

## **CULTURE AND BEHAVIOURS IN THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2022**

### **Update to the Finance and Public Administration Committee for activities to be completed by December 2022**

1. This update sets out the progress in the remaining activities in the Continuous Improvement Programme (CIP, 'the Programme') for culture and behaviours in the Scottish Government until December 2022, as part of the quarterly updates on the progress of the CIP's delivery to Parliament's Finance and Public Administration Committee (FPAC), most recently at an oral session with the Deputy First Minister in November.
2. The development of the procedure for handling complaints by civil servants about current or former Ministers was the key project in the CIP. This was concluded in February 2022 with a review of the procedure in respect of reporting and transparency that was made operational in December 2022. There were a number of supporting actions to the procedure that were wrapped together into a Continuous Improvement Programme (CIP), which were carried out in 2022.

### **Continuous Improvement Programme Activity in 2022**

3. The CIP has reached the end of the activities set out for it in 2022 (Annex A), most notably the development of the procedure and its update, as well as the identification of measures of success, staff communications related to raising a grievance, ongoing engagement with trades unions, and participation at Scottish Government all-staff events. Regular updates were received from the Information Governance Programme, and the Ministerial briefing sessions related to the procedure were completed.
4. The activities carried out until the end of December 2022 were:
  - a. Alignment to wider culture and behaviour initiatives, including organisational vision and values, with engagement with staff
  - b. Proactive outreach work in Scottish Government to inform risk assurance and cultural improvement
  - c. Review of the processes in use, including Propriety & Ethics (commenced)
  - d. Continue to implement the information management review and improve the quality of digital storage and retrieval processes
5. The Propriety & Ethics Directorate took part in the Scottish Government all-staff event to highlight the benefit of the principles behind the development of the updated procedure, especially during the periods of extensive engagement with trade union colleagues; with staff groups; Ministers; internal and external review groups and other complaint handling bodies. The session concerned building the trust and confidence of all civil servants to maintain a positive and respectful culture with the highest standards of behaviour, where bullying and harassment is not tolerated and where there is trust in how

matters will be handled if things go wrong. Propriety and Ethics were joined by the Convenor of the Council of Scottish Government Unions to discuss that, while the development of the updated procedure is a significant achievement, the change in culture and behaviour we want to see requires the procedure to be supported by a working culture of early intervention and mediation.

6. In 2022, Propriety and Ethics has reached out beyond the Government's core offices in the central belt to satellite offices throughout Scotland as part of our proactive engagement work as a new directorate. The aim is to establish Propriety and Ethics as a point of contact and a supportive function throughout the organisation. In conjunction with our colleagues in People Directorate, we are also reaching out to our staff networks and are very mindful of the importance of engaging with protected characteristic groups, for example colleagues with a disability, LGBTI+ colleagues, and minority ethnic colleagues.
7. The review of the processes in use in Propriety & Ethics was initiated in October 2022 with Internal Audit identified as the reviewer. Due to the updates to the procedure for handling complaints about current or former Ministers becoming operational in December 2022, the formal review will begin in early 2023 and will be concluded in Spring 2023. Outside of the formal review, continually reviewing and refining processes has been an iterative process throughout 2022. In addition to the main procedure undergoing a review in relation to transparency and reporting of outcomes, Propriety and Ethics works closely with People Directorate to discuss roles and responsibilities in ongoing work. The Propriety and Ethics Directorate is also reviewing the directorate work programme in view of the completion of the procedure and the activities that constituted the CIP.
8. The Information Governance Programme is managed by the Digital Directorate and is distinct from the CIP for culture and behaviours. This programme started in 2021 and is due for completion in 2023 where it will have achieved putting actions in place in response to the eight recommendations made in [the Corporate Review of Information Management](#), which was published in June 2021. The Information Governance Programme has provided regular updates to the CIP and has also developed its own set of measures of success.
9. Communications with staff on the updated procedure and on culture and behaviours are a collaboration between Propriety and Ethics, Communications and the People Directorate in the Scottish Government. Key messages have focussed on the updated procedure and the updated staff grievance policy. Periods of staff engagement that followed the launch of the updates to the procedure and the staff grievance policy were highlighted in internal communications. In August, an internal survey of a statistically significant sample of Government employees showed that 73.6% were aware that the updated procedure for handling complaints by civil servants about current or former Minister's behaviour had been launched earlier in the year.

