



Submarine
Delivery Agency

Non-Executive Director Submarine Delivery Agency

Candidate Pack

Closing Date: 08/10/2025





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Welcome Message from Chief of Defence Nuclear (CDN), Madelaine McTernan CB

The UK's independent nuclear deterrent is essential to our nation's security and is Defence's highest priority. The **Defence Nuclear Enterprise (DNE)** is responsible for maintaining the UK's nuclear deterrent; it is a cohesive network of organisations and arrangements that guarantees strategic deterrence. The DNE works together to deliver its shared mission: **ensure nuclear capabilities, deter threats, and protect the nation and its interests.**

As part of the DNE, the Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA) **works in partnership** with the Royal Navy, Defence Nuclear Organisation, and other components of the DNE to provide submarines to the Royal Navy, including those that are critical to sustaining our Deterrent. The SDA Advisory Board's role is to support the executive team in effectively leading the organisation and delivering its outputs. The Board provides challenge, advice, support and effective governance. It also constructively scrutinises SDA performance on behalf of CDN.

We are seeking an exceptional individual to join the Board to help shape how the SDA delivers for the DNE and strengthens its position as a world-class delivery organisation. Whilst it carries the broad responsibilities of a Non-Executive Director, this role is especially focused on driving **digital, AI, and technology transformation**. You will help steer the SDA's evolution into a secure, data-driven enterprise supporting the adoption of digital twin technology, AI-enabled decision-making, and scalable digital infrastructure. Your insight will be key in driving digital outcomes across defence and industry, and in helping the executive team embed a culture ready for tomorrow's challenges.

You will challenge and inspire the SDA to drive change. You will have the resilience to engage on critical issues and the integrity to handle sensitive information. This is a rare opportunity to play a key role in safeguarding national security through strategic deterrence. If you have the skills and experience to make a difference, **we encourage you to apply.**





About The SDA

The Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA) exists to deliver submarines to the Royal Navy for the defence of the nation. Every activity undertaken by the SDA is guided by this mission. Working as part of the DNE, our purpose unites us, inspires us, and motivates action. It ensures we never lose focus on the **critical national endeavour** we support.

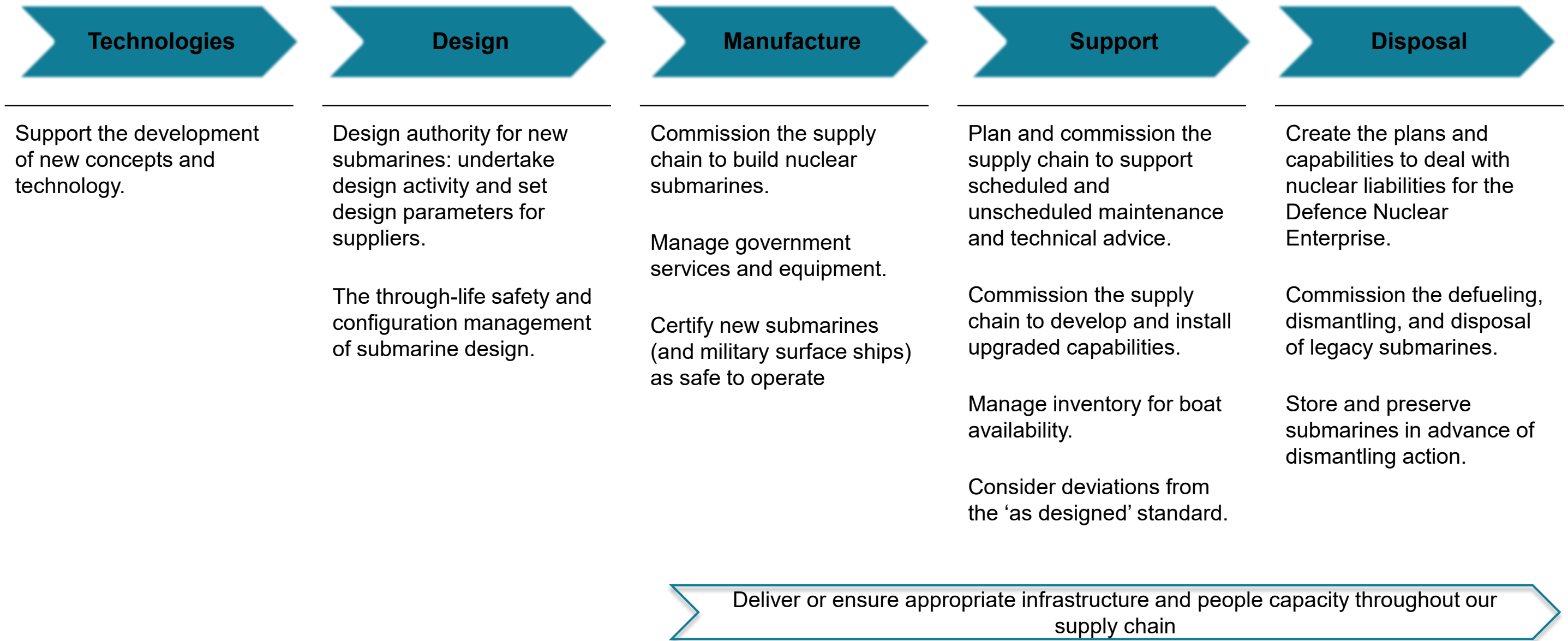
Working together across the wider DNE, including with industry partners **BAE Systems, Rolls-Royce, and Babcock International**, we are focused on delivering the means to strategically deter the most significant threats faced by the nation and our allies. We are responsible for submarines throughout their full lifecycle, including maintenance and disposal.

