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Scheme of Financial Delegation

**13 January 2015**

**V2.4 FINAL**

**Review date: March 2016**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This scheme of Delegation of Authority shall have effect as if incorporated in the Standing Orders (SOs).

The Chief Executive has the overall responsibility, as Accounting Officer, for all aspects of the Health Research Authority’s performance but clearly cannot discharge those responsibilities personally and has therefore devised this Delegation of Authority scheme. Accountability cannot be devolved but the responsibility for aspects of control and management is hereby devolved. Officers who have devolved responsibilities also have a duty to discharge these responsibilities in accordance with the Health Research Authority’s Standing Orders (SOs), Standing Financial Instructions (SFIs) and the NHS Code of Conduct.

In the first instance the Chief Executive devolves responsibility to direct line reports by agreement. In turn each of these line reports will devise a scheme, in accordance with this scheme, to devolve responsibility to individuals in their delivery function.

This scheme refers to six levels of management to which matters can be devolved. Each delivery function needs to be clear with each post holder at which level they are and in which areas they have devolved responsibility. They must also put in place deputising or substitution arrangements for the above, particularly when senior managers are absent. Where the Chief Executive has devolved authority to a direct line report, that direct line report can choose to delegate authority to officers at other levels as they see fit, but they are not compelled to devolve.

A record must be kept of the officers they select to devolve authority at Silver plus, Silver, Silver minus, Bronze plus and Bronze levels and their specimen signatures must be supplied to the Finance Department. These records must be maintained and up to date at all times. These records detail the responsibilities placed on each signatory.

Principles on which delegation is based

1. All staff, individually and collectively, are responsible for
   1. Avoiding loss;
   2. Operating within the delegated limits set out.
2. Separation of duties required on every transaction
3. Requirement for confirmation that goods/services have been received as ordered prior to payment
4. Authorisation of expenditure delegated to the most appropriate level – ie to the person most able to influence value for money decisions
5. Ensuring that delegated financial authorities are respected.
6. Emphasis of roles as stewards of public funds will form the bedrock for management of HRA finances alongside a cost conscious culture – all budget managers clear what their roles are when they are granted delegated authorisation status

**2. THE SIX TIERS OR LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT**

2.1 Bronze

Those at Bronze level will be individual budget holders whose responsibility covers a discrete area. For example they would usually deal with an individual or maximum of three HRA Research Ethics Committees, which form part of a single cost centre. REC Managers would normally operate at this level.

2.2 Bronze plus

Those at Bronze plus will have similar responsibilities to those at Bronze but require a higher limit to be able to effectively carry out their duties. Regional Managers would normally operate at this level.

2.3 Silver

Those at Silver level will be responsible for all or part of a function, and may have a number of Bronze plus level budget holders reporting to them.

2.4 Silver plus

Those at Silver plus level will typically be direct line reports to a Director and be responsible for a significantly larger part of a service area and line management reports than those at Silver level.

2.5 Gold minus

Those at Gold minus level will typically be Directors and direct line reports to the Chief Executive.

2.6 Gold

Those at Gold level will be the Chief Executive. In the absence of the Chief Executive the third Executive Director will operate at the Gold level.

The Chief Executive together with the Director of Finance, will approve all non ICT financial transactions with a value in excess of £100,000 up to £350,000.

A limit of £100,000 will also be observed for ICT financial transactions. These approval limits are based on current government restrictions and ALB delegations and may be subject to change. Board approval and the agreement of the DH sponsor are required for any transactions above these limits.

A log will be maintained of all communications and marketing expenditure between £20k and £100k in line with ALB delegation requirements and shared with DH Communications team on a quarterly basis.

All cases for digital expenditure, regardless of the proposed expenditure, require individual approval from the DH digital panel and must be submitted through the Director of Finance. These limits do not apply to professional service consultancy expenditure for which there is a freeze on new spend. Any proposed new consultancy spend is subject to DH approval and all cases must be submitted through the Director of Finance.

In the interests of transparency, the following will be reported on our website.

* All payments over £15k
* Better payment performance information
* Board members and Directors travel expenses

In addition, all payments or contracts agreed over £100,000 will be reported to the Board for information.

2.7 The limits are all excluding VAT, as VAT is reclaimable in some circumstances and the use of limits excluding VAT makes it easier to administer. All limits below are therefore excluding VAT.

