



Government
Commercial
Function



Cabinet Office

Candidate Pack

Government Chief Commercial Officer Cabinet Office

Senior Commercial Specialist

Salary: £250,000 per annum

Closing date: 15th October 2024



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Welcome Message from

Cat Little

Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office



Thank you for your interest in the Government's Chief Commercial Officer role.

It is a brilliant time to be taking on the responsibilities and challenges that this role entails. Demands for high-quality public services have never been higher; nor has the need to drive ever greater efficiency in delivering them. Rising to meet the demands of citizens is both a privilege and a responsibility. Citizens rightly expect Government money to be spent wisely, in pursuit of high quality services that deliver for them in all aspects of life.

To do this, the Civil Service must be highly skilled, motivated and innovative in searching out new efficiencies and seizing opportunities wherever they arise. In building our relationships with the suppliers that support us in delivering these services, we must be equally stretching: building the deep strategic relationships with specific suppliers where necessary, while being searching in all our contractual relationships to ensure we are spending taxpayers' money wisely.

The Commercial Function is a thriving group of experts who take on this challenge every day, and the role of Government Chief Commercial Officer presents an opportunity to work alongside and within this vibrant community on a huge array of projects; whether in energy, national security, or in improving healthcare delivery at the national and local level. With the recent passage of the Procurement Act, there are enormous opportunities to leverage the new flexibilities offered, and to shape our relationship with suppliers that span from the largest multinational organisations to the smallest SMEs.

Realising these opportunities requires confident, experienced leaders, who work collaboratively and strategically to drive real results at pace. We need to support our colleagues in developing their skills and experience even further and prepare the Civil Service to meet the challenges of the coming years and decades. I would be delighted to hear from candidates from all walks of life and past experience who have the enthusiasm and energy to take this task on and deliver real change and value for the citizens of the UK, building an excellent commercial function for a modern Civil Service.

Background

The Civil Service is one of the biggest and most complex employers in the UK, employing over 400,000 Civil Servants serving both Ministers and the public to deliver the priorities of the Government of the day. These include major projects with a lifecycle cost of around £500bn, as well as programmes and services that affect everyone in the United Kingdom. The annual spend is c. £70bn per annum with a range of suppliers including SMEs.

Following a review with some major contracts and key suppliers a number of years ago, the Civil Service committed itself to dramatically improving its commercial performance. This included establishing a Commercial Function which operates with, and in support of, departments. This coincided with the first set of [Commercial Standards](#) published for the government in February 2016, updated in May 2022, which we now benchmark against, and the suite of 'Playbooks' co-developed with industry to drive improved outcomes for all stakeholders.

Over the last eight years, much progress has been made in establishing a well recruited and respected functional community, backed by these professional standards and a record of delivery on savings and contract performance across Central Government departments and their associated arm's length bodies. While that work needs to continue, public spend with third parties is a total of c.£300 billion, with c.£230 billion coming from the much more diffuse group of wider public bodies; schools, councils and the NHS, itself composed of 240 or more independent trusts. The challenge now is therefore to make further progress in the way that central government departments work with their supply base, ensuring vibrant markets of well-run suppliers exist for the goods and services central government needs, while also expanding commercial excellence into areas of wider government where the role holder will have only influence rather than any direct line ability to foster local capability and delivery improvements. The recently passed Procurement Act brings new flexibilities (and also transparency requirements) that need to be seized.

You can find out more about the Government Commercial Organisation [here](#) or by looking at the details on the Commercial Function [here](#).

About the role

Based within the Cabinet Office, the Government Chief Commercial Officer (GCCO) leads the Commercial Function across the entire Civil Service, partnering and advising at the most senior levels. Reporting directly to the Chief Operating Officer of the Civil Service, the role is accountable for evolving and implementing the commercial strategy for the Civil Service, positioning the commercial function as a key delivery partner in all commercial relationships and helping departments realise efficiency savings.

The GCCO is responsible for implementing professional standards for circa 6,000 Commercial professionals, as well as leading and building strong commercial expertise across all Government Departments. Commercial resources overseen by the Function consist of;

- a number of core interlocking central teams working together on Policy, Standards and Continuous Improvement, Complex Transactions, Markets and Suppliers (that will build pan-government relationships with key suppliers) and Commercial Capability;
- colleagues in the Commercial Directorates within Departments and Agencies, and;
- the Crown Commercial Service, a trading fund sourcing common goods and services for the Civil Service and the wider public sector, managing spend of circa £30bn in 2022/23.

