

# Paper D1

## Update from Resources Committee

### Resources Committee

#### Basic Information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Michael Hopkins, Convenor <b>michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk</b> Victoria James, Chief Operating Officer <b>victoria.james@urc.org.uk</b>
<b>Action required</b>	Note
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Resolution 27</b> General Assembly notes the work of the Resources Committee. <b>Resolution 28</b> General Assembly notes the Annual Report and audited accounts for 2025.

#### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To provide an overview of the Resources Committee work relating to matters not already before General Assembly for decision. To draw General Assembly's attention to the availability of the audited accounts for 2025 and accompanying Trustee's report.
<b>Main points</b>	
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	<b>G2 Resources Committee Update July 2025</b> <b>G1 Budget Paper November 2025</b>
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	N/A

#### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	N/A
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	N/A

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Resources Committee formally began its work after General Assembly in 2024 and after its first year of work conducted a review of its Terms of Reference but also how it conducts its business. For this review processes each member of Resources Committee met with the Convenor and Secretary and discussed their experiences of the committee and any suggested improvements for how it functions. This was a helpful process, which yielded positive feedback but also

constructive points about areas of development which the Secretary has been implementing with the support of the wider Administration and Resources team.

- 1.2 Between General Assembly 2025 and General Assembly 2026, the Committee will have met five times.

## **2. Decisions & Main Areas of Focus**

### **2.1 Staffing Restructure**

2.1.1 The Resources Committee Update for General Assembly 2025 explained that the then General Secretariat had announced that there was to be a full review of the staff team (except for Retired Ministers Housing Society (RMHS)) which is not funded through the Ministry & Mission (M&M) budget). On 6 May 2025, the Resources Committee reviewed the proposed structures and associated roles in the context of a detailed outline of the strategy and rationale for the proposed changes.

2.1.2 At the time of General Assembly 2025, the consultations were ongoing and therefore no details could be provided at that time. The consultations concluded shortly after General Assembly 2025 with the new structure coming into place from 1 September 2025. It remains the case that the team is continuing to settle into that new structure and the operational developments to underpin the structure continue.

2.1.3 Within paper G1 Budget paper for Assembly Executive in November 2025, it was noted that the process resulted in nine people being made redundant, seven people being appointed to new roles and five people moving to part time hours. Each person moving into a new role had the benefit of a trial period to make sure the new role was right for them. One person has decided within their trial period that the role was not right for them and as such the number of redundancies rests at 10. Resources Committee and the Senior Leadership team thank these individuals for their work during their time with the United Reformed Church and their contribution to our shared life.

2.1.4 The restructure aimed to streamline operations, clarify roles, increase collaboration and ensure efficiency and accountability such that decision making in the Councils of the church becomes impact focussed and data driven. As such, teams within the Offices of General Assembly relate to the structures and areas of work covered by the Councils of the Church, which fall into three main areas. Firstly, those things which are necessary to be a well-run, compliant organisation, which is the remit of the Resources Committee. Secondly, those things which are essential to be a church organisation, which is the remit of the Ministries Committee. Finally, there are those things which help us live out our faith as the URC, which will be the remit of the new committee approved by General Assembly which will combine the current Mission and Discipleship committees.

2.1.5 Consequently, we have three main Departments, each led by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (formerly the General Secretariat):

- Administration & Resources, led by the Chief Operating Officer
- Ministries, led by the Deputy General Secretary (Ministries)
- Faith in Action, led by the Deputy General Secretary (Faith in Action).

2.1.6 Alongside these Departments are roles outside of the Senior Leadership Team which report directly to the General Secretary which include Head of Governance Services, Head of Legal Services and the Director of Strategy & Programmes.

2.1.7 Within Administration & Resources, we have formed a People and Benefits team which cover all areas in relation to the technical functions which enable people to fulfil their roles and receive their stipend or salary. This encompasses receipt of ongoing benefits and ensuring all legislative matters such as right to work checks for lay and ordained people are fulfilled.

2.1.8 The database and website functionality also sits within Administration and Resources to enable us to have a coordinated approach to data collection and analysis to support future strategic decisions and assess the impact of projects across the work of the Offices of General Assembly.

