

GUIDANCE NOTE

Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk

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What is the WPS helpdesk?

The helpdesk is a **call-down facility** for UK government teams that provides high-quality, evidence informed analysis and expertise on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) issues. The helpdesk can support the integration of gender sensitivity and gender transformation approaches in conflict and security-focused policy and programming, and boost UK capacity to advance its WPS National Action Plan. The helpdesk started in December 2021 and will operate until 31 March 2025.

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What can the helpdesk help me with?

The helpdesk is primarily intended for desk-based advisory support but can include limited field work or short trainings. Illustrative types of support are:

- **Gender and conflict analyses** at a local, national or regional level to inform gender-responsive conflict and security policy and programming
- **Thematic research and evidence summaries** exploring the links between gender and a range of conflict and security issues.
- **Training sessions** such as WPS deep dives, gender and conflict analysis, and gender and conflict-sensitive MEL.
- **Project, programme and/or portfolio reviews**, reviewing documentation such as business cases, strategies, programme approaches to highlight gaps, entry points and opportunities for WPS inclusion.

- **Country accompaniment packages** that include in-depth analysis with regular updates, tailored training, and short-term mentoring support to specific teams over a slightly longer timeframe.

The GPS team can offer guidance on whether the helpdesk is the appropriate service for you. To meet certain needs, you may find other HMG resources more suitable such as Violence against Women and Children helpdesk or the Deployable Civilian Experts roster. For analysis involving restricted materials a different approach may be required as helpdesk experts do not routinely undergo security clearance.

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Who manages the helpdesk?

The WPS Helpdesk is a partnership led by **Saferworld** with **Conciliation Resources (CR)**, **Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK)**, **Women's International Peace Centre (WIPC)**, and the **University of Durham**. The budget for helpdesk support comes from the ISF and is free to use across UK government departments and ISF Portfolios. The total funding committed to this helpdesk is £1.7 million and, starting from April 2022, each year the helpdesk will have an annual budget of £500,000 (including non-ODA) that any UK government stakeholder can access.

STEP 1
Task
request

STEP 2
Present
team

STEP 3
Kick-off

STEP 4
Delivery

STEP 5
Peer
quality
assurance

STEP 6
Feedback
and
revisions

STEP 7
Sign-off

STEP 8
Dissemination
and feedback

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How do I use the helpdesk?

You can email the helpdesk at wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk with your request. The helpdesk management team will acknowledge your request within one working day, and subsequently arrange a short call to confirm the terms of reference (ToR). The ISF Project Team will be available to shape ToRs if helpful, although this is not mandatory. The helpdesk will identify and present a team of experts, and if approved, schedule a kick-off meeting. We regret that we cannot accept requests for specific named experts to handle your request, but we always choose the best-matched experts for the ToR. Once this has been completed, the delivery stage starts, and you are free to directly interact with the experts as-needed with the helpdesk team in cc.

Key terms

- **Task Commissioner:** the UK government officer submitting a request to the WPS Helpdesk
- **Task Terms of Reference:** the short form which the Task Commissioner should complete, setting out the requirements of the task requested
- **Helpdesk Coordinator:** focal point at the WPS helpdesk who will respond to and coordinate all helpdesk enquiries including task requests
- **Quality Assurance:** expert peer review of task content as part of helpdesk quality control to be led by a senior expert
- **Call down:** to request task assignments from contracted service provider over a period of time

Quality assurance checks will be completed on all materials prepared by the expert teams, and once they pass quality assurance, you'll receive a version of your requested materials (although note, submitted materials are not intended to be proofread final drafts at this stage). At this stage, your comments and questions are welcome, and the expert team will be on-hand to make revisions. Once satisfied, the report will be signed off, you'll be sent a short feedback survey to complete and (unless confidential) the materials will be uploaded to the WPS Helpdesk public website. The helpdesk will contact the task commissioner for monitoring of any outcome after the task is signed off.

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How long does a task take?

Although there is no 'typical' helpdesk request, tasks are likely to range from short-term (a few days' work) up to research or consultations that happen over a period of weeks or months; the average task length in the third year of operation has been seventeen days over a span of seven to twelve weeks. Overall task length will be determined by the scope of the ToRs and the likely coordination and quality assurance requirements.

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Questions and more information?

If you have questions and feedback on the WPS Helpdesk function, please contact us at:

wpshelpdesk@saferworld.org.uk

ISF Project Focal Point for the WPS Helpdesk:
Elise Sandbach and Rebecca Ingram

Information about the Helpdesk and the task terms of reference is available at: <https://wpshelpdesk.org/>