This role will also have oversight and direct management of the Government Grants Function (GGMF). Grants are a vital funding tool for government, key to the delivery of government priorities including Net Zero, Levelling Up as well as stimulating innovation and rebuilding the economy. The Government Grants Function (GGMF) is focused on unlocking the greatest value from grant funds for citizens and the economy improving capability and driving delivery excellence to secure better outcomes.

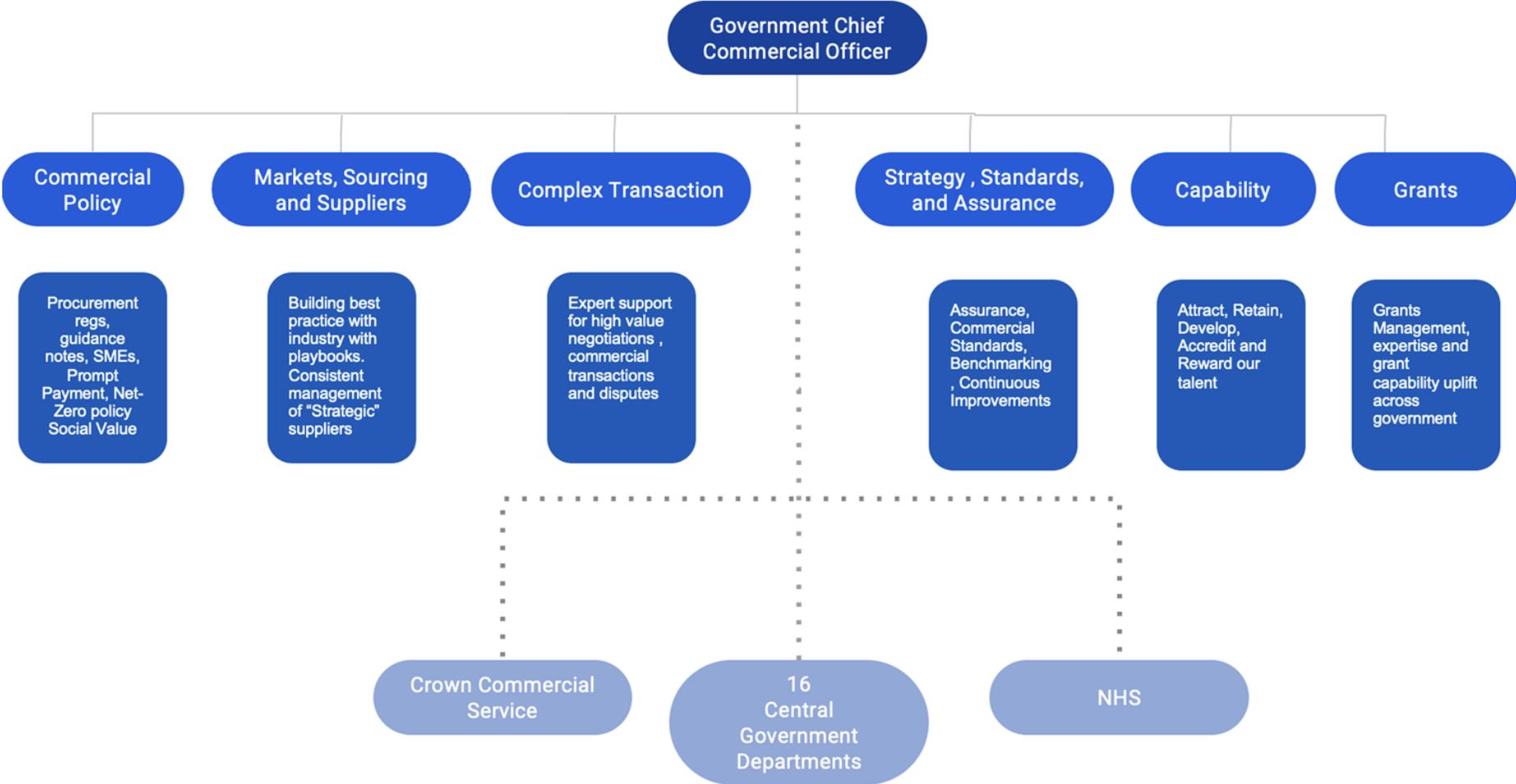
The GGMF supports government departments and their Arms Length Bodies to achieve increased efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of government grants, from the design of a grant scheme to evaluation of outcomes. Government grant spend in 2022/23 totalled £156bn. As Director General across both grants and commercial you will actively drive the close partnership between the GGMF and GCF to achieve greater effectiveness in the design and delivery of commercial contracts and grant schemes.