2.1.9 Three roles within the Administration & Resources Department are joint roles with the Methodist Church. The Building & Facilities Manager and Support Officer both work across the two office sites, which are geographically very close together. The Records and Archives Manager is also a joint role managing the records for both the Methodists and the URC.

2.1.10 The safeguarding team are part of the Ministries Department.

2.1.11 The Faith in Action Department support the United Reformed Church's outreach in several different areas. The Communications team are now part of the Faith in Action Department so that they are embedded in the life and work of this team, such that the depth and breadth of the life of the URC can be communicated.

2.1.12 Within the Faith in Action department there are several sub teams such that:

- Children, Youth & Intergenerational Discipleship and Evangelism and Ecumenism work alongside each other with shared support.
- Public Issues and Global and Intercultural Church would work alongside each other with shared support.
- World Justice and interfaith relations including Commitment for Life.

2.1.13 For more detail, the current organisational charts are provided in Appendix 1.

## 2.2 Finance Matters

2.2.1 The finances of the church has continued to be a significant area of focus for Resources Committee since General Assembly 2025 and has included:

- Preparing the 2026 budget ready for approval by the URC Trust and Assembly Executive. As there was going to be another deficit budget, this process was both a strategic and financial exercise. There were also operational complexities as a consequence of the staff restructure which moved some areas of spending into different teams. This required careful work to ensure the comparative figures were accurate.
- Monitoring of the quarterly management accounts.
- Preparation of the 2025 annual report and accounts for approval by the URC Trust and adoption by General Assembly. This process included meeting with

the auditors at the start of the process as well as receiving their feedback at the end of the process which will inform future work and decision making. The audit has been a smooth process for 2025.

2.2.2 After the committee adopted a new Budget Policy in 2024 for 2025, the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) have been working to embed this policy with staff and Committees. This embedding work continues but the policy is being followed well thus far by Committee Secretaries, and the outworking is that Resources Committee have been notified of some unbudgeted spends approved by committees (£10-20k) or agreed by budget holders (under £10k). In cases where it is higher spend (over £20k) agreement has been sought from Resources Committee on the recommendation of the relevant committee. This has resulted in the following decisions thus far under the policy:

- Repairs to the heating system in the Offices of General Assembly - £22,800
- JPIT Intern - £6,100
- Continued legal work on the disciplinary process review - £25,000

2.2.3 So far in 2026, there has therefore been approval of essential unbudgeted spend of £53,900.

2.2.4 The COO and CFO are aware that there is a need for further work with committees and those supporting committees to ensure a full understanding of the policy and its implications.

2.2.5 The Committee have reviewed the remit of the Church Building Fund grant and updated the process which has been communicated to synods as they seek to support local churches.

## 2.3 Church House (Tavistock Place) and Central Properties

2.3.1 Resources Committee have been involved in conveyancing transactions for several central properties for Moderators and General Assembly Appointed Ministers:

- The manse which was used by the previous Deputy General Secretary (Mission) is being marketed for sale for £530k as it will not be used in future as a manse.
- A new manse has been purchased for the North Western Synod Moderator at a cost of £675k. The property is currently undergoing a renovation with an estimated total cost of £120k. The purchase price reflected the need for modernisation.
- A purchase had been agreed on a new manse for the South Western Synod Moderator, after which the current manse will be sold. However, the first sale fell through and a second has now been found at a purchase price of £750k.
- The former South Western Moderator's manse which was not fit for purpose and proved difficult to sell, finally sold in the summer of 2025 for £535k.

2.3.2 The Committee, in collaboration with the URC Trust have established a clear delegation of authority for the maintenance of central properties and the purchase and sale thereof. This sets out which level decisions rest with the employed staff team, what needs to be decided by Resources Committee and what Resources Committee needs to refer to the URC Trust.

2.3.3 During some of the sale processes it has become apparent that, while the Law Society recommendation of a deposit equivalent to 10% of the agreed purchase remains, it is becoming increasingly common for 5% to be accepted. While 10% is to be achieved where possible, the Committee, along with the URC Trust have agreed that 5% can be accepted if it means securing a sale. In the event of breach, the full 10% is enforceable.

2.3.4 The Church House building remains in a good state of repair. However, at the start of January 2026 emergency work was required to the heating/air-conditioning system at an unbudgeted cost of £22,800.