Our mission:

- Safeguard deterrence by ensuring submarine availability.
- Lead the design and construction of all new UK submarines and, in partnership with our customers and suppliers, bring them into service.
- Manage the delivery of the nuclear infrastructure needed to support the submarine fleet, including maintenance and new construction.
- Safely dispose of submarines that are no longer in service.
- Ensure we retain and develop the submarine technology base so that it meets our future requirements and retains capability advantage.
- Support and fulfil our roles in international partnerships.
- Develop the industrial base for the DNE.

Our **vision** is to be recognised for excellence in submarine delivery. Our **mission** is to deliver available, capable submarines for the defence of the nation.

How We Operate



The Board

As an advisory Board, the role of the SDA Board is to support the Executive Committee in effectively leading the organisation. It scrutinises performance, provides challenge and advice on strategy, maintains high standards of corporate governance, and ensures that appropriate controls are in place to manage risk.

Final decisions rest with the Chief Executive Officer, who remains directly accountable to the Chief of Defence Nuclear and the First Sea Lord.

The SDA Board is comprised of:

- An independent Non-Executive Chair.
- A maximum of three Government Non-Executive Directors (NEDs).
- At least three independent NEDs.
- The SDA Chief Executive Officer.
- The SDA Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and,
- The SDA Deputy Chief Executive.

It will also be routinely attended by the Shadow Board members and other members of the Executive Committee as required. The Board's primary focus is on the efficiency and effectiveness of the SDA, its capacity and capability to meet its remit, and to ensure compliance with its [Corporate Framework](#).





The Role

As part of its commitment to strong corporate governance and future-focused leadership, the SDA is seeking to appoint a new Non-Executive Director with deep expertise from across one of more of the following areas: digital, AI, and technology transformation.

This is a unique opportunity to help shape the future of the SDA at a time of profound technological and geopolitical change. The SDA is delivering one of the most complex engineering programmes in the world, and the arrival of the Dreadnought class submarine marks a generational shift—not just in capability, but in how defence platforms are designed, built, and sustained.

Dreadnought will be the UK's first truly digital submarine, underpinned by digital twin technology, secure data architecture, and AI-enabled support systems. The successful candidate will bring senior leadership experience in digital transformation across large-scale public or private sector organisations, and will play a key role in coaching and mentoring the SDA's Executive Team, helping to embed a culture of innovation, agility, and resilience.

