

Scottish Government Non-Executive Directors

Applicant Information Pack August 2026



Welcome from the Permanent Secretary

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Scottish Government Non-Executive Director. I am delighted that you are considering bringing your experience, expertise and insight to support our organisation.

The Scottish Government exists to improve the lives of the people of Scotland. We are committed to building a trusted, high-performing civil service that is equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly changing world.

Rising demand for public services, demographic shifts, fiscal constraint, and technology is transforming how organisations operate. To respond successfully, we are becoming a more focused, skilled and adaptable organisation; one that is relentlessly focused on delivering Ministers' priorities and taking practical action to improve outcomes for the people and communities we serve.

Our Non-Executive Directors play a vital role in helping us achieve that ambition. They provide independent challenge, constructive advice and strategic insight, helping us to strengthen our leadership, improve our performance and ensure we remain focused on what matters most.

I am looking for individuals who share our commitment to public service and who will bring fresh perspectives, diverse experience and a willingness to challenge and support in equal measure. We value the benefits that different backgrounds, viewpoints and lived experiences bring to our decision-making.

If you are excited by the opportunity to help shape the future of the Scottish Government and have the integrity, skills and experience to fulfil this unique NXD role, I look forward to hearing from you.



Joe Griffin
Permanent Secretary

The Scottish Government - Scotland's Civil Service

The Scottish Government is the devolved government for Scotland. We have responsibility for a wide range of key policy areas including: education, health, the economy, justice, housing and transport. We are 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 £67 billion of expenditure each year.

Working with colleagues across parliament, local government, the third sector, business and communities, the Scottish Government has four strategic priorities designed to guide decision making and deliver for the people of Scotland:

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

Senior Management Structure

The Permanent Secretary is the most senior civil servant in Scotland and leads the Executive Team. There are seven Directors-General that make up the Executive Team with strategic responsibilities for: Corporate; Economy; Health and Social Care; Education and Justice; Communities and External Affairs; Net Zero, and Exchequer, Strategy and Performance. Further information about the Scottish Government, can be found [here](#)

Mission, Vision and Values: In the Service of Scotland

- 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.

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 Audit and Assurance Committee and attend Corporate Board.



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 decision-making. As Principal Accountable Officer (PAO), the Permanent Secretary is ultimately responsible for how the Scottish Government 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 focus on providing their independent advice, support and challenge in cross-government spaces. They participate in the quarterly Corporate Board, which focuses on strategic direction concerning organisational strategy and performance. They bring an objective 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 Audit and Assurance Committee and support the Assurance process through quarterly Director General Assurance meetings. They 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, recognising 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.

Key details about the appointment

Time commitment: Up to 40 days per year.

Remuneration: The role will attract a quarterly fee of £3660.

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

The Permanent Secretary is looking for Non-Executive Directors who can put their skills, knowledge, understanding and experience to good use at the Scottish Government. The table below sets out the priority and essential criteria and explains how each will be tested.

To be considered for appointment you must demonstrate, by the end of the process, that you meet all the essential criteria and one priority criterion. You can draw on examples from your working life, your personal life, or through your participation with a private, public, voluntary, charity or community organisation. The priority criteria will be considered first in the assessment process. **You should select and evidence one of these.** You will be expected to meet all essential criteria.

Knowledge, experience and skill	What does this mean in practical terms?	How will this be tested?
PRIORITY Criteria: apply under one of the following criteria		
Commercial leadership	We are looking for someone with business acumen, commercially minded, who can demonstrate a track record of driving transformation. We want someone who is entrepreneurial in nature with deep knowledge and understanding of the factors supporting economic growth.	Show us your track record in your tailored CV, and tell us about your understanding in your covering letter. At interview we will talk to you about how you would use your experience and expertise in a non-executive role.
Digital leadership	We are looking for someone with experience of implementing or overseeing digital transformation in a complex organisation to deliver increased productivity and streamlined services. Knowledge and understanding of the strategic implications of emerging technologies, including AI, and their impact on organisational performance, reputation, and growth.	Show us your experience in your tailored CV, and tell us about your understanding in your covering letter. At interview we will talk to you about how you would use your experience and expertise in a non-executive role.

