



Candidate Pack

Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO)

Chair

£27,000 per annum for circa 30 days

Ministry of Defence | First term: January 2027-January 2030



The opportunity

A Chair role at the intersection of government, defence industry, regulation and major commercial decision-making

At a glance

Why now

The Strategic Defence Review, Defence Industrial Strategy and Defence Investment Plan create an opportunity for the SSRO to reinforce its contribution to critical Defence outcomes, including economic growth, productivity, innovation and value for money while maintaining the independence and credibility of the single source regulatory regime.

Section	What you will find
About the SSRO	What the organisation is, what it does and why it matters to Defence and industry.
The opportunity	The context for the appointment and what the next Chair is expected to achieve.
Role of the Chair	Strategic leadership, Board and CEO leadership, stakeholder engagement and accountability.
Person specification	The experience, judgement and leadership qualities we are seeking.
Application process	How the appointment will be run and key dates.
Terms	Appointment length, time commitment, remuneration, location and security requirements.
How to apply	Application requirements and contact details.

A distinctive leadership brief

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is looking for a broad balance of skills and experience: a commercially sophisticated and strategically minded leader who can exercise impartial judgement, navigate the relationship between government and industry, understand complex contracting and challenge constructively.



Message from the Director-General Corporate

Dr Nina Cope CB



Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in this role at a critical time for Defence.

The SSRO has a significant role to play in ensuring that the UK's investment in Defence delivers maximum impact, value and industrial benefit. As Defence implements the Strategic Defence Review, Defence Industrial Strategy and Defence Investment Plan, there is an opportunity for the SSRO to build on its strong statutory foundations and continue to ensure that the single source regulatory regime works effectively for both Defence and Industry. Around half of the procurement spend of Defence is conducted under the regulations, and work has already started to refresh the regime to improve incentive alignment, support the MOD's Small and Medium Enterprise agenda, and foster innovation.

The next Chair will lead the Board through this next phase, ensuring that the SSRO remains authoritative and impartial in exercising its statutory functions, whilst helping the organisation focus strongly on outcomes, productivity, innovation and value for money. The Chair will need to build trusted relationships across government and industry, provide constructive challenge to the Chief Executive and senior team, and bring a pragmatic, commercially sophisticated perspective to the Board.

This is a distinctive opportunity for an experienced leader with the judgement to operate at the intersection of government, industry, regulation and national security. I hope you will consider applying.

Dr Nina Cope CB
DG Corporate, National Armaments Director Group

About the SSRO

The Single Source Regulations Office (SSRO) is an arm's-length body established under the Defence Reform Act 2014. It oversees the regulatory framework for non-competitive defence contracts and operates independently while being sponsored and funded by the Ministry of Defence through the National Armaments Director Group.

The SSRO employs around 40 public servants and has an annual budget of approximately £7 million. Its role is highly specialist, but the market it oversees is significant: in 2024/25, around 49% of new MOD contracts, worth approximately £10 billion, were awarded on a non-competitive basis. Single source contracting is particularly important in Defence, where highly specialised capabilities and a concentrated supplier base can mean that competition is not always possible or appropriate.

The organisation provides a framework of transparency, assurance and value for money across this part of the defence market. Its work includes maintaining the integrity of the regulatory regime, supporting fair pricing and appropriate profit levels, and providing clear and credible decisions when matters are referred to it.

Further information about the SSRO, its work and priorities can be found in its latest [Annual Report and Accounts](#) and [Corporate Plan](#).



The opportunity

Leading the SSRO through its next phase of development

Why this appointment matters now

Following the Strategic Defence Review, there is a renewed focus on how the single source regulatory regime can contribute to wider Defence objectives. The SSRO is an important part of the architecture, and there is an opportunity to ensure that the organisation continues to be outcome-focused, commercially aware and effective in supporting Defence and industry.

The incoming Chair will inherit an organisation operating in a period of leadership transition. Alongside leading the Board, the Chair will be closely involved in strengthening the relationship between the SSRO, MOD and industry and in ensuring that the executive leadership is equipped for the next phase.