About the role cont.

As the Government Chief Commercial Officer, you will:

- **Strengthen and develop commercial capability** throughout the civil service and have direct leadership oversight of Commercial Directors in departments. You will also be a point of contact for Ministers on cross-government commercial matters;
- **Ensure that the government acts as a responsible, intelligent and experienced client**, ensuring that relationships with our most significant suppliers are strategic, productive and working to mutual advantage
- **Develop commercial management information and capability** for the Government to act strategically;
- **Improve the management of the most complex commercial transactions** across government to help deliver better outcomes;
- **Lead a central procurement organisation** and develop category management, with the aim of expanding beyond central government to the wider public sector.

GCO Organogram



What experience will you need?

The Civil Service is open to talented people from any career background and we will always seek to identify transferable skills from the individual's experience. To help you succeed in this role, we are seeking candidates with the following experience:

- Organisational leadership at the most senior level, including experience of sitting on an executive committee, or reporting directly into an executive committee member;
- Proven track record leading procurement across an enterprise, organisation or substantial business unit, with extensive knowledge of best practices in terms of category management, supply chain management and other related areas;
- Leadership of a procurement or supply chain function across a matrixed organisation;
- Extensive history of managing and supporting challenging stakeholders (across the public or private sectors – such as ministers, boards, strategic suppliers, and investors);
- Demonstrable experience of building high performing teams of diverse leaders from varying backgrounds, delivering through others by orchestrating and empowering;
- Proven track record of developing and/or implementing innovative tools and processes, with a continuous improvement mindset.

Desirable Criteria

- Ideally, membership of a professional body such as CIPS or equivalent.

Diversity is vital to the success of this role, and to the Civil Service as a whole. We actively welcome applications from candidates from all backgrounds, with different experiences and perspectives - and we are committed to ensuring that we work in an inclusive way that means everyone in the Civil Service can perform at their best.

The Recruitment Process

Civil Service recruitment processes at Director General level are regulated by the [Civil Service Commission](#), and we follow clear guidelines to ensure that our recruitment is fair and open. We also design our recruitment processes with both external and internal candidates in mind.

We expect the process for this role to be as follows:

- **The closing date for applications will be 23:55 on the 15th of October.**
- A Longlist of applications will take place on Monday 21st October
- Longlisted candidates will then be invited to **preliminary interviews with Russell Reynolds from Tuesday 22nd October**
- A shortlist of the applications will take place on Monday 11th November
- Soon after, shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend the **Commercial Assessment and Development Centre (ADC)**
- The panel will review results from the ADC and determine which candidates will go on to;
 - Undergo an **Individual Leadership Assessment (ILA)**
 - Take part in a **Staff Engagement Exercise (SEE)**
 - **Meet with key stakeholders**, including senior Ministers

Inputs from all of those three steps will then form the basis of a panel interview, chaired by Martin Spencer from the Civil Service Commission on **Friday 6th December 2024**.

Full details will be provided to shortlisted candidates and recognising that there are a number of steps in the process, we will do our best to arrange the sessions in a way that works for you. We hope that this process will be conducted in face-to-face sessions, but if you need any adjustments do let us know. More detail about the ADC can be found on page 14.

The Panel

The panel will consist of:



Martin Spencer
Civil Service Commissioner

[LinkedIn](#)



Cat Little
Civil Service Chief Operating
Officer and Cabinet Office
Permanent Secretary

[LinkedIn](#)



Bernadette Kelly
Permanent Secretary
Department for Transport

[LinkedIn](#)



David Williams
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Defence

[LinkedIn](#)

How to apply

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Russell Reynolds Associates (RRA) on behalf of the Cabinet Office. The closing date for applications is no **later than 23:55 on the 15th of October**.

