Reports and Accounts.** The Chief Executive will publish an Annual Report and full cost accruals accounts, prepared in accordance with an Accounts Direction issued by HM Treasury. The contents of the Accounts Direction will be agreed by HM Treasury, the Adjutant General and the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive will ensure that the Annual Report and Accounts are laid before Parliament prior to the summer recess. In addition to other mandatory reporting, the Chief Executive will provide the Adjutant General with routine progress reports.

6.2 The Chief Executive manages funds in accordance with the financial delegations made to him (see Annex C). The Agency and the MOD will review these delegations from time to time, with the aim of progressively increasing the level of delegation where this offers prospects of improved performance.

6.3 **Internal Audit.** The Chief Executive is responsible for arranging internal audit in a manner which represents best value for money and in accordance with the standards laid down in the Government Internal Audit Manual. The Agency also remains subject to MOD Internal Audit by staff acting on behalf of the PAO. The Chief Executive is responsible for implementing agreed audit recommendations and will be consulted in determining the programme of work.

6.4 **External Audit.** The Agency is subject to external audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Formal certification of the Agency's accounts is required in accordance with the Treasury Accounts direction.

7. Personnel, Pay and Training

7.1 **Status and Conditions of Employment.** The Agency employs a broad range of staff, the vast majority being recruited specially for service overseas with the Agency or recruited locally. The permanent civilian staff of the Agency are civil servants subject to MOD terms and conditions of employment. Subject to appropriate clearance with MOD, the Adjutant General, and where necessary OPS and the Treasury, the Chief Executive may introduce changes to these terms and conditions after appropriate consultation with staff and their representatives, including Trade Unions. Locally Engaged Staff are employed under arrangements which vary between the countries in which they are employed. Additional specialist support may be engaged where appropriate from the private sector and such arrangements will be consistent with current Departmental guidelines.

7.2 The Chief Executive aims to achieve the most cost effective mix of UK based and locally engaged staff commensurate with its objectives and responsibilities.

7.3 **Pay.** In line with paragraph 7.1 above, the Chief Executive will operate a pay and grading system which meets the needs of the business and has delegated authority to agree pay and conditions of service arrangements for UK based Agency employees. For UK based staff negotiation takes place with staff including their Trade Union representatives, whilst separate arrangements apply for locally entered staff reflecting appropriate local practice. In some cases local MOD representatives act on behalf of the Chief Executive.

7.4 **Personnel Management.** The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that effective personnel management arrangements are in place and will promote and operate good management practice in respect of all Agency staff. Where appropriate, the arrangements will include provision for staff transfer both within and out of the Agency to fulfil individual career development needs and potential and Agency needs. The Chief Executive will secure from MOD comprehensive personnel management support to cover those grades and aspects not undertaken by the Agency which are set out in Annex E.

7.5 **Training.** The Chief Executive will be responsible for identifying and meeting the training and development needs of his staff within the Agency and will have full delegated authority to commit funds to Agency training.

7.6 **Industrial Relations.** The Chief Executive is responsible for all industrial relations within the Agency, and he will consult staff and their representatives, including the Trade Unions on all appropriate matters. Outwith pay bargaining a Teachers' consultative committee allows for regular discussion and consultation between the recognised Teacher Associations and the Agency senior managers. In addition matters of local concern may also be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive through local Whitley Committees where they exist.

7.7 Arrangements also exist for discussion between locally entered staff and representatives of the Agency in line with local arrangements.

7.8 **Equal Opportunities.** The Chief Executive will promote equal opportunities best practice throughout the Agency and will provide staff with a working environment free from discrimination and harassment.

7.9 **Health and Safety.** The Chief Executive will comply fully with appropriate Health and Safety regulations provided that they do not infringe Host Country regulations.

7.10 **Discipline and Inefficiency.** The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that civilian disciplinary and inefficiency cases are handled in accordance with MOD policy.

8. Review of the Framework Document

8.1 The Adjutant General or Chief Executive may propose amendments to this Framework Document at any time with the aim of increasing delegated responsibility where this offers the prospect of improved performance. Within five years of launch, the Adjutant General will conduct an evaluation of the Agency's performance and a review of the options for its future. If, as a result, Agency status is retained, he will review the content of this Framework Document in consultation with the Chief Executive, Treasury and OPS. Separate consultation with staff and their representatives will be undertaken at this time.

8.2 **Publication.** Copies of this Framework Document, together with any subsequent amendment, will be place in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament. Additional copies of this Framework Document can be obtained from the Agency.