What the Chair will seek to achieve

- Ensure the SSRO continues to discharge its statutory functions with authority, fairness and high standards of governance, while focusing the organisation and its resources on the areas where it can have greatest impact.
- Support the organisation in connecting its work clearly to wider Defence outcomes, including growth, productivity, innovation, sovereign capability, supply-chain resilience and value for money.
- Build a constructive, high-trust relationship with MOD and Defence industry, maintaining confidence in the SSRO's impartiality while ensuring that the organisation balances the practical realities and strategic priorities of both constituencies.
- Bring a strong understanding of the commercial realities of complex supplier markets, ensuring that the SSRO's approach recognises the importance of cost, pricing, risk and incentives in supporting effective delivery and investment.
- Provide constructive challenge to the organisation, executive team and, where appropriate, wider Defence, while building support for agreed strategic priorities.
- Lead the Board in creating a strong, accountable culture with clear priorities, effective risk management and proportionate governance.
- Develop and support the Chief Executive, including playing a key role in executive succession and the appointment of the permanent Chief Executive.

The wider context

The MOD's priorities for the SSRO include maintaining excellence in its statutory functions; contributing to Defence outcomes; improving efficiency; strengthening people and skills; and maintaining strong accountability and sponsorship arrangements. The annual [priorities letter to the Chair](#) also emphasises outcome-focused performance, strategic risk management, value for money and constructive engagement with Defence Commercial and industry stakeholders.

The leadership challenge

The successful candidate will need to be able to see beyond the mechanics of regulation: to understand the strategic outcomes that the regime is intended to support, while ensuring that fairness, value for money and confidence in the system remain at the heart of the regime.



Role of the Chair

Strategic leadership, governance and influence

Strategic leadership

- Lead formulation and delivery of the Board's strategy, ensuring that it is clear, outcome-focused and connected to Defence priorities.
- Ensure the SSRO focuses its resources on its statutory functions and on the outcomes where it can add greatest value.
- Bring an external perspective and constructive challenge to strategy, performance and organisational direction.

Board leadership

- Lead an effective, collegiate Board with a culture of constructive challenge, collective accountability and sound decision-making.
- Ensure the Board has the right balance of skills, experience and diversity to fulfil the SSRO's statutory responsibilities.
- Lead Board effectiveness, non-executive members' performance and ongoing consideration of Board composition and capability.
- Help set the tone from the top and support an inclusive, high-performing culture through a period of change.

Chief Executive and executive team

- Build a close and constructive relationship with the Chief Executive, providing support, advice and challenge while respecting the Chief Executive's executive responsibilities and role as the SSRO's Accounting Officer.*
- Play an active role in shaping, coaching and developing the Chief Executive and wider executive team.
- Oversee executive succession and lead the appointment of the permanent Chief Executive.



Stakeholders and impartiality

- Act as the principal Board-level point of contact with MOD, Ministers, Defence industry and other relevant stakeholders.
- Build trust across constituencies with competing interests and maintain confidence in the SSRO's impartiality and objectivity.
- Represent the SSRO credibly and confidently, including when views differ between the organisation, government and industry.

Governance, risk and value

- Ensure high standards of regularity, propriety, risk management and corporate governance.
- Maintain close oversight of performance, expenditure, efficiency and value for money.
- Ensure the Board escalates to MOD material strategic, financial, operational or reputational risks appropriately.

*The Chief Executive is the SSRO's Accounting Officer, with responsibilities for the proper stewardship of public resources as set out in the [MOD–SSRO Framework Document](#). The Chair and Board provide support, scrutiny and challenge while respecting the Chief Executive's executive and Accounting Officer responsibilities.



Person specification

We are seeking a commercially sophisticated and strategically minded leader with the judgement, impartiality and ability to navigate competing interests required to lead the SSRO through its next phase.