Please submit the following, by email to responses@russellreynolds.com:

- Please **quote the role title and assignment code 2404-063L** in the subject heading of the email. All applications will be acknowledged.
- **Your CV**, with educational and professional qualifications and full employment history, including an explanation of any gaps in your employment history, and details where possible of budgets and numbers of people;
- A short covering statement of **no more than two A4 sized pages (1000 words)** explaining why this appointment interests you and how you can evidence your suitability for the role, with particular reference to the criteria in the ‘what experience will you need’ section on page 8;
- **Diversity monitoring form**. Please complete the following electronic form: [here](#)
- A **declaration of interest form**. Please complete the following electronic form: [here](#)

Please note that references and open-source due diligence checks (including into social media accounts) may be undertaken for all short-listed candidates. This vacancy is part of the [A Great Place to Work for Veterans](#) initiative. For further information on whether you are eligible to apply under this scheme please follow the link.

Cabinet Office is an accredited ‘Disability Confident Employer’ under the government’s **Disability Confident Scheme**, which denotes organisations that have a positive commitment towards disabled people. We guarantee to interview anyone with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the role, as outlined on page 8 of this pack. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview you should declare this where indicated on the Diversity Monitoring Form at the point you submit your application.

The law requires that selection for appointment to the Civil Service is on merit on the basis of fair and open competition as outlined in the [Civil Service Commission's Recruitment Principles](#). If you feel your application has not been treated in accordance with the [Recruitment Principles](#), and you wish to make a complaint, you should contact sarah.vale@cabinetoffice.gov.uk in the first instance.

Terms

- This role is being offered on a **permanent** basis and is a **full-time role**. Flexible working applications are welcomed and will be considered (including existing job share arrangements). You can be based in any of the Cabinet Office locations - London, York and Glasgow - but regular travel to our London offices will be required.
- This role is at Senior Commercial Specialist level (SCS3 Director General equivalent). If you are successful and are from outside of the Civil Service, you can expect your salary on appointment to be **£250,000 per annum** plus GCO Pension and GCO terms and conditions. Performance related pay at 20% (of base salary) is available. Existing civil servants will be offered a salary in line with the standard Civil Service rules on level transfer or promotion (10% increase on base salary or band minimum, whichever is higher). Where existing civil servants are currently earning more than the relevant pay-scales advertised, if successful, their remuneration will be adjusted to the maximum that has been advertised for this post. Successful candidates who gain an 'A' accreditation will be offered the choice between GCO terms or Cabinet Office (modernised) Civil Service terms. The advertised salary will be adjusted to sit on the GCO Civil Service equivalent pay scale for SCS level. B grade candidates will not be eligible to progress for this role.
- The role includes **25 days annual leave**, with the option of buying an additional 5 days. (This is in addition to 8 public holidays and one privilege day).
- If successful you must hold, or be willing to obtain, security clearance up to **DV** level. More information about the vetting process can be found [here](#).
- You will need to hold the right **immigration status and nationality requirements for this role** - please ask Russell Reynolds if you have any questions.
- Unfortunately we will not be able to reimburse you for any **expenses** incurred as part of this recruitment process.

Terms cont.

- *All civil servants are subject to the provisions of the Civil Service Code, which details the Civil Service values, standards of behaviour and rights and responsibilities. For further information visit [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk).*

To ensure the integrity of the judgements and decisions they make every day, all civil servants must make sure that no conflict arises - or could be perceived to arise - between their public duties and their private interests when joining, or leaving, the civil service. This is a requirement of our Civil Service Code and is designed to protect both individual civil servants and their employing departments.

If you believe you have any interests that might be relevant (or be perceived as relevant) to your ability to undertake this role, please let Russell Reynolds know early in the process. Such interests may be financial or may be related to the relationships you have with specific individuals, organisations, or employers. Russell Reynolds will be able to discuss those interests with you and help work through potential next steps.

Additional Resources

- GCO Careers Website - <https://www.govcommercialcareers.co.uk/>
- GCF People Standards were launched in 2015 to provide assurance that there is consistency and a common understanding of expected attributes, technical skills and business judgement of commercial professionals within Government. They set out the standards expected at the four different professional levels (Commercial Lead, Associate Commercial Specialist, Commercial Specialist, and Senior Commercial Specialist). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-commercial-function-people-standards-for-the-profession>
- Commercial Assessment Centre (ADC) - The ADC is a day-long assessment that will take place using a live video conference and an online assessment platform. Please see our brochure for more information <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commercial-assessment-and-development-centre>



Thank you for your interest in this role.
Please contact
responses@russellreynolds.com if you
would like to have a further discussion.