10. The CIP measures of success have been developed to assess the impact of the programme. They are part of a wider framework of assurance and monitoring of people management practices and culture within the organisation. The measures are drawn from questions in the UK Civil Service People Survey as it provides the most comprehensive data set available on the experiences and attitudes of staff across the Scottish Government. This allows for an evidence-based assessment of staff experiences and perceptions about our organisational culture and behaviours. The measures were chosen because they focus on staff trust and confidence in the policies and procedures to address inappropriate behaviour and track progress in building a culture where it is safe to challenge. They were selected following careful engagement with colleagues in People Directorate, the trade unions, staff networks and the Reviews Implementation Assurance Group. Following publication dates in previous years, an analysis of the People Survey results is expected to be published by the UK Civil Service later this year. Propriety & Ethics will review the CIP measures of success to ensure that appropriate action is being undertaken throughout the organisation to improve these scores.

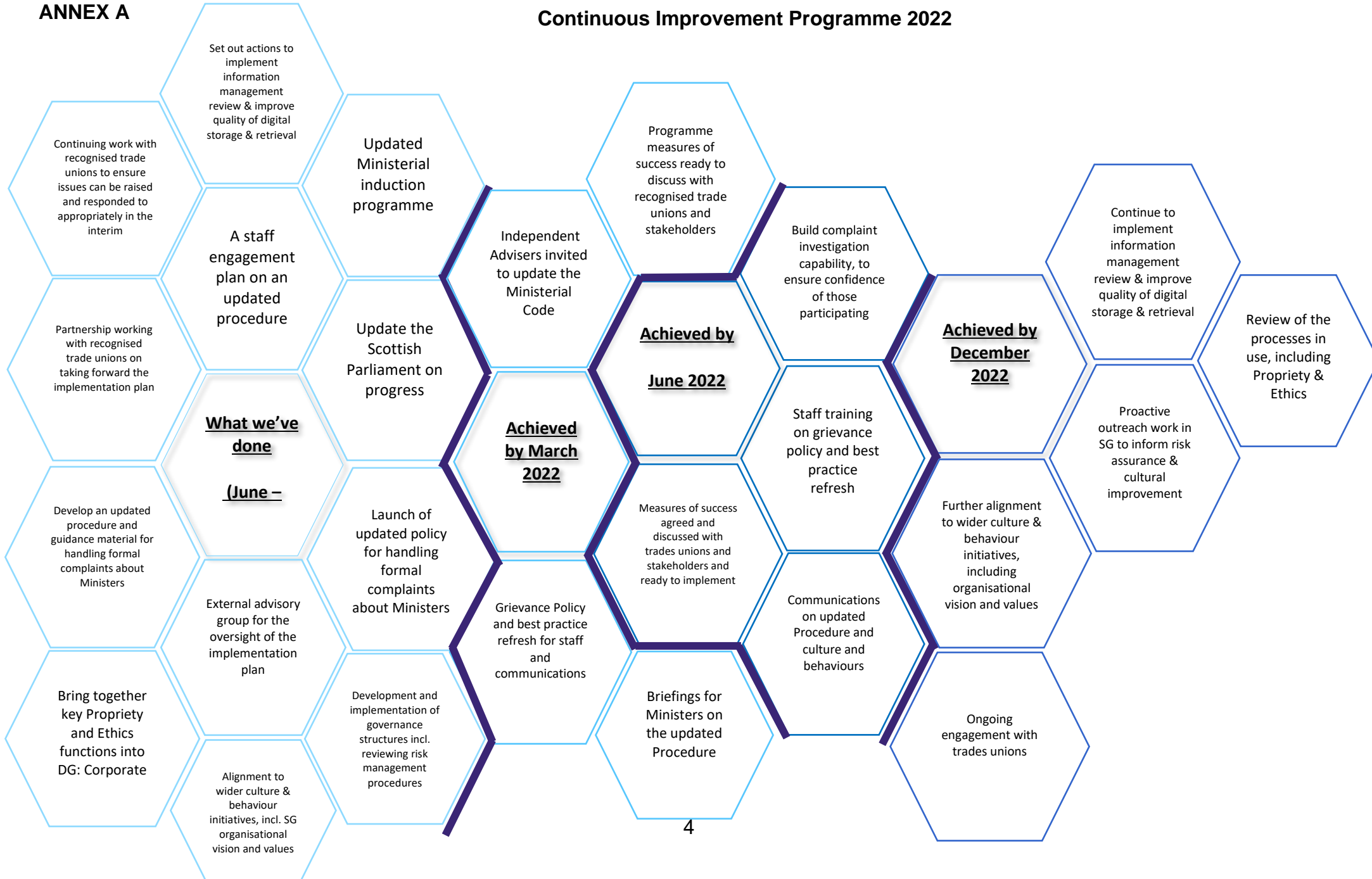
### **Conclusion**

11. It has been helpful over the last year to group the activities that support the development of the procedure under the framework of an overarching programme. We consider that the CIP has now completed its activities and has embedded ownership and responsibility for the supporting actions in establishing the culture and behaviours we wish to see in the areas identified for improvement. Implementation of the information management review, for example, is managed and reported through the separate information governance programme. Therefore in 2023 we propose to absorb the activities the programme commenced into ongoing work throughout the organisation rather than through the creation of another iteration of the programme. Reporting ongoing activities to FPAC can be presented independently of the CIP while still demonstrating the Scottish Government's commitment to improving culture and behaviour.
