



An Roinn Cosanta
Department of Defence



Corporate Governance Policy

Policy Number	CD – POL GEN 006
Policy Owner	Head of Academic Affairs & Governance
Revision date	February 2026
Approved by	Cep Carty, Head of Civil Defence Branch
Further info	civildefence@defence.ie
Review by	February 2028
Policy Summary	This policy documents the procedures and roles that are in place to ensure robust Corporate Governance processes within the wider Civil Defence organisation.
Changes Made	N/A – this is the first iteration of this new policy

1. Introduction

The Civil Defence organisation in Ireland, which was established in 1951 and has a legislative basis under the Civil Defence Act 2023, was established to provide support to the following Principal Response Agencies (PRAs):

- Local Authority - Director of Services/Fire & Rescue Services
- Án Garda Síochána
- Health Service Executive/National Ambulance Service

The Department of Defence is responsible for the overall strategic direction of the service, and for the delivery of training, on a national basis. Civil Defence operations are carried out by 28 distinct Civil Defence Units under the ambit of the relevant local authority. The Local Authorities are responsible for all operational activities.

The Civil Defence College is an integral part of the Department of Defence and is the National Training Centre for Civil Defence. The College works with a wide range of national and international bodies to develop and deliver training, skills and expertise in a variety of fields.

Our alignment to, and quality assurance agreements, with such bodies as the Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC), ensures consistency and external oversight of our practices. Some programmes are drawn from internationally accredited agencies; for example, Swiftwater and Flood Responder/Instructor/Management training is certified by Rescue3 Europe, an internationally recognised water rescue agency.

Our Training is modelled on two connected streams; one based at the College (central training) and the other within each Local Authority (local training).

The work of Civil Defence is directed by the Towards 2030 Policy, which set out a ten-year plan for Civil Defence:

<https://www.civildefence.ie/about/towards-2030/>

2. Purpose

The purpose/mission of Civil Defence is to support the emergency services and to provide community support, by promoting, developing and maintaining Civil Defence as an effective volunteer-based organisation.

This purpose of this document is to set out the key elements of the Corporate Governance Structure across the end-to-end Civil Defence Organisation. This Policy is one part of the Organisation's Governance System and complements and must be interpreted in coordination with the wider list of Civil Defence policies, which are listed in Appendix 1 and available to view on the Civil Defence Website

3. Scope

This policy covers all roles and responsibilities associated with the Civil Defence service, across both the Department of Defence and the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, which is the lead Government Department for the Local Authority sector.

4. Governance Structure

The Governance Structure related to Civil Defence is set out in four diagrams captured at Appendix 2:

- High-level Organisation Structure (across both Departments)
- Civil Defence Branch Structure

(In relation to the Medical Faculty)

- Quality Assurance Faculty Structure
- Teaching & Education Faculty Structure

These structures are designed to ensure that there is effective, and appropriate, governance and accountability across the wider organisation.

The structures, supported by our Volunteer Code of Practice, Volunteer Charter, Induction and Training Plans, are also designed to ensure a positive learning and operational environment, free from cultural bias or discrimination.

5. Other relevant Governance policies & procedures

As mentioned in section 2 above, this Corporate Governance Policy is supported by a range of other policies as set out in Appendix 1. Some of the key policies include:

- Quality Assurance of Medical Faculty
- Civil Defence College Faculty Development Policy
- Ranks & Commands Policy
- Recognition of Prior Learning Policy
- Compliance Register
- Internal Verification Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Clinical Governance Policy

The key procedures supporting Corporate Governance include:

