

FRC ETHICAL STANDARD (2019)

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

1. Transitional Provisions

The Ethical Standard has an effective date of 15 March 2020, with transitional provisions for engagements relating to the audit of earlier financial periods, and for non-audit or audit-related services, for which an engagement letter has been agreed and for which work is already underway prior to the effective date, to be completed in accordance with the terms of the original engagement letter.

We have been asked to clarify the status of non-audit or audit-related services which have not been engaged for or started prior to 15 March 2020, but which relate to a financial period which commences prior to 15 March 2020. In those circumstances, we are of the view that an objective, reasonable and informed third party would be likely to conclude that the provision of a service that was not included in the list of permitted services would be inappropriate to enter into an engagement for.

2. Other Entities of Public Interest

An Other Entity of Public Interest (OEPI) is defined in the Glossary of Terms. Large private companies in sub-paragraph (d) refers to those covered by the criteria in Part 8, paragraph 23(3) of The Companies (Miscellaneous Reporting) Regulations 2018 (SI/2018/860). The definition excludes fund management entities¹ contained within a private equity or venture capital limited partnership structure.

The auditor of a portfolio company held by a private equity or venture capital fund that meets the definition of an OEPI, may only provide non-audit or audit-related services to that entity which are included on the list of permitted services in paragraph 5.40 of the Ethical Standard.

The same requirement applies to any controlled undertakings held by that entity and to its UK parent. Given the exclusion of fund management entities from the definition, the requirement in respect of providing services to the UK parent applies to services in respect of, or relevant to the OEPI itself, or its subject matter. Other services provided to the UK parent by the OEPI auditor can only be provided after the audit firm has undertaken an assessment of threats to independence and applied any necessary safeguards to address this.

Financial Reporting Council
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¹ The advisor, the general partner, the fund manager and the fund itself.