12. Propriety & Ethics will oversee work to improve culture and behaviour from the CIP into an organisation-wide response but will conclude the formal CIP and routine Parliamentary reporting. The Propriety & Ethics Directorate will maintain the relationship established with the Committee clerks during 2022 to respond to the Committee's interest in specific questions or other areas of interest that fall within the directorate's portfolio, as appropriate.

**Propriety & Ethics Directorate**  
**Scottish Government**  
**January 2023**

**ANNEX A**

**Continuous Improvement Programme 2022**



## Annex B

### Continuous Improvement Programme Tracker: activities ending December 2022

The updated procedure is viewed within the context of a wider programme of continuous improvement focussing on our culture of openness and inclusion. The activities supported the development of the procedure for handling complaints by civil servants about a current or former Minister's behaviour.

<b>Activity in 2022</b>	<b>Achieved by</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Grievance Policy and Best Practice refresh for staff, including update to Fairness at Work</b>	March 2022	<p>Following period of 'soft launch' to allow for reflection, comments have been received by individual staff members and various networks.</p> <p>Many of these were incorporated into the revised grievance policy and procedure which was launched in draft on 24 February and published on the staff intranet and, following further staff / network consultation, was finalised with trade unions then published in April 2022 with associated communications to staff.</p> <p>This activity is now complete. Training for staff and engagement with the trade unions will be ongoing.</p>
<b>Briefings for Ministers on the updated Procedure related to complaints about current or former Ministers</b>	March 2022	All Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers received a briefing on the new procedure. The briefings, which were attended by DFM and Permanent Secretary, provided factual information on the updated procedure within the context of a shared commitment to a positive and respectful working relationship between Ministers and civil servants. This activity is complete.
<b>Measures of success to be defined and discussed with trade unions and stakeholders</b>	March 2022	<p>Measures of success discussed with trade unions, the programme activity owners in the Scottish Government and the Reviews Implementation Assurance Group.</p> <p>Programme measures of success will be linked with the People Survey results for overarching outcomes.</p>