Community or voluntary sector leadership	We are looking for an experienced leader from the community sector, charity sector, or social enterprise, who has a track record of working with people and supporting them to make their voices heard in decision making and delivering change. Knowledge and understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing mission-led organisations, and expertise in developing partnerships and engaging effectively with diverse communities.	Set out your experience in your tailored CV, and tell us about your understanding in your covering letter. At interview we will talk to you about how you would use your experience and expertise in a non-executive role.
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ESSENTIAL Criteria: applicants need to meet all of the essential criteria to be considered for appointment

Experience in a governance role	We are looking for people who bring experience of ensuring effective governance at board level within the public, private or community sector and can demonstrate a successful track record overseeing financial strategy, planning, scrutiny, audit and risk management, and accountability. Knowledge and understanding of board responsibilities and good governance principles.	Set out your experience in your tailored CV and tell us about your understanding in your covering letter. At interview we will ask you for specific examples of your governance experience.
Constructive challenge, advice and influencing skills	We are looking for people with outstanding communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to build relationships and influence at all levels. We use our values to inform ways of working and guide us on how we, as individuals, behave and operate - even in the face of uncertainty and ambiguity. You will have experience of applying your understanding of issues and others' perspectives to enable effective scrutiny, offering challenge that has changed views and influenced decisions without causing harm to long-term relationships.	Your covering letter will provide evidence of your communication skills. At interview we will ask you for specific examples of your constructive challenge and influencing skills.

Understanding of diversity and equality as business-critical issues	We are looking for people with direct experience of championing diversity and equality. Knowledge and understanding of the benefits of diversity and inclusion in performance improvement, decision making, talent management and leadership.	Set out your experience in your tailored CV and tell us about your understanding in your covering letter. At interview we will ask you for specific examples of how you have applied this understanding.
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How to apply

To apply for this post, you will submit your application **no later than 11:59pm on 15th September, 2026**. Download and save this applicant information pack to refer to.

Please click the 'apply now' link at the top of the advert. As part of the online application process, you will need to complete the personal information section and then upload the following as one PDF:

- **Covering letter**

Your letter should be in Arial 12 point font and no longer than two pages. You should provide examples of your chosen priority criterion and the essential criteria as noted in the person specification.

- **Tailored CV**

In addition to your covering letter, you should also submit a tailored CV. This should be no longer than two pages using Arial 12 point font. You should set out your relevant career history, with key responsibilities and achievements. Please also ensure that you clearly indicate the scale of organisation (turnover and headcount) where you have Board level leadership experience (as an executive and / or non-executive).

IMPORTANT - Please combine your supporting statement and career history (CV) into one PDF before uploading as one attachment to your application.

Your PDF should be uploaded using the 'Drop Resume Here' box that appears on the supporting documents and URLs section, or you can use the link function.

We strongly recommend that you draft your answers in a word document and check that you are happy with them before uploading the combined covering letter and tailored CV. Please note that you will not be able to update any information or your covering letter and tailored CV once they have been submitted.

Late applications, those without a covering letter and tailored CV, and those exceeding the page limits cannot be considered by the panel.

For a confidential discussion please contact:

Kirsty Walker, Board Secretary (Kirsty.Walker2@gov.scot)

Reasonable Adjustments

If you require a reasonable adjustment at any stage of the process, please contact ETSGO@gov.scot marking your email 'In confidence: NXD Recruitment 2026'

Selection

The selection panel will assess all application forms against the criteria for appointment (see the person specification). Those who demonstrate evidence that most closely meets the criteria tested at this stage will be shortlisted for interview.

At interview, the selection panel will ask you questions that relate directly to the criteria for appointment. Interviews are planned for w/c 12 October.

In addition to being asked questions about how you meet the criteria, you will also be asked to give a presentation that will highlight how you would apply your experience and expertise in the role (details will be provided in advance of interview).

The selection panel will review the evidence provided and agree on which candidates have most closely met the criteria for selection and should be recommended to the Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary will make a decision about whom to appoint based on evidence from the selection panel and will meet with the candidates before making a final decision.

Selection Panel

Miriam Craven, DG Corporate (Panel Chair)

Gregor Irwin, DG Economy

Belinda Oldfield, Lead Non Executive Director

Kirsty Walker, Board Secretary (Panel Secretary)

Please note that applicants will be asked to declare if they know any members of the selection panel. The selection panel will also declare if they know any applicants.

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.

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. 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.

As part of the selection process, all applicants invited to interview will be subject to a social media review. The selection panel may consider publicly available information posted by candidates on social media or information that is reported in the media. Any findings that the selection panel agree are pertinent to the role or that may call into question suitability for the appointment, credibility of the process or the Scottish Government will be discussed with candidates at interview. Consideration of any issues will take place openly and

transparently to establish the facts. Candidates will be given an opportunity to respond to any concerns.

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. Feedback will be offered to all applicants who are interviewed.