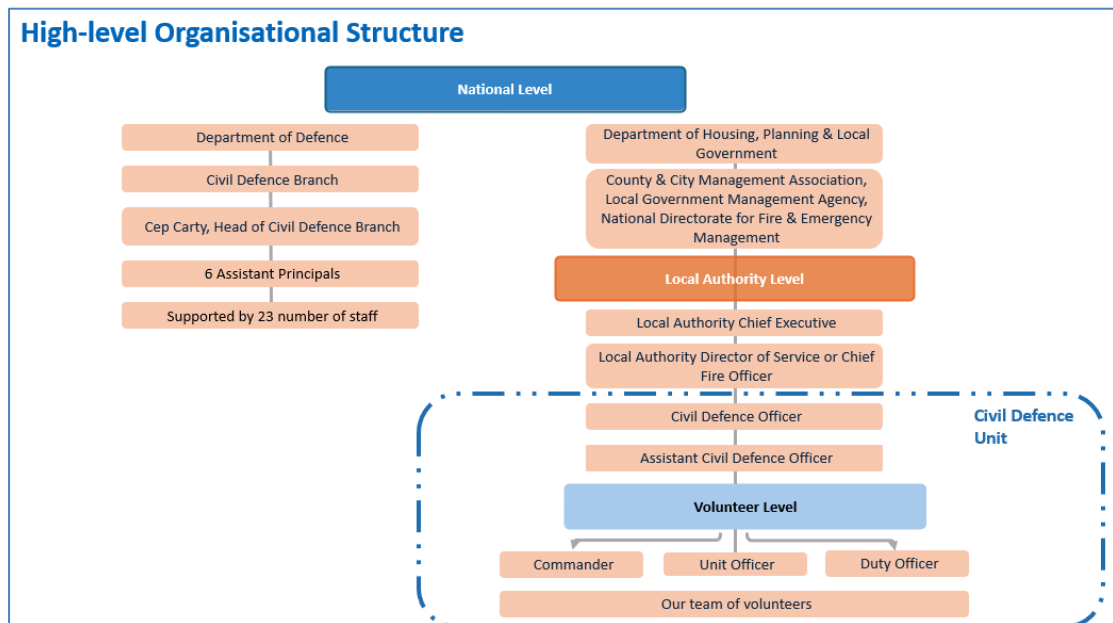
- Annual Business Planning & Review process
- Multi-annual Civil Defence Unit Development Plan process
- Monthly review of volunteer numbers and training course delivery/recording
- Quarterly meetings with the CCMA Corporate & Emergency Planning Committee
- Bi-annual meetings with the Inter-Agency Guidance Team
- Risk Management & Compliance Register monitoring process
- Data and Record Management processes
- Feedback and Complaints Process and quarterly review of QR Code submissions

Appendix 1 – List of Civil Defence policies, Legislation and Frameworks

Area	Policy	Title
Training	POL TRN 001	Equality & Access to Training
Training	POL TRN 002	Recognition of Prior Learning
Training	POL TRN 003	Assessment & Awards
Training	POL TRN 004	Appeals
Training	POL TRN 005	Extenuating Circumstances
Training	POL TRN 006	Administration of Training
Training	POL TRN 007	Training Quality Assurance
Training	POL TRN 008	Programme Development
Training	POL TRN 009	Faculty Development
Training	POL TRN 010	ICT POLICY
Training	POL TRN 011	Internal Verification
General	POL GEN 001	Garda Vetting
General	POL GEN 002	Evacuation
General	POL GEN 003	Ranks and Promotions
General	POL GEN 004	Data Management & Protection
General	POL GEN 005	Child Protection
General	POL GEN 006	Corporate Governance
Area	Licence/Registration	Title
General	Legislation 001	Civil Defence Act
General	Legislation 002	Civil Defence Code of Practice
Area	Framework	Title
Training	FRW TRN 001	Academic Governance Medical Faculty
General	FRW GEN 001	Risk Management Framework Overview

Appendix 2 – Governance structures

(a) High-level Organisational Structure – two Government Departments & the Local Authority Sector



Organisational Structure - responsibilities

National	
Department of Defence	Provides overall governance and strategic direction for Civil Defence.
Civil Defence Branch	Manages national co-ordination, policy, and training standards, central training delivery & central procurement. Manages engagement with an extensive portfolio of stakeholders on behalf of the organisation.
Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government	Lead Department for the Local Authorities. Manages the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management
National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management	A section in the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government who co-ordinate emergency responses and gives support to the Irish Fire Service.
County & City Management Association	The 'representative voice' of the local government management network (a network of the chief executives of the county and city councils and the assistant chief executives of Dublin City Council). It operates through a series of committees, one of which – the Corporate & Emergency Management Committee – meets with Civil Defence Branch on a quarterly basis.
Local Government Management Agency	The Local Government Management Agency provides a range of professional services to the local government sector, and acts as a point of contact for the CCMA. It connects all 31 local authorities.
Local Authority	
Civil Defence Officer	Oversees local Civil Defence operations, capability development & training, preparedness and Stakeholder engagement.
Assistant Civil Defence Officer	Supports the CDO with all of the above.
Volunteer Level	
Commander	Leads the unit and ensures operational readiness.
Unit Officer	Assists the Commander and manages specific team functions.
Duty Officer	Oversees daily operations and task execution during shifts or incidents.
Our team of volunteers	Carries out training, exercises and duties, in support of our principal response agencies, our communities and – in particular – the most vulnerable.

The **Department of Defence** operates under a published Corporate Governance Framework Document. Section 2.5 of this Framework specifies that “Section 4 (1) and 9 (2) of the Public Services Management Act empowers the Secretary General to assign to other officers of the Department responsibility for the performance of his or her functions”.

These assignments are set out in the Who does what section of the Gov.ie website here <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-defence/organisation-information/department-of-defence-who-does-what/>

The roles are further expanded in the annual Business Plan, in Role Profiles for each team member on the Department of Defence Performance Management and Development System (PMDS), and in Job Guides.

