



GOVERNMENT OF THE
VIRGIN ISLANDS
Premier's Office

PREMIER'S OFFICE

SERVICE CHARTER

2025





WELCOME

This Service Charter serves as an agreement between our office and our internal and external customers. It is an understanding based on the principle that this office will provide quality service to all.



OUR CONTACT INFORMATION



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Premier	2
Message from the Permanent Secretary.....	3
ABOUT US.....	4
Our Vision.....	4
Our Mission	4
Our Commitment to You.....	4
Our Responsibilities	4
Who We Are	5
Staff of the Premier’s Office	7
EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT	7
Our Customer Service Behaviours and Standards.....	8
Our Commitment To Serving You	9
Your Rights	9
You can help us serve you better:	9
Tell us how we are doing	10
Responsibilities of the Premier’s Office.....	11
Our Organisational Chart	16
Enacted Legislation	2

MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER



In our continued pursuit of excellence and good governance, the Premier's Office is pleased to introduce our Service Charter. This initiative underscores our commitment to providing the highest standards of service and accountability, ensuring that every interaction with our office is characterised by integrity, transparency, and efficiency.

This Service Charter is more than a set of guidelines. It is a pledge to our clients, employees, and community. It sets clear expectations and standards for the quality of service the public can expect from our office. By defining these standards, we aim to enhance the overall experience for everyone who interact with our office, fostering a relationship built on trust and mutual respect.

For our clients, the Service Charter provides a transparent framework that outlines the level of service you can anticipate. It ensures that your needs and concerns are addressed promptly and efficiently, guaranteeing a consistent and positive experience. Whether you seek information, assistance, or resolution of issues, you can be assured of our dedication to serving you with the utmost professionalism and care.

For our public officers and staff, the Service Charter serves as a guiding document that reinforces our commitment to good governance and excellence in service delivery. It empowers our team with clear expectations and standards, promoting a culture of accountability and continuous improvement. It is a tool for us to strive for and to deliver excellence, as we aspire to do.

Implementing this Service Charter reflects the Government's unwavering dedication to good governance, quality service, and accountability. It is a testament to our ongoing efforts to improve and elevate the standards of service provided by the Premier's Office and, indeed, throughout the Public Service. By setting these benchmarks, we can better serve our community and meet the evolving needs of our citizens and clients.

In closing, I sincerely thank all our clients and public officers for their support and commitment. Together, we will continue to build a more responsive, efficient, and transparent Government dedicated to the well-being and prosperity of the Virgin Islands.

Thank you, and we look forward to serving you with excellence.

Hon. Dr. Natalio D. Wheatley
Premier



MESSAGE FROM THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

Greetings to all of our clients!

As the coordinating ministry of the Government of the Virgin Islands, we are delighted to educate everyone on the standards of excellence that you can expect from the Premier's Office as well as pertinent information on the Ministry.

The relaunch of our Service Charter is another significant step in showcasing our commitment to service excellence. While our Charter sets out the minimum standards of service, we are aiming to exceed your expectations. Public Service Excellence is our vision and the team at the Premier's Office is committed to serving our clients in the most professional manner at all times.

Accountability, efficiency, responsiveness and transparency are among the principles of good governance. In the ensuing pages, you will discover how the Premier's Office will demonstrate its commitment to adhering to good governance standards.

It is our pleasure to invite you to note your rights and hold our team accountable to serve you according to the standards outlined in our Charter. We are also expecting that you would do your part so that we can serve you better.

We look forward to providing ongoing service to you.

Mrs. Carolyn Stoutt Igwe
Permanent Secretary



ABOUT US

Our Vision

In leading a thriving Territory, the Premier's Office, through seamless coordination and planning across Government, charts a bright future for all.

Our Mission

The Premier's Office develops and coordinates cross-sectoral policies and programmes to promote the strategic development of the Virgin Islands to ensure an informed, prosperous, cohesive and stable society.