2.3.5 Resources Committee are also undertaking a review of the facilities contracts to ensure that they are both fit for purpose and best value for money.

## 2.4 People & Benefits

2.4.1 The staff restructure created a new People and Benefits team which brings together, HR, payroll and pensions. Maxine Parker started in January as the new Head of People and Benefits. Maxine is working closely with the COO to move forward culturally and operationally following the restructure.

2.4.2 The current focus is a full review of policy and procedure, and most particularly to ensure compliance with the Employment Rights Act 2025. This work is scheduled through 2026. Details of policy work relating to this are provided in section 4.

2.4.3 The Pensions Committee is a subcommittee of Resources Committee, the Resources Committee has received regular updates about the move to Buy Out by an insurer of the closed pension scheme. Two members of Resources Committee are also members of the Joint Working Group working with the Pension Trust towards buy in and ultimately buy out of the Scheme. Since the Ministers' Pension Scheme moved to 'buy in' with Just, it is no longer necessary for us to hold the Pension Deficit Fund. The fund was made up of generous contributions from Synods for which we express our grateful thanks. The balance of the funds held have now been returned to the synods in proportion to their original contributions.

## 2.5 Policies

2.5.1 Resources Committee have dealt with the following routine policy reviews over the year:

- Anti-bribery
- Bring Your Own Device (IT)
- CCTV Policy
- Salary Review Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Health & Safety and Welfare Handbook
- Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure
- Expenses Policy (Lay staff)

2.5.2 The Employment Right Act 2025 has necessitated updates to various policies: -

- Probation Policy & Procedure

- Induction Policy and Procedure
- Paternity Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Neonatal leave and Paternity Bereavement Leave

2.5.3 Other policies have been introduced to cover operations and represent proactive steps to prevent future difficulties and to mitigate risks:

- Complaints Policy – this relates solely to complaints made by members of the wider denomination about lay staff members or contractors engaged in relation to the work undertaken in and from the Offices of General Assembly. It does not apply to ministers, RMHS, local church or synod contexts.
- Subject Access Request Policy & Procedure
- Generative AI Guidance

### **3. Annual Report and Annual Accounts**

3.1 Both the Resources Committee and the URC Trust have considered the findings of the audited accounts for year-end 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 and approved them.

3.2 Members of the General Assembly are invited to review the audited accounts, in preparation for passing this resolution, which are on the URC website and can be found on this page [www.urch.org.uk/general-assembly-papers](http://www.urch.org.uk/general-assembly-papers).

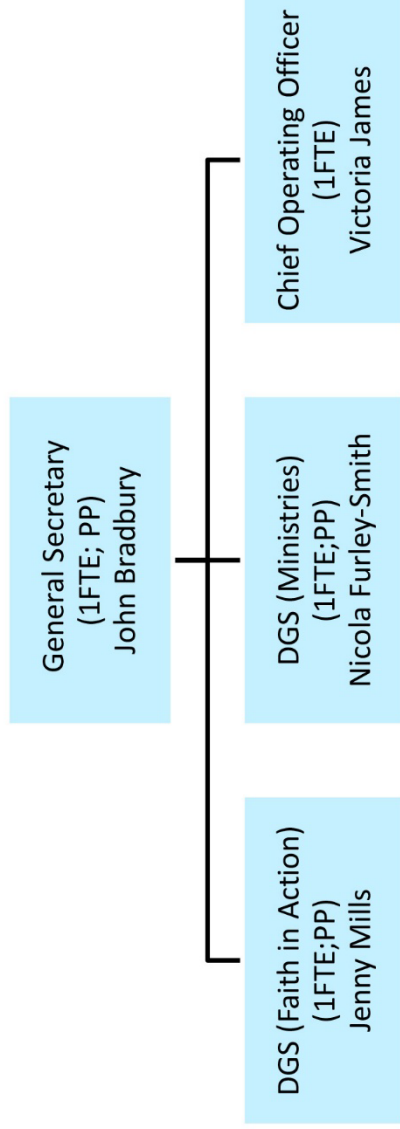
3.3 If for any reason the accounts are not available online before the General Assembly meets, the Treasurer will seek to withdraw the paper from consideration by members of the General Assembly.