The key roles and responsibilities within the Department are as follows:

Role	Responsibility
Director - Emergency Operations and Infrastructure Oversight	Overall responsibility for Civil Defence at Department Management Board
Head of Branch	Overall responsibility for day-to-day management of Civil Defence Branch activities, including Key Stakeholder engagement
Assistant Principal Medical	Responsible for day-to-day management of Medical Response training
Assistant Principal Academic Affairs & Governance	Overall responsibility for the direction and management of Academic Affairs and associated Risk Management
Assistant Principal for Policy, Planning & Communications	Responsible for ensuring that all policies are managed and updated as required, are robust and clear. Responsible for timely communications to all Key Stakeholders.
Other Assistant Principals – Training and Technical	Subject Matter Experts in other training disciplines. Work with both the AP Policy and the AP Academic Affairs to ensure that all training delivery is robustly managed, improved and governed.
Assistant Principal – Business Management	Works with the Assistant Principal Team to ensure that Information Management and Compliance is robustly managed.

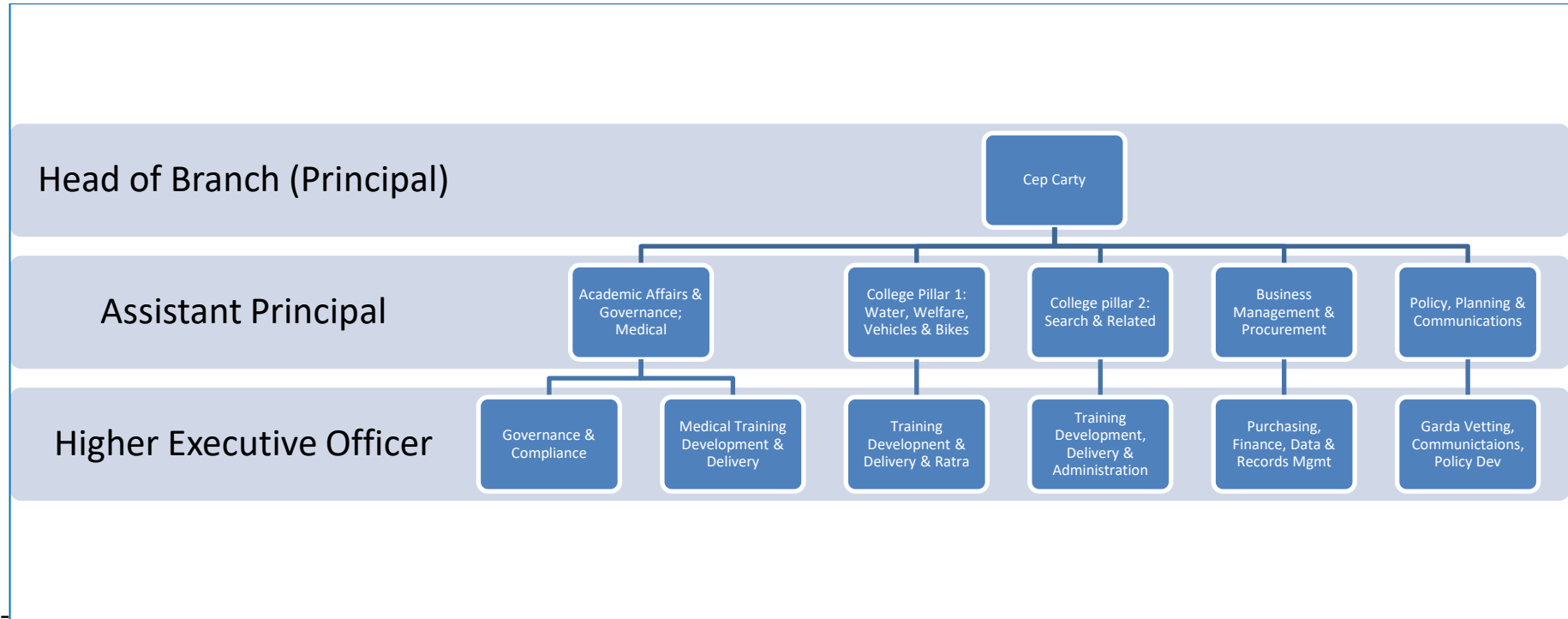
Higher Executive Officer – Policy, Planning & Communications	Supports the Assistant Principal in the development of policy, in the facilitating of communications, and manages the Garda Vetting process
Higher Executive Officer – Business Management & Procurement	Supports the Assistant Principal in the management of all information and data, including the annual record of processing activities and security reviews
Higher Executive Officer – Training & Technical	Supports the Assistant Principal in the management of all data sharing within the Technical Communications space
Executive Officer – Training Administration	Manages all Training Administration
Executive Officer – Medical pillar	Supports the Assistant Principal (Medica) with the updating of Medical courses, assists with the quality assurance of course examinations, provides secretariat to the Governance Validation Framework.
Assistant Principal – Data Protection Office	Overall responsibility for data and information management within the Department.