Our Commitment to You

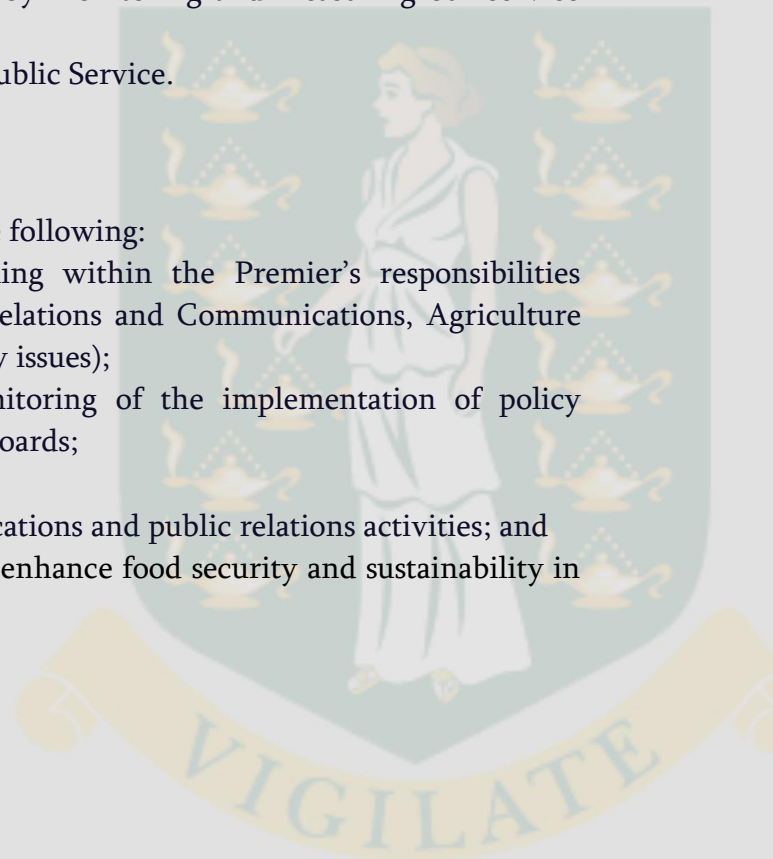
The Premier's Office is committed to:

- assisting you in a prompt, efficient and fair manner;
- providing you with the services you need in a courteous and professional manner;
- preserving your privacy and confidentiality as much as possible;
- responding to your enquiries on the status of applications;
- providing explanations for application denials;
- settling invoices in the timeliest manner possible;
- improving service delivery to the public by monitoring and measuring our service standards; and;
- improving the public's perception of the Public Service.

Our Responsibilities

The Premier's Office has the responsibility for the following:

- Providing policy advice on matters falling within the Premier's responsibilities (including International Affairs, Public Relations and Communications, Agriculture and Fisheries, and cross-government policy issues);
- Coordinating the development and monitoring of the implementation of policy initiatives across ministries and statutory boards;
- Processing grants and other expenditures;
- Coordinating government-wide communications and public relations activities; and
- Strengthening agriculture and fisheries to enhance food security and sustainability in the Territory



Who We Are

The Premier's Office is the lead ministry within the Public Service of the Virgin Islands and provides strategic and administrative support to the Premier. The ministry coordinates and manages the work of Government to ensure the successful formulation and implementation of ministerial and cross-ministerial government policies and programmes throughout the Territory.

Departments

The Premier's Office is made up of several departments, each with its own unique focus.

- **Information and Public Relations** – often referred to as the Government Information Services (GIS), this department is committed to providing the public with timely information on the programmes, policies, projects and activities of the Government of the Virgin Islands.
- **International Affairs Secretariat (IAS)** – manages and coordinates the Government's external and international relations, advise Government on international issues and other matters that affect the long-term interest of the Virgin Islands.
- **Department of Agriculture and Fisheries** – responsible for ensuring food is safe, nutritionally sound, produced and harvested in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Statutory Agencies

There are currently two statutory agencies under the purview of the Premier's Office.