**3. Details of Scheme of Delegation and financial limits**

3.1 Committing Expenditure – purchasing and payments

3.1.1 Raising Non-Pay Requisitions in line with Departmental Efficiency Measures

Up to available budget

orders up to £1,000 Bronze

orders to £50,000 Gold minus

orders up to £100,000 Gold

orders over £100,000 up to £350,000 Director of Finance

Countersigned by Gold

Orders above £350,000 Require Board approval and agreement of DH Sponsor

Over and above available budget Chief

all orders Executive

All requisitions must go through the Health Research Authority’s nominated Procurement System and be entered on to the Purchase Order system by the nominated procurement facilitator or buying co-ordinator.

3.1.2 Employing Temporary Staff and filling vacant posts in the establishment

Under the Departmental Efficiency Controls, approval is required to recruit to all vacancies.

A banded job description is required to support all Vacancy Control Form requests.

Under the HRA Vacancy Control Policy a Vacancy Control Form must be completed for all vacant posts within establishment and where requirements for a new post have been identified. Affordability sign off is required by finance.

Where external recruitment is required the HRA business case template must be approved by the Executive Management Team recruitment panel.

3.2 Tendering and Contracts

Invitations to Tender Director of Finance subject to the Departmental Efficiency Controls

Admission and Acceptability of Late Tenders Director of Finance

Opening/Receipt of Tenders and Quotations see SFI 17.6.3

All tenders and quotations must be opened or reviewed by at least two members of senior staff not directly involved in the scheme or project. A process for doing this will be published.

Use of Single Tender actions by agreement with Director of Finance and subject to the Departmental efficiency controls

Up to £25,000 Director of Finance or Chief Executive (total number and value to be reported to next Audit Committee)

over £25,000 and up to £50,000 Chief Executive (to be reported in detail to next Audit Committee)

Signing of Contracts (all contracts to be recorded in the Contracts Register by nominated Buying co-ordinator prior to signature. The Finance Department maintain the contracts register)

Non – recurrent contracts up to £5,000 Budget Manager and Senior

with agreed budget Finance Manager

Up to £50,000 Director of Finance

Up to £100,000 Chief Executive

Over £100,000 To be signed both by Chief Executive and Director of Finance. To also be reported to the Board and Audit Committee at its next meeting for information.

3.3 Management of Budgets

3.3.1 Restricting Expenditure to Budgeted Level

Budget holders are responsible for ensuring that their budgets are only used for the designated purpose and that day to day financial activities of the HRA are carried out within the guidelines of the SFI and SO procedures.

They are also responsible for ensuring that their named deputy (s) is held accountable for compliance with the locally defined arrangements for committing expenditure.

Budget holders must therefore ensure that:

1. They read and familiarise themselves with the complete SFI and SO documentation (available on the HRA website, HRA shared drive and intranet)
2. They read the Nolan Committee Principles on “Standards in public life”. These are submitted together with the proposed final budget for the year.
3. Raise awareness of the contents of these documents to all the staff that support them in their delegated financial responsibilities
4. They are clear about their role as stewards of public funds. A cost conscious culture must form the bedrock for management of HRA finances alongside pursuit of value for money.
5. They and their delegated signatories, sign a declaration and authorized signatory form to confirm their awareness and understanding of their designated responsibilities (see appendix A)

Training will be offered by finance to all budget managers on an annual basis and a register maintained. A minimum of quarterly budget meetings with a finance lead will also take place at which training can be provided. A register of meetings will be kept. Where budgets are overspent, or there are other areas of concern, the appropriateness of delegation of authority should be reviewed by the line manager and rescinded if the individual concerned is unable to demonstrate their competence to manage a budget. Further training should be given in these cases and the individual delegation restored once competence can be shown.

3.3.2 Virement

The HRA Budget Virement Policy sets out the policy, delegations and procedure relating to budget virements.

Virement, or the moving of budgets between headings, is permitted in the following circumstances only. A budget virement form must be completed and approved in all cases and submitted for HRA finance approval. Each budget (cost centre) must be split between the following categories of expenditure –

Pay

Non-Pay

Income

3.4 Setting Fees and Charges

All levels of fees and charges to be proposed to and agreed by the Director of Finance. All such levels of fees and changes to be reviewed at least annually.

3.5 Losses and Compensation

3.5.1 Power to Authorise Write-Off of Losses and

Special Payments up to Delegated Limit for the Authority

All losses up to £500 should be authorized by the Director of Finance. All losses over £500 but less than £20,000 to be authorised by the Chief Executive with advice from the Director of Finance.

The HRA audit committee will review the schedule of all losses and compensations.