The **individual Civil Defence Units** operate under a cyclical multi-annual planning process, which sees engagement between the Department and the Local Authorities to agree plans and targets for the planning period. These plans must be agreed, signed by the Chief Executive of the relevant Local Authority and published on the Local Authority website. The Civil Defence Officers manage the day-to-day operations of the local unit, including all local training and clinical governance responsibilities, and report to the direct line manager (generally a Director of Service or a Chief Fire Officer).

The **LGMA/CCMA Corporate & Emergency Planning Committee** are representatives who work with the Department to discuss any proposals in relation to changing Civil Defence services and to discuss and resolve any challenges that may arise.

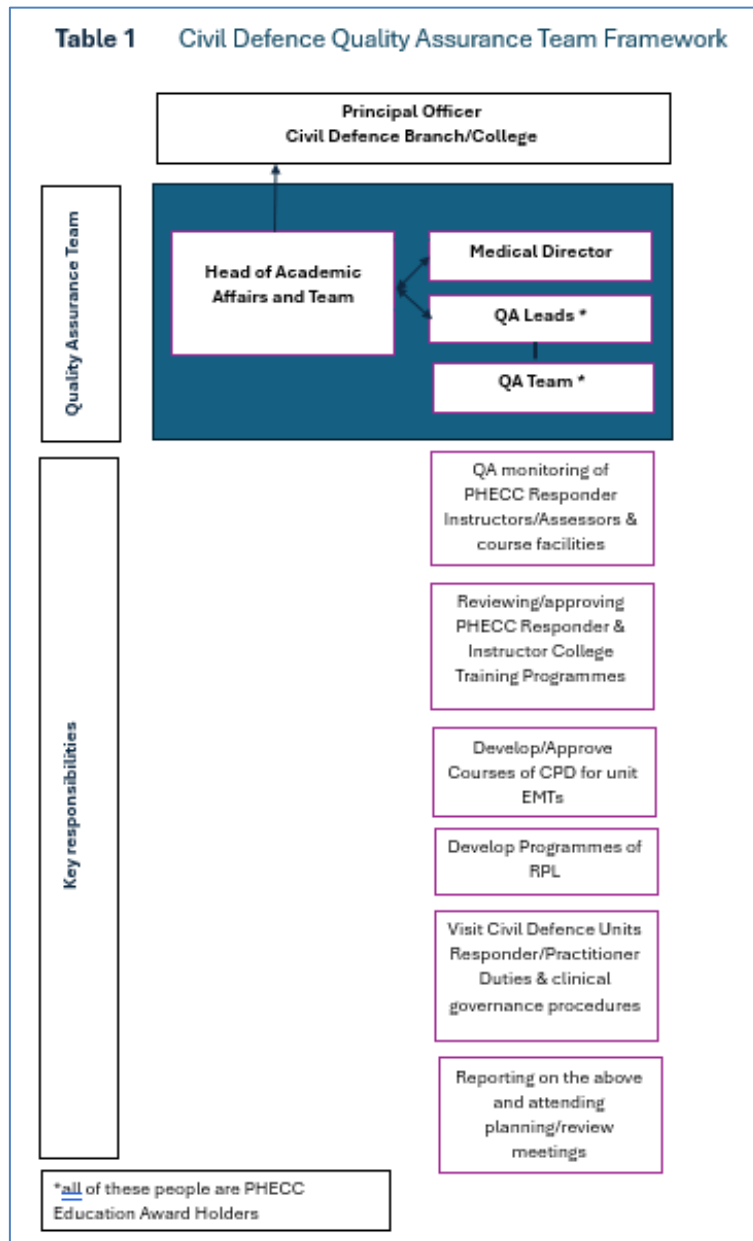
The Department is working with the LGMA and CCMA to build a Memorandum of Understanding document, which will provide further detail on the respective roles.

(b) Civil Defence Branch Structure



(c) Medical Faculty - Quality Assurance Structure

In 2025, the Branch established a QA Faculty, to strengthen governance and oversight in the medical domain. The structure is as follows:



This group of PHECC Education Award Holders will provide independent oversight of all medical training activities.

(d) Medical Faculty – Teaching & Education Structure

In addition to the establishment of the QA Faculty, we have also implemented additional governance controls within Training Delivery, with the requirement for a Unit Medical Team Lead. This Team Lead will work with their CDO/ACDO and with the wider Medical Training & Education Faculty to ensure the ongoing and consistent delivery of medical training and medical response duties within their unit.