- **Virgin Islands Recovery and Development Agency (RDA)** was established in 2018 by the Government of the Virgin Islands to execute recovery projects faced by the Territory following the extreme weather events of 2017.
- **Virgin Islands Shipping and Maritime Authority (VISMA)** transitioned from the Virgin Islands Shipping Registry to a statutory body in 2024. Its purpose is to ensure that Virgin Islands ships can safely, securely and efficiently enjoy the freedom of the seas and the support of a vigorous and effective Maritime Administration.

Overseas Offices

In addition, the Premier's Office has two overseas offices.

- **BVI London Office** opened in 2002 and represents the interests of the Government and people of the British Virgin Islands in the United Kingdom and Europe. The Office also

serves as headquarters for official visits to the region and supports British Virgin Islanders living and studying in the United Kingdom.

- **BVI Hong Kong Office Ltd.** (formerly BVI House Asia) was launched in September 2013 as the Asia Pacific Regional Office committed to expanding, strengthening and deepening the BVI's footprint in Asia with a focus on the financial services industry. The Office is based in Hong Kong.



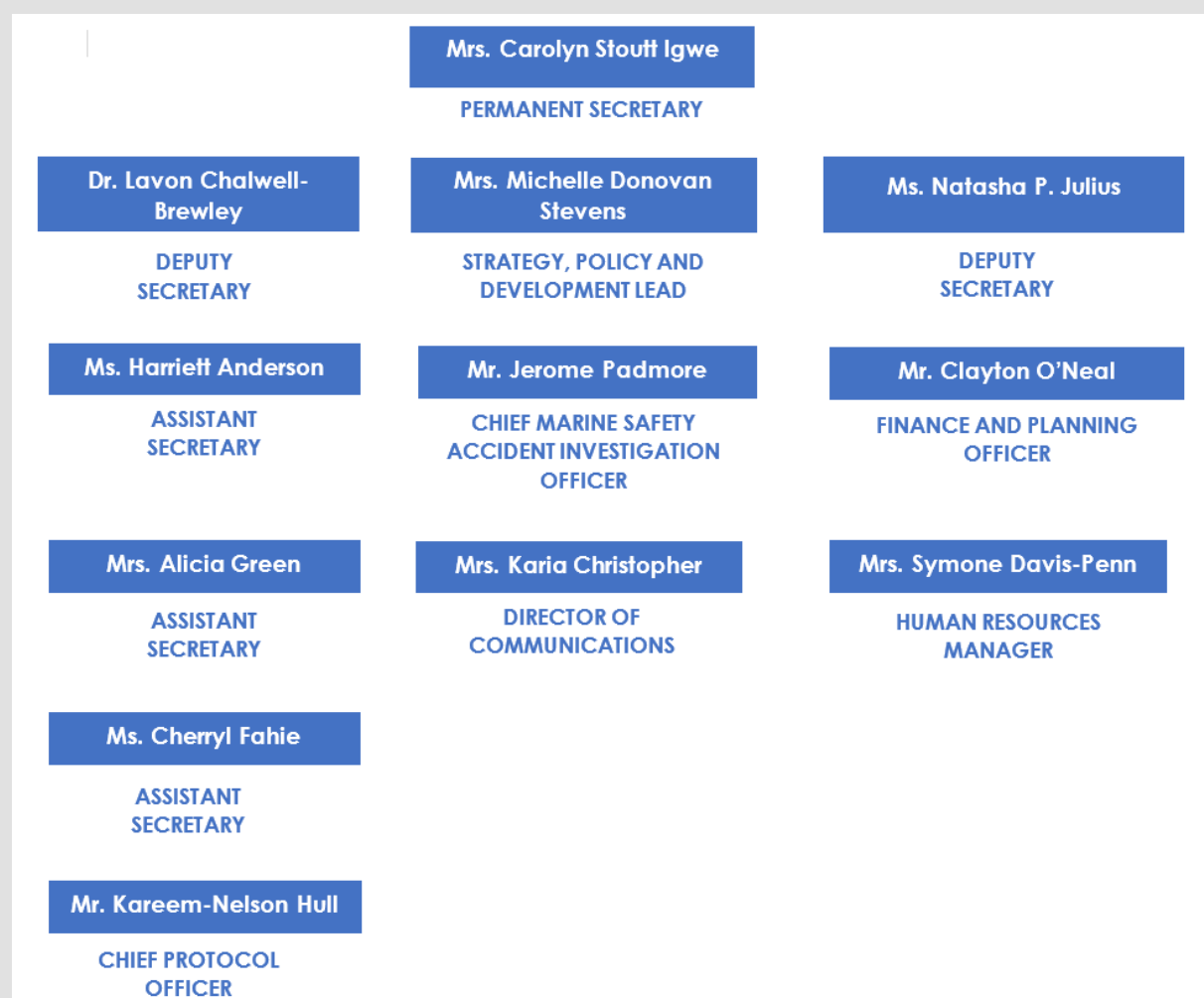
STAFF OF THE PREMIER'S OFFICE

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

The Premier has direct responsibility as the leader of government business, who coordinates the development and implementation of government's legislative agenda across ministries and statutory bodies.

The Executive Management Team comprises the highest level of leadership in the Premier's Office which includes the Permanent Secretary, two Deputy Secretaries, three Assistant Secretaries, the Strategy, Policy and Development Lead, Chief Protocol Officer, Director of Communications, Finance and Planning Officer and Human Resources Manager.

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See Appendix for full staff complement

OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE BEHAVIOURS AND STANDARDS

As a public sector organisation, we will work to ensure the services we offer to our clients are indicative of a respected, trusted and efficient Public Service with people at the centre of all we do. The Public Service organisational customer service standards and behaviours guide our interactions and delivery.

The customer service behaviours are the activities that directly affect the service quality and guide the daily interactions of public officers. Our customer service standards outline what our customers should expect during an interaction including but not limited to, timeliness, accuracy, effectiveness, safety, etc. Our clients can hold us accountable to these standards when conducting business with any government department.