Essential criteria

Strategic, Board and organisational leadership

- Strong track record of strategic leadership and delivery in a complex organisation or environment, translating complex objectives into clear priorities and measurable outcomes.
- Substantial Board-level experience, whether as a Chair, non-executive or senior executive, with evidence of supporting, challenging and holding senior executives to account.
- Experience of leading or governing through significant change, developing senior leaders and creating the conditions for strong organisational performance.
- Demonstrable understanding of the governance and accountability of a public body operating within a statutory framework.

Commercial and procurement experience

- Significant senior-level, real-world experience of large-scale commercial activity, procurement, contracting or strategic supplier/customer relationships in Defence, aerospace, nuclear, infrastructure, energy or another relevant complex industrial or major-programme environment.
- Demonstrable understanding of commercial risk, cost, pricing, incentives and value for money, and of how these factors influence supplier behaviour and the negotiation and delivery of major contracts or commercial relationships.
- Evidence of applying commercial judgement to wider strategic objectives, balancing value for money, investment, growth, delivery and risk.

Impartial judgement and stakeholder leadership

- A track record of exercising impartial judgement in complex stakeholder environments, listening to and understanding different perspectives and balancing competing interests to identify constructive ways forward.
- Evidence of building trusted relationships and influencing at the most senior levels, engaging credibly and constructively with Ministers, senior officials – including the MOD sponsor team – industry leaders and Board colleagues.

Desirable experience

- Experience of operating in, or working closely with, a regulated or statutory organisation, with an understanding of the associated governance, accountability and stakeholder environment.
- Experience of interpreting, applying or navigating complex legislation or regulatory frameworks, particularly in the context of significant regulatory or legislative change.
- Previous Chair experience, or comparable experience leading a Board or senior governance forum.

Independence and conflicts

The successful candidate must be, and be seen to be, impartial by both government and industry stakeholders. Potential conflicts of interest will be considered carefully on an individual basis. Candidates should be able to demonstrate how they would build confidence in their objectivity and independence.



Application process

A fair, open and rigorous public appointment process

This is a regulated public appointment. The appointment will be made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. We want candidates to have a clear understanding of what is involved and to have the opportunity to understand the SSRO, its stakeholders and the expectations of the role before making a final decision to apply.

Stage	Timing	What to expect
Applications open	16 September 2026	The opportunity will be advertised through the Cabinet Office Public Appointments website and other appropriate channels. Direct engagement by Russell Reynolds Associates will run in parallel.
Applications close	10:00 BST on 12 October 2026	Candidates must submit a CV, supporting statement and the required monitoring/declaration forms through the Public Appointments applicant tracking system.
Shortlisting	Week commencing 19 October 2026	The panel will review the field and agree the shortlist. Russell Reynolds Associates will engage with candidates throughout the campaign, reviewing their experience against the published criteria to support the Advisory Assessment Panel's consideration of the field.
Engagement before interview	Late October / early November	Shortlisted candidates may be invited to have an informal conversation with relevant stakeholders to deepen their understanding of the SSRO and the role.
Panel interview	19 November 2026	Interviews will be chaired by Nina Cope, DG Corporate. Candidates may be asked to give a prepared opening presentation or respond to a scenario-based exercise.
Final decision	Following interview	The final appointment decision will be made by the Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry. Shortlisted candidates will be subject to due diligence checks, and any appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of those checks.

Selection panel

- Dr Nina Cope CB, DG Corporate, National Armaments Director Group – Chair of the panel
- Jim Carter, DG Commercial and Industry, National Armaments Director Group
- Samira Braund, Defence Director, ADS – industry representative
- Kate Ellis, Chair of the Oil & Pipelines Agency – independent panel member

The process may involve stakeholder engagement with members of the SSRO Board, executive team, MOD and/or industry before the final interview stage. Any such engagement will be described clearly to shortlisted candidates.