### **4. Future Work**

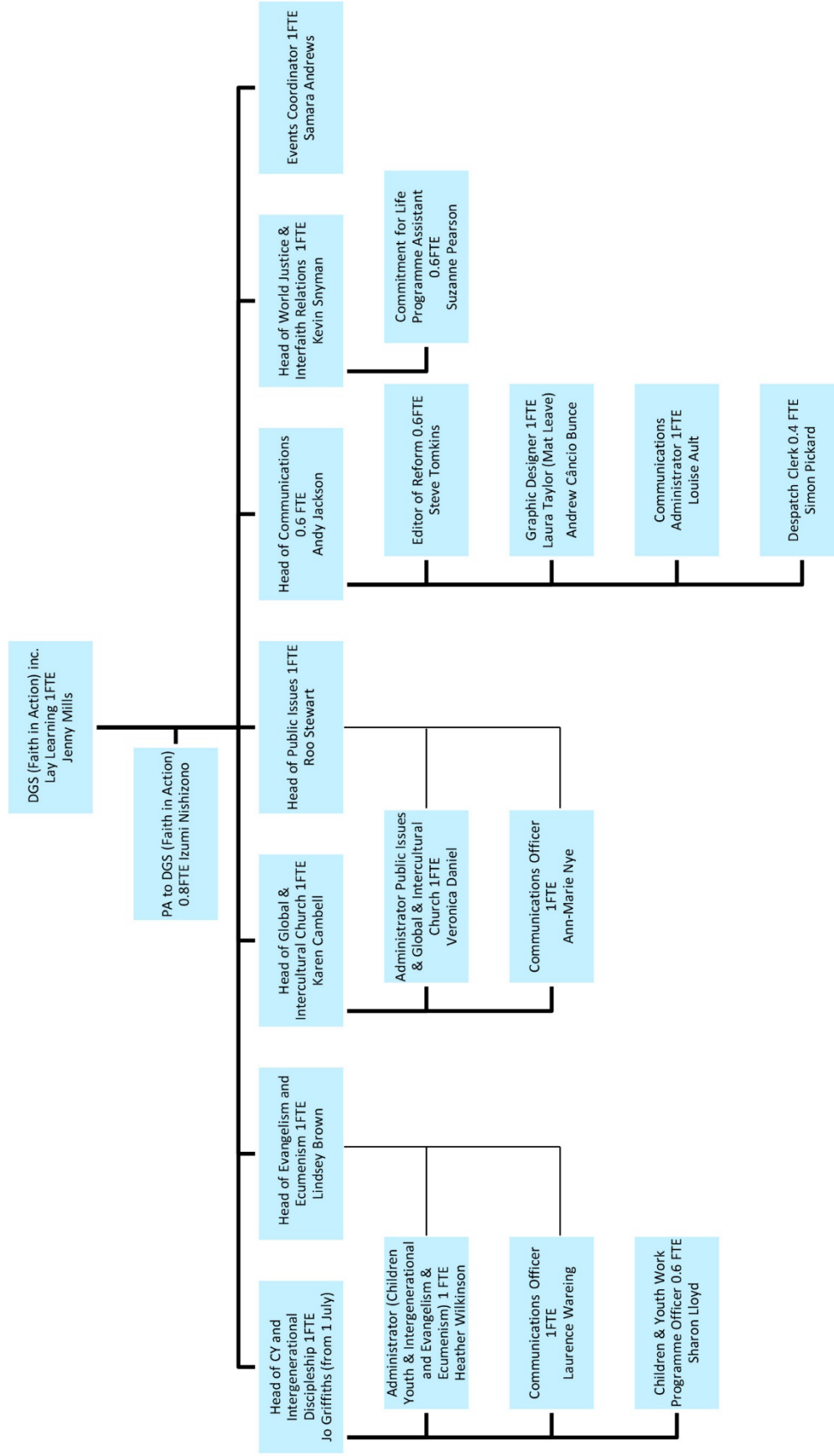
4.1 For the remainder of 2026 into 2027, the Resources Committee have a number of key areas of focus:

- Continuing the implementation of the Church Life Review Resolutions passed at the Extraordinary General Assembly in November 2025.
- Working jointly with Ministries on the review of the M&M process.
- Developing the database to meet the evolving needs.
- Working with Faith in Action Committee on a strategy for the URC Bookshop and the *Reformed* Magazine (the name of which was changed from *Reform* in April 2026 to avoid confusion with the political party).