SAFETY

- I prioritise safety in everything I do.

AUTHENTICITY (Professionalism)

- I anticipate needs and welcome questions.
- I acknowledge others' contributions toward a successful customer service experience.
- I am knowledgeable about the services and programmes we deliver and proactively share information.

FRIENDLINESS

- I seek out customer contact, using names whenever possible.
- I smile, make eye contact, display positive body language and keep conversations positive.
- I thank each and every customer.

EFFICIENCY

- I reduce hassles and inconveniences.
- I value each customer's time and resources.
- I make it right-right away.

Our Commitment to Serving You

1. If you telephone us, we will

- answer your call within three rings;
- identify the ministry and give our name;
- greet you pleasantly;
- make every effort to address your inquiry or connect you to the appropriate person who will do so

2. If you visit us, we will

- greet you promptly upon entering our office;
- advise you as to when you can expect to receive assistance in the event our officers are busy assisting other customers;
- serve you within five (5) minutes of arrival if you have an appointment.

3. If you write or email us, we will

- notify you of any additional requirements immediately upon receipt;
- respond within ten (10) business days of receipt of written requests and within three (3) business days of contact for all oral requests;
- endeavour to respond within the timeframe but, in the event we are unable to, then you can expect us to:
 - a. contact you by phone;
 - b. acknowledge receipt of your communication in writing, at which time we will advise you as to when you can expect a reply;
- endeavour to respond to all your requests for information but, in the event we are unable to respond, we will refer you to the appropriate individual, department or agency.

Your Rights

As a customer, you have a right to:

- be dealt with promptly, professionally, fairly, and truthfully in accordance with generally accepted service standards (Public Service Management Code);
- appeal a decision made with respect to any application to the Ministry

You can help us serve you better by:

- Completing applications fully;
- Respecting and following our policies and established procedures;
- Addressing staff with courtesy;
- Providing additional information when requested, accurately, thoroughly and in a timely manner;
- Submitting bills in a timely manner;
- Abiding by any and all legal requirements and other obligations that customers are to meet in order to be eligible for services sought.

