

Chief Operating Officer – Job Description

Role title: Chief Operating Officer

Reporting to: Commissioner

Role type: Senior leadership / executive management

Role Purpose

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for leading the organisation's operational, governance, administrative and support functions, ensuring that the organisation operates effectively, efficiently and in accordance with its strategic priorities, regulatory obligations and good governance standards. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the postholder will provide executive leadership across finance oversight, contractor management, facilities, projects, risk, compliance support and internal administration.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership and Governance

- Act as an executive member of the Senior Leadership Team, contributing to organisational strategy, planning and decision-making.
- Oversee organisational governance and administration, ensuring effective systems, controls, records and reporting are in place.
- Support the Board and senior leadership with operational insight, governance information and assurance reporting as required.
- Promote a culture of accountability, continuous improvement and sound operational discipline across the organisation.

Operational and Team Management

- Lead and manage the Governance, Operations and Administration (GOA) team, ensuring clear responsibilities, effective performance management and appropriate resourcing.
- Oversee day-to-day operational processes and ensure that administrative activities are delivered accurately, efficiently and to appropriate standards.
- Identify opportunities to improve operational effectiveness, streamline processes and strengthen internal controls.
- Ensure appropriate policies, procedures and records are maintained and reviewed in line with organisational needs.

Finance, Audit and Fiscal Oversight

- Oversee financial administration, budgeting, fiscal duties and financial planning activities, working with external finance providers where appropriate.
- Manage the relationship with external accountants, including month-end accounts, financial oversight and reporting.
- Coordinate and support the annual audit process, ensuring timely preparation, accurate information flow and effective liaison with auditors.
- Review and approve payroll processes, ensuring appropriate controls and authorisations are maintained.
- Oversee investment management and financial planning arrangements, ensuring alignment with organisational objectives and risk appetite.

Contractor and Supplier Management

- Manage key external contractor and supplier relationships, including finance, information security, IT, human resources and other professional service providers.
- Ensure contractors are appropriately engaged, monitored and held accountable for agreed service levels and deliverables.
- Oversee contracts, renewals and supplier documentation, ensuring value for money, service quality and appropriate risk management.
- Maintain clear communication channels between internal stakeholders and external providers.

Projects, Facilities and Risk Management

- Provide project management oversight for operational projects, including planning, budget management, implementation tracking and reporting.
- Oversee premises and facilities management, ensuring the working environment is safe, secure, compliant and fit for purpose.
- Ensure appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place and monitored effectively.
- Support organisational risk management by identifying operational risks, implementing controls and escalating material issues as appropriate.

Information Technology and Information Security

- Provide senior-level oversight of IT arrangements, working with external IT providers to ensure systems are reliable, secure and aligned to organisational needs.
- Oversee information security arrangements in conjunction with specialist advisers, ensuring appropriate controls, awareness and reporting are maintained.

- Support technology-related decisions by assessing operational impact, risk, cost and implementation requirements.

Person Specification

Essential Experience, Knowledge and Skills

- Experience supporting, working at or reporting to Board level officers, with the ability to provide clear, balanced and evidence-based advice.
- Strong understanding of organisational governance, administration, financial controls and risk management.
- Experience managing teams, professional advisers, contractors and suppliers.
- Good working knowledge of budgeting, audit, contracts, facilities and operational compliance.
- Senior operational leadership experience.
- Senior-level awareness of IT and information security matters.
- Excellent communication, planning, judgement and stakeholder management skills.

Desirable Qualifications

- Institute of Directors Diploma in Company Direction, or equivalent governance qualification.
- Project management qualification such as PRINCE2, Agile or equivalent practical project management experience.
- Relevant finance, governance, risk, operations or management qualification.

Key Attributes

- Strategic and commercially aware, while maintaining strong attention to operational detail.
- Calm, organised and pragmatic, with the ability to prioritise effectively under pressure.
- Credible and collaborative, able to build productive relationships with the Board, senior leaders, colleagues and external providers.
- Risk-aware and governance-minded, with a commitment to accountability, integrity and good administration.
- Proactive and improvement-focused, with the confidence to challenge constructively and recommend practical solutions.