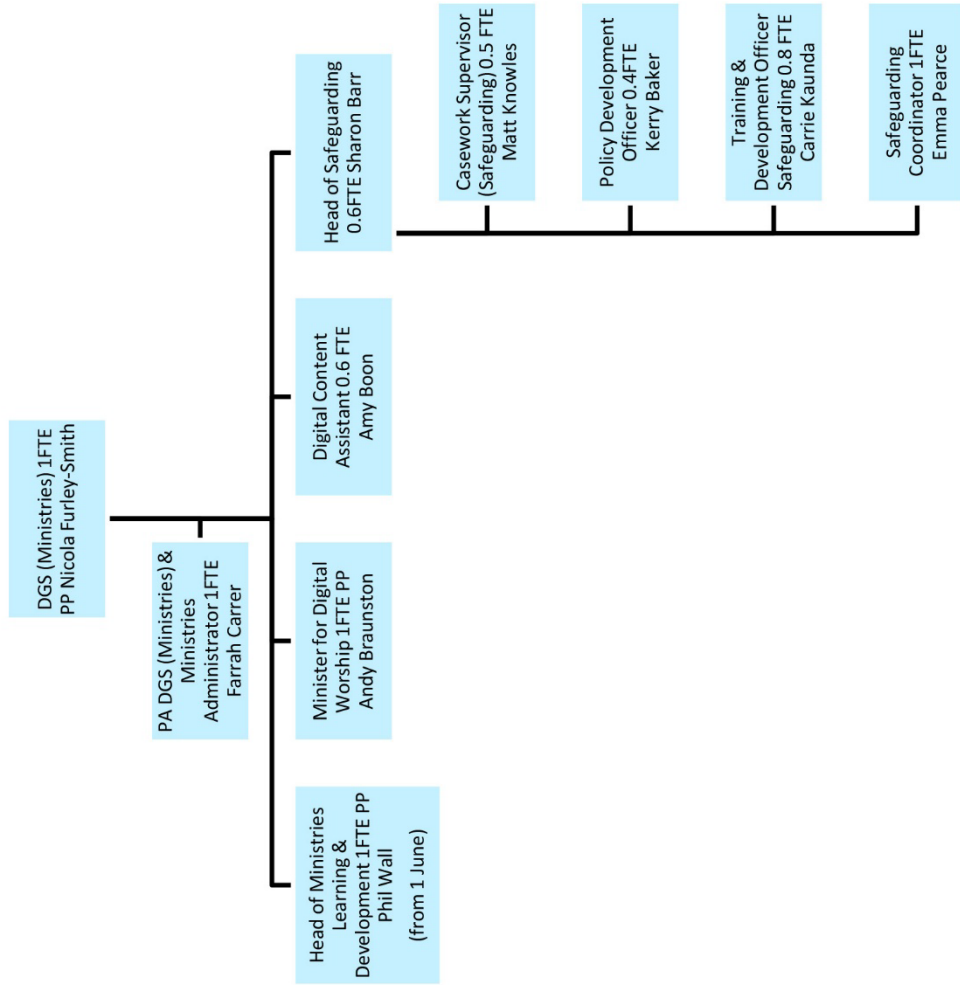
# Senior Leadership Team (SLT)