Special Payments all require approval by the board up to £20,000 (Excluding payments that are novel, contentious, repercussive or special severance payments, which require Department of Health approval). They should also be reviewed by the HRA audit committee.

All HR related cases require HM Treasury approval and where they are over £20k they also required GAC approval.

3.6 Employment

3.6.1 Establishments

Establishments must be matched by, and Director of Finance

limited to, available budget but may be varied countersigned by CE

as budgets change. Permanent staff

recruitment process must be followed

3.6.2 Salaries on Appointment all posts **including secondments** (noting that all vacant posts are budgeted at mid point)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Starting salaries up to mid point | Line Manager in consultation with Gold minus officer if salary proposed is above minimum point on scale and upto mid point. The fully completed VCF must be returned to finance. |
| Starting salaries between mid point and top of approved band | Gold minus officer if salary proposed is above minimum point on the approved band. The fully completed VCF must be returned to finance with funding identified for the difference and is subject to a further finance check and approval. |
| Starting salaries above the approved band | Gold in consultation with Director of Finance if appointed above the banded scales. The fully completed VCF must be returned to finance with funding identified for the difference and is subject to a further finance check and approval.. |
| Recruitment and Retention premium | Gold in consultation with Director of Finance for any decision to pay recruitment and retention . The fully completed VCF must be returned to finance with funding identified for the difference and is subject to a further finance check and approval.. |

In line with the Departmental efficiency controls, any post with a salary in excess of £142,500 will require sign off by the DH Remcom on behalf of the Secretary of State prior to going to advertising. Approval is also required when an employment contract is issued, renewed or an individual earning in excess of £142,500 moves to a new post. All new VSM posts must be evaluated via DH. The HRA Board and HRA Pay and Remuneration Committee are required to approve any proposals prior to submission to DH Remcom.

3.6.3 Regrading In accordance with Job Evaluation process

3.6.4 Leave (in accordance with policy)

* Approval of leave )
* Approval of carry-over leave within Policy ) Line Manager
* Compassionate and special leave )

3.6.5 Study Leave Line Manager

3.6.6 Removal Expenses

Authorisation of payments, in accordance with

Policy up to current HMRC tax free limit

Providing consideration was promised

at interview Gold, in consultation with HR

3.6.7 Sick Leave

Management of long term sickness Line Manager

3.6.8 Grievance and Disciplinaries Refer to detailed Policy

3.6.9 Telephones

New or replacements for existing telephone or

Mobiles/iphones/ Silver

3.6.10 Honorary Contracts and Secondment agreements Gold on advice from HR. HR must hold all copies of secondment agreements.

3.6.11 Travel and other expenses Line Manager

3.7 Business Cases to DH

All business cases for submission to the DH must be approved by the Chief Executive before being submitted.

All business cases involving ICT related expenditure over £100k should also be submitted to the Department’s Estates and Information Services who will review and provide advice, priori to submission for financial approval.

3.8 Leases for Equipment and Buildings

There is a freeze on signing any new property leases or lease extensions unless they are approved by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

All leases, including photocopier and equipment leases must be agreed by the Director of Finance after a review has been undertaken to ascertain whether the lease constitutes a finance or operational lease.

3.9 Unconventional or Novel Transactions

In the event that a transaction is proposed that is unconventional, novel or otherwise unusual, the advice of the Director of Finance must be sought and whose approval must be obtained before proceeding. Any such payments should also be reported to the audit committee.

3.10 Capital

£1million to £5million whole life costs require approval from DH sponsor.

# Document Control

**Change Record**

| Version Status | Date of Change | Reason for Change |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| December 2011 V1.0 | 29/12/2011 | Updated for comments from HRA SMG |
| February 2014 V2.0 | 20/02/2014 | Revised for new structures, delegation limits and general refresh and update and submitted to reviewers for comment. |
| March 2014 V2.1 | 11/03/14 | EMT and finance team comments assimilated |
| V2.2 | 12/03/2014 | Audit chair initial comments |
| V2.3 | 26/03/2014 | Board comments incorporated |
| V2.4 | 12/01/2015 | Update and improvement in controls. |
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**Reviewers**

| **Name** | **Position** | **Version Reviewed** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Finance team, EMT** |  | **V2.0** |
| **Audit Chair, Board** |  | **V2.2** |
| **EMT, Board** |  | **V2.4** |
|  |  |  |

**Distribution of Approved Version**

| **Name of person or group** | **Position** | **Version Released** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| Executive Management  Team |  |  |
| Intranet/shared drive |  |  |
| All budget managers with 2015/16 budgets |  |  |
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Appendix A