Terms of appointment

A three-year, part-time public appointment

Term	First term of three years, from January 2027 to January 2030. Reappointment would be subject to satisfactory performance, ministerial agreement and the Governance Code.
Time commitment	Approximately 30 days per annum. The Chair should expect the commitment to vary according to organisational requirements, particularly during periods of significant change or executive succession.
Remuneration	£27,000 per annum. Limited additional per diem payments may be available for specific, non-routine additional duties, subject to the applicable arrangements.
Location	SSRO's offices are in London and the Chair will be expected to attend meetings in London as required. Candidates may be based anywhere in the UK, subject to being able to fulfil the requirements of the role. Reasonable travel and subsistence expenses will be covered by the SSRO in line with its policies.
Status	The Chair is appointed to the SSRO under the Defence Reform Act 2014 and serves in a public appointment capacity.
Security	The appointment requires Baseline Personnel Security Standard and Security Check (SC) clearance. Candidates must be able to meet the relevant national security vetting requirements.
Conflicts	Candidates will be required to declare relevant interests and potential conflicts. These will be assessed carefully as part of the appointment process.
Performance	The Chair will be subject to annual performance evaluation by the MOD. Board effectiveness and non-executive members' performance will also be reviewed in accordance with the SSRO governance framework. The Chair will also be expected to meet the Responsible Minister at least once a year.

Governance expectations

The Chair is expected to lead the Board effectively and collegially, uphold the highest standards of corporate governance, and maintain a strong working relationship with the Chief Executive, MOD and other stakeholders. The Chair must ensure that the Board remains focused on strategy, performance, culture, risk, value for money and the effective discharge of the SSRO's statutory responsibilities.

This is a regulated public appointment. The process will be run fairly and openly, with appropriate consideration of conflicts of interest, security requirements and due diligence. Shortlisted candidates will be subject to reputational and conflict checks using publicly available information. The successful candidate must demonstrate the highest standards of integrity and public service.



How to apply

Russell Reynolds Associates has been retained to support this appointment. You will need to apply through both the Public Appointments website, and via Russell Reynolds. Candidates who do not complete both processes will not be considered for this role.

Step 1

For the Public Appointments website, you can [create an account](#) or [sign in](#) to your account at: [Apply for a public appointment - GOV.UK](#) and complete your personal profile.

Once you have created or logged into your account, click on 'apply for this role', use the search facility to find this role and then follow the on-screen instructions to apply. All candidates are required to provide:

- equality information
- information relating to any outside interests or reputational issues

We will ask you to check and confirm your personal details to ensure your application is accurate.

You will also have the opportunity to make a reasonable adjustment request or apply under the Disability Confident Scheme before you submit your application.

Step 2

When you have reached the “Application registered” screen, you can then complete your application by submitting your application to responses@russellreynolds.com, quoting reference **2609-043L** in the subject line.

You will be required to provide:

- a **current curriculum vitae** outlining your career history, board appointments and other relevant professional experience.
- a **supporting statement** of no more than two pages setting out, with relevant examples, how your experience and achievements demonstrate the essential criteria in the Person Specification. You may also highlight any experience relevant to the desirable criteria.

As a reminder, your application is not complete, and cannot be taken forward, if you have not completed both steps. The closing date for applications is **10:00 BST on 12 October 2026**.

Candidates who would welcome a confidential discussion about the opportunity prior to applying are encouraged to contact Russell Reynolds Associates using the email address above.

Accessibility and reasonable adjustments

We are committed to making this appointment process accessible to all candidates. If you have a disability or require reasonable adjustments at any stage of the process, please let us know. We will work with you to understand your requirements and put appropriate adjustments in place.

You can request reasonable adjustments and indicate if you wish to apply under the Disability Confident Scheme through the Public Appointments application process. You can also contact Russell Reynolds Associates in confidence to discuss any support or adjustments you may need during the recruitment process.

Russell Reynolds Associates take data privacy seriously. This [Privacy Notice](#) explains who we are, how we collect, share, and use personal information, and how you can exercise your privacy rights.

Candidate support

Russell Reynolds Associates will be available to discuss the role and application process with prospective candidates, including providing guidance on the information required as part of the formal Public Appointments application process.



Appendix I

Principles of public life

The [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.