Tell us how we are doing

We value your feedback. It provides us with information that helps us to refine and improve our service. It is important to know what works well. By telling us when you have received excellent customer service and what we got right, it helps us to recognise the efforts of our people and to ensure we replicate best practice across the Ministry and departments. We are committed to ensuring all complaints received are taken seriously and handled efficiently, fairly and confidentially. We will aim to resolve all complaints as soon as possible. However, depending upon the nature of the complaint response times may vary. All complaints will be handled in a confidential manner and you will be provided with updates during the investigation of your complaint.

Submit your commendations and complaints through the Government's centralised platform, **Rate Us** (<https://rateus.gov.vg>).



APPENDIX

Responsibilities within the Premier's Office

The responsibilities of the **Public Administration Unit** include:

- Ensuring that local and international obligations are met;
- Writing Government policy proposals or reports in the form of draft Cabinet papers;
- Equipping the Premier with the requisite information and advice as requested;
- Providing policy level advice and support to the Permanent Secretary; and
- Maintaining relationships with regional and international organisations.

The responsibilities of the **Strategy and Policy Development Unit** include:

- Coordinating the planning and policy process of the Premier's Office and its departments;
- Providing support and advice to the Permanent Secretary by developing viable options for responding/addressing identified and emerging issues to create or change a policy;
- Conducting research and assisting with policy development, analysis and delivery;
- Researching and gathering information (evidence) to contribute to specific policy formulation and development;
- Interacting with a range of internal and/or external stakeholders and building strong partnerships with other organisations and bodies with similar interests to discuss, monitor and evaluate policy issues;
- Monitoring and evaluating actual performance of specific policies and implementing strategies against committed outcomes and objectives; and
- Supporting the Ministry on strategic management to contribute to its effectiveness in the Public Service.

The responsibilities of the **Human Resources Unit** include:

- Guiding long-term HR strategy and providing advice to the Permanent Secretary, Heads of Department and senior officers on personnel matters and policy development;
- Managing high-level recruitment, ensuring fair selection processes, and recommending employment terms and conditions in accordance with the Service Commission Regulations 2014, Appointment to Public Office (Devolution of Human Resource Functions) Regulations 2008, Public Service Management Code, 2023, and other relevant legislation;
- Coordinating training, coaching, and new employee orientation to support professional growth and success effectively;
- Overseeing the full appraisal process from performance agreements to corrective action, promoting a culture of continuous performance development and improvement;

- Maintaining HR records, preparing periodic reports and Public Service Commission Papers, enforcing health and safety standards, supporting grievance resolution, and ensuring disciplinary processes align with established policy.

The responsibilities of the **Protocol and Event Coordination Unit** include:

- Providing for protocol services across Government and planning, arranging and executing protocol services for official events for Government ceremonies and conferences as well as rendering professional support to Government officials and visiting dignitaries;
- Maintaining the standard of all functions of diplomatic, ceremonial and general protocol for the Government of the Virgin Islands; and
- Organising all Government protocol, providing training to relevant personnel and supervising officers responsible for protocol or who serve as liaison officers in other ministries.

The responsibilities of the **Finance Unit** include:

- Advising management in the Ministry and Departments on financial matters to ensure decisions are based on up-to-date, expert information;
- Managing fiscal transactions and related financial activities pertaining to the preparation and maintenance of the capital and recurrent budgets;
- Performing fiscal analysis and making recommendations relating to the status of account balances to the Accounting Officers of the Ministry and its Departments;
- Preparing purchase orders for goods and services; and
- Processing invoices for the Premier's Office.