		Measures of success have been drafted and continued to be discussed with trades unions and stakeholders before they were implemented.
<b>Update the Ministerial Code in cooperation with its Independent Advisers</b>	March 2022	The Independent Advisers were sent the final, approved version of the new procedure. Updates to the Code are currently being considered.
<b>Communications with staff on updated Procedure and culture and behaviours</b>	June 2022, then ongoing until December 2022	The updated grievance policy and procedure for staff came into operation on 21 April. This was featured in the staff intranet and disseminated through internal communications channels. The communications underlined the importance of the organisation's culture and behaviours in maintaining an inclusive and respectful working environment. A survey carried out in August showed that 73.6% were aware that the updated Procedure was published in February. Updates to improve the reporting and transparency for the outcomes of the Procedure were completed in December 2022.
<b>Staff training on grievance policy and best practice refresh</b>	June 2022 (then continuing until December 2022)	Teams across the government are being supported with workshops on the updated staff grievance procedure and early intervention. Individual managers are being supported with coaching as required. Online learning for the grievance policy is also being designed.
<b>Build the independent complaint investigation capability to ensure the confidence of those participating</b>	June 2022 (then ongoing throughout 2022)	The Propriety & Ethics Directorate met the external pool of investigators and decision makers throughout the year to review revised guidance to support the procedure, to review operational support to them in the event of an investigation and to engage with them on the updates to the procedure.  A process mapping exercise has been completed with the Propriety and Ethics business management team to work through the operational processes to be followed in the event of a complaint.
<b>Measures of success ready to implement</b>	June 2022	The measures of success focus on staff trust and confidence and drawn from the People Survey. Internal consultation was undertaken to determine the measures with the People Advice and Wellbeing Team, Corporate Analysis Services Team; People Directorate policy teams; and Ministerial Private Office. External

		consultation was carried out with the Reviews Implementation Assurance Group and trade unions.
<b>Alignment to wider culture and behaviour initiatives, including organisational vision and values, with engagement with staff</b>	December 2022	<p>The In The Service of Scotland all staff events took place over four days in November. The event focused on the four vision principles, including being values driven.</p> <p>A total of <b>3,093</b> colleagues from across the organisation (including agencies and public bodies) registered to attend. This included <b>2,646</b> (25%) of core SG staff.</p>
<b>Proactive outreach work in Scottish Government to inform risk assurance and cultural improvement</b>	December 2022	<p>Engagement work is in train with staff networks, Ministerial Private Office and satellite offices of the Scottish Government. Programme of meetings in place for early 2023.</p> <p>Continued dialogue with external agencies such as Rape Crisis Scotland, Close the Gap and Ethical Standards Commission to inform changes to the procedure for formal complaints to improve transparency.</p>
<b>Review of the processes in use, including Propriety &amp; Ethics</b>	December 2022	DG Corporate has approved the appointment of Internal Audit reviewer, beginning in January 2023.
<b>Continue to implement the information management review and improve the quality of digital storage and retrieval processes</b>	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Information Governance Board and Information Programme Delivery Group meetings were held throughout 2022 along with Information Management Practitioner Group meetings.</li> <li>• Extensive communications issued on the staff intranet and webinar training sessions about the reduction in the use of unstructured data repositories were carried out as part of the Drive Management Project to improve information governance.</li> <li>• Staff sessions on information management were attended by more than 2,200 civil servants in the Scottish Government.</li> <li>• Phase 1 of the drive management project is complete. Initial planning and scoping have taken place for the next phase to consider technical and business impacts.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information Governance Programme measures of success have been established. Further measures will be put in place in line with the programme of work.</li><li>• eRDM (electronic Records and Document Management System) servers have been upgraded with an upgrade to the client software also scheduled. Due to some initial issues with the upgrade and the resources which have been deployed to resolve these there may need to be some further re-planning undertaken.</li></ul>
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