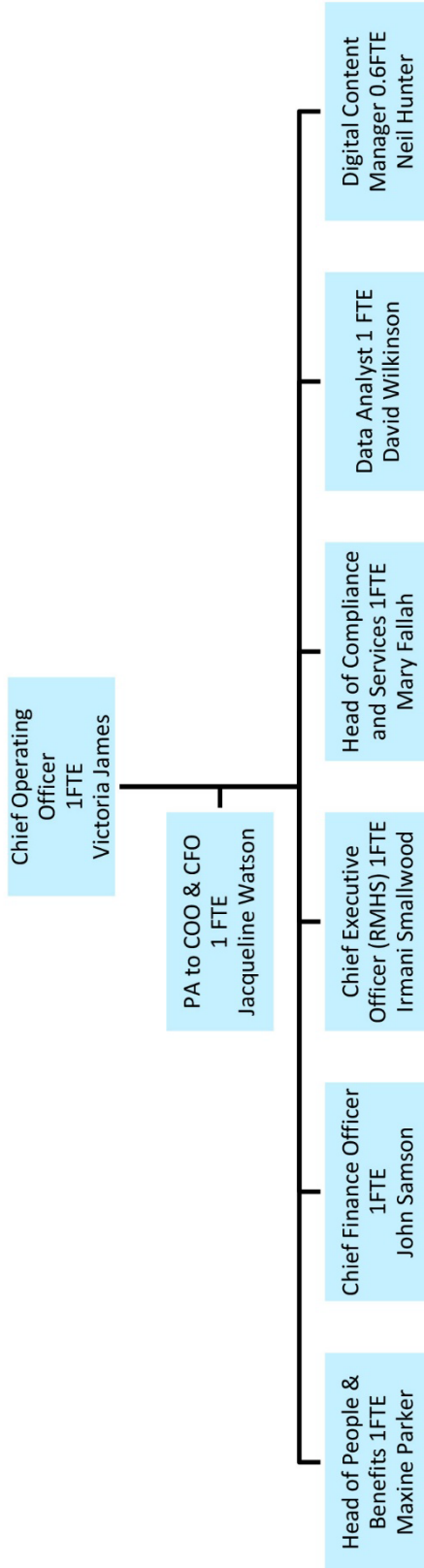
# Faith in Action – New Combined Team



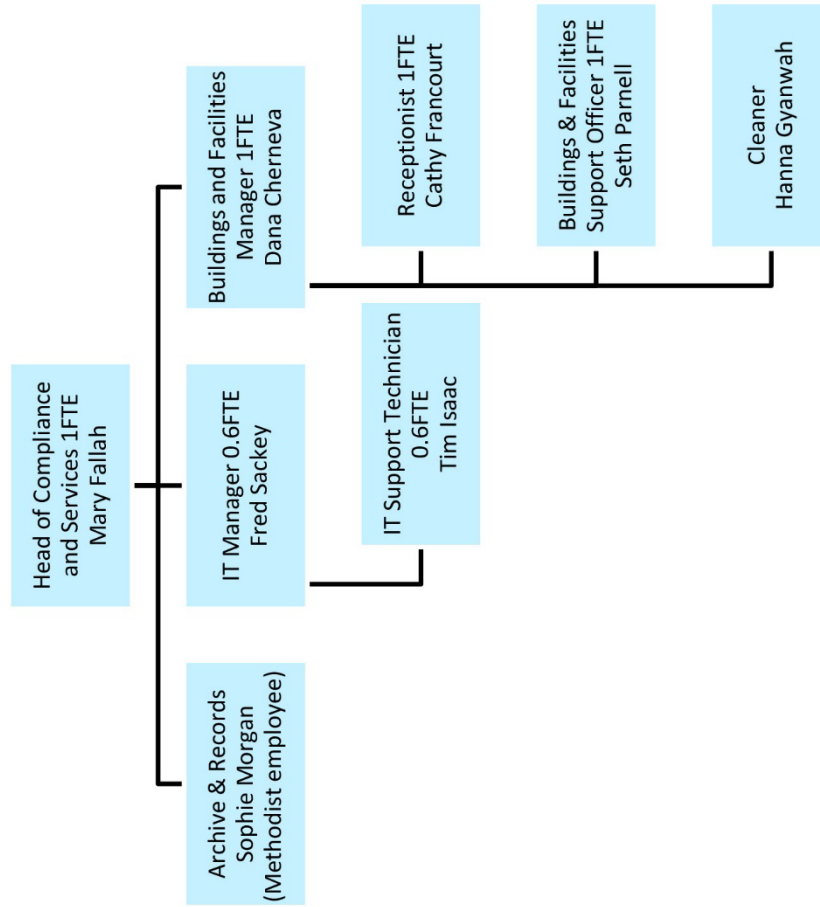
# Ministries



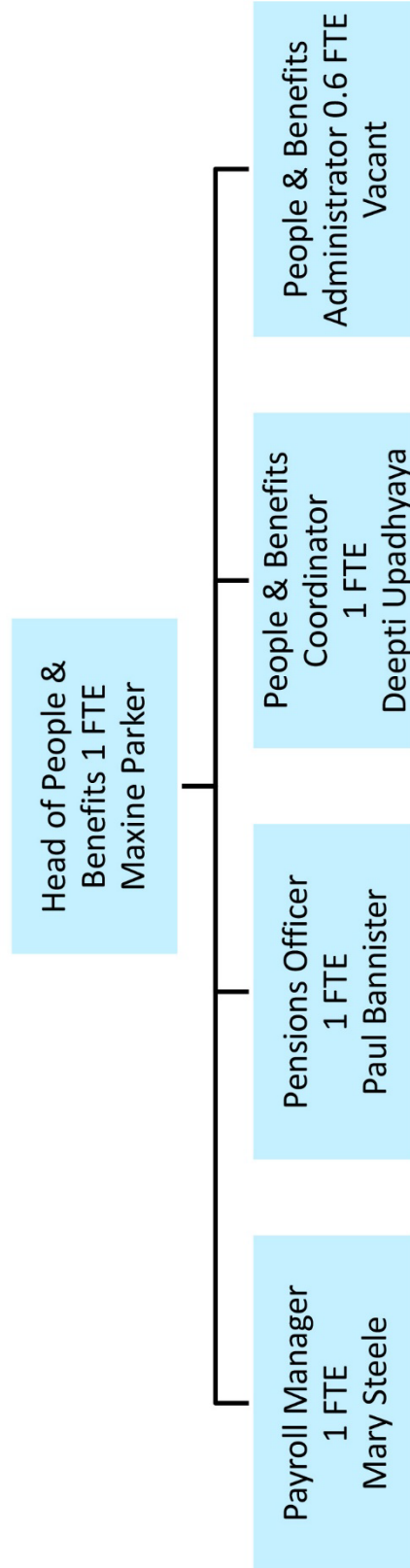