The responsibilities of the **Agriculture and Fisheries Management Unit** include:

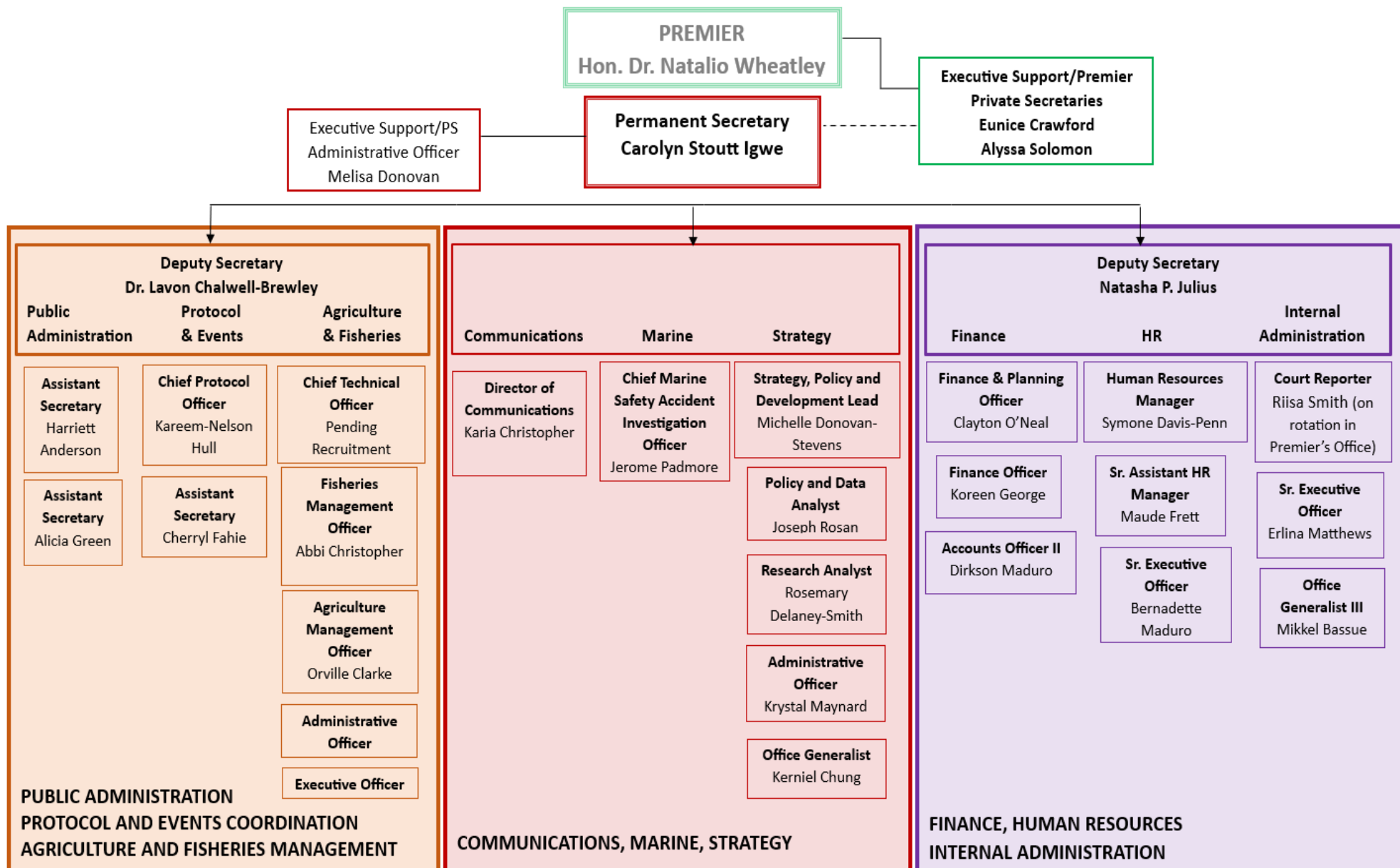
- Establishing standards, guidelines or codes of practice to give effect to any requirement under the Virgin Islands Food Security and Sustainability Act, 2022;
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry responsible for natural resources and the environment, establishing criteria for the licensing of agricultural and fishery production and processing facilities; and
- In collaboration with the Ministry responsible for natural resources and the environment, establishing climate change vulnerability assessment and risk management protocols to determine and address impacts from climate change on agricultural and fisheries industries and food security in the Territory.