As a member of the SDA Board, the Non-Executive Director will provide strategic challenge and support, monitoring performance and helping to drive organisational effectiveness. They will help shape how digital capability is deployed across the enterprise—from secure data aggregation and predictive maintenance, to open architecture systems and AI integration. This is not a conventional NED role; it is a chance to influence the future of defence delivery, support the SDA's mission-critical work, and help ensure the UK's strategic deterrent remains credible, modern, and digitally enabled.

If you have the vision, experience, and commitment to help lead this transformation, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Essential Criteria

Candidates must be able to demonstrate their experience and skills against the following essential criteria:

- A proven track record in leading or implementing large-scale digitally-enabled transformations within comparable environments, resulting in service enhancements and cost efficiencies - impacting people, processes, and technology.
- Deep knowledge of at least one of the following (with an understanding of the others): cloud computing, data analytics, cyber security, and artificial intelligence.
- Senior experience working in the field of digital, data and/or information at executive or board level within an organisation of comparable scale.
- Substantial leadership experience across organisations forging collaborative relationships across stakeholders and supply chains.
- Proven ability of overcoming technical and delivery challenges in implementing data governance, advanced analytics capabilities, and/or cybersecurity programmes.

It is important that in your application you provide evidence and examples of proven experience of the above selection criteria. These responses will be developed and discussed with those candidates invited for interview.





Detailed Terms

Time commitment: Minimum commitment for this role will be 24 days per annum. The Board will be expected to meet in full at least quarterly and operate additionally in Committee (as required) to support SDA outputs.

Remuneration: £25,000 per annum.

Appointment and tenure of office: Three-year fixed term. The appointee may be reappointed, or the appointment may be extended by mutual agreement at the end of this period, in compliance with the MOD's Public Appointments Policy. There is no presumption of reappointment. Any reappointment or extension of the appointment will only be made with agreement by the relevant Approving Authority.

Location: Board and Committee meetings are held quarterly, generally in Bristol or London. Visits or meetings in other locations may be required, with travelling and reasonable related expenses covered through the departmental guidance.

Eligibility: You must be a sole UK National. The role requires Developed Vetting (DV) clearance. You will be required to receive and maintain this in order to carry out your role. Failure to receive or maintain the required clearance may be grounds for termination.

As a public appointee, you are required to follow the "Seven Principles of Public Life" set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Annex A) and the [Code of conduct for board members of public bodies](#). The Code forms part of these terms and conditions of appointment. You must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between your public duties and your private interests – financial or otherwise. You must comply with the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies on handling conflicts of interest. As a minimum, these will require you to declare publicly any private interests which may, or may be perceived to, conflict with your public duties. In general, all financial interests should be declared.

How To Apply

To apply, please submit your application to responses@russellreynolds.com.

Please send the following information by **no later than 23:55 on the 8th October**.

- **Your CV**, with educational and professional qualifications, and full employment history, including an explanation of any gaps in your employment history.
- A short supporting 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 direct reference to the criteria in the 'Experience Required' section.
- A **diversity and conflict of interest form**. All applicants are invited to complete this information to assist the Civil Service with monitoring its recruitment process. All data is reported in an anonymous and aggregate format and will not be seen by anyone assessing your application. Please find the link [here](#).

Please note that references and open-source due diligence checks (including into social media accounts) will 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.

MOD 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 essential criteria for the role, as outlined on page 7 of this pack. If you wish to claim a guaranteed interview, you should declare so at the point you submit your application.

Process

Please note that these dates may be subject to change. If you anticipate any difficulty attending, please advise of this in your application.

Closing date	8 th October
First round interviews	Weeks commencing 13 th and 20 th October
Final Panel interviews	9 th December and 17 th December

Panel members at the interview will include, but may not be limited to, **David Goldstone**, Interim Chair, SDA; **Charles Forte**, Enterprise Chief Information Officer, Ministry of Defence; **Vice Admiral Sir Chris Gardner**, Chief Executive Officer, SDA; and **Andrew Chalklin**, Chief Information Officer, Atomic Weapons Establishment.

Full details of the process will be provided to shortlisted candidates. 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.