# Admin & Resources



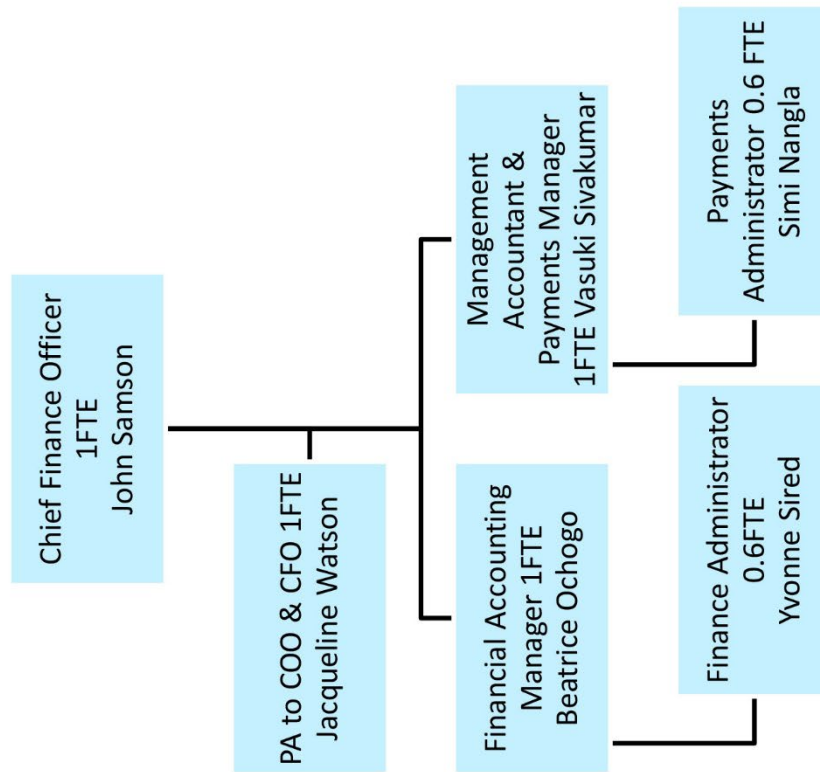
# Compliance & Services



# People & Benefits



# Finance



# Areas linked to the SLT