The responsibilities of the **Chief Marine Accident Investigator** include:

- Performing the role of lead public safety officer for the marine sector;
- Advising the Permanent Secretary and Minister responsible for Maritime Administration;
- Receiving reports of marine accidents;

- Supervising and reviewing the circumstances of marine accidents investigations and reporting and working with requisite entities to produce reports following respective investigations of marine accidents;
- Coordinating and managing the communication with other investigators, regulators and seafarers;
- Assisting in handling inquiries made by relevant marine safety/accident authorities and other investigators;
- Assisting with resolving issues related to maritime, procedures, regulations and primary laws; and
- Assisting with gathering of information required for meetings locally and internationally to gather necessary information pertaining to marine accidents.





ENACTED LEGISLATION

The following is a list of enacted legislation that falls under the Premier's Office Portfolio.

1. Agricultural Small Holdings, CAP. 83
2. Animals (Importation and Diseases) (Amendment) Regulations [No. 9 of 2001]
3. Animals (Importation and Diseases) (Amendment) Regulations [No. 5 of 1995]
4. Animals (Importation and Diseases) (Prohibition of Importation) (Revocation) Order [No. 53 of 2002]
5. Animals (Importation and Diseases) (Prohibition of Importation) Order [No. 10 of 2001]
6. Animals (Importation and Diseases) (Prohibition of Importation) Order, [No. 1 of 2004]
7. Animals (Importation and Diseases), CAP. 88
8. British Ministers and Consuls Act
9. Data Protection Act
10. Diplomatic Privileges (Extension) Act
11. Disaster Management Act
12. Dogs (Prevention of Injury to Persons, Livestock and Poultry) Act [No. 14 of 2001]
13. Endangered Animals and Plants, CAP. 89
14. Fisheries Regulations
15. Food Security and Sustainability Act
16. Fumigation of Plants, CAP. 90
17. Importation Prohibition (Epidemic Diseases) CAP. 179
18. Integrity in Public Life Act
19. Merchant Shipping (Adoption of UK Legislation) Act
20. Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution) Act
21. Merchant Shipping Act (Accident Reporting and Investigation) Regulations, 2020
22. Newspaper Surety Act
23. Overseas Service Act
24. Plant Protection (Prohibition of Importation of Plants from Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago) Regulations, [No. 3/1996]
25. Plant Protection (Prohibition of Importation of Plants) (Amendment) Regulations [No. 2 of 1997]
26. Plant Protection (Prohibition of Importation of Plants) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations [No. 5 of 1997]
27. Plant Protection (Prohibition of Importation of Plants) (Amendments) Regulations, [No. 35 of 2002]
28. Plant Protection, CAP. 93
29. Pound, CAP. 245
30. Pounds and Livestock Brands Act [No. of 2004]

31. Production of Telegrams Act
32. Protection of Animals (Amendment) Act [No. 3 of 2005]
33. Protection of Animals, CAP. 94
34. Protection of Endangered Animals, Plants and Articles (Removal and Possession), CAP. 95
35. Protection of Trees and Conservation of Soil and Water, CAP. 86
36. Quarantine, CAP. 196
37. Slaughter Houses Act, 2001 [No. 8 of 2001]
38. Virgin Islands Recovery and Development Agency Act
39. Virgin Islands Shipping and Maritime Authority Act, 2023
40. Wild Birds Protection, CAP. 96

Adopted Legislation

The following list of legislation was adopted by the Virgin Islands and falls under the Premier's Office portfolio.

1. Antigua Diocesan Synod Incorporation, CAP. 249
2. Board of Trustees of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Inc., CAP. 250
3. Pilgrim Holiness Church Incorporation, CAP. 251
4. Roman Catholic Bishop of St. John's Incorporation and Vesting, CAP. 251
5. Virgin Islands Missionary Diocese Incorporation, CAP. 253
6. Wesleyan Methodist (Vesting of Property), CAP. 254

Cabinet Approved Policies under the Premier's Office

1. Discretionary Powers Policy
2. Statutory Boards Policy
3. Ministerial Staff Policy (pending)





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