

## Partnership Forum - Guiding Principles

The Partnership Forum members at Audit Scotland have created a set of guiding principles to support effective partnership working between Audit Scotland and the Audit Scotland Branch of the Public & Commercial Services Union (PCS).

These principles were created by Partnership Forum members during 2014 and are embedded in the content of the Partnership Forum Agreement on the following pages of this document.



### Open communication

key messages for all colleagues, tone not adversarial  
relevant to all, making a difference  
shared sense of purpose – partners not ‘sides’  
when we disagree let’s say so



### Constructive culture

informal or formal, as needed but signal this beforehand  
constructive, we have a future tomorrow  
proactive not just reactive  
highlight our joint successes , our wins & our brand



### Creating opportunities & solving problems

forum is for big, cross-cutting, strategic issues  
re-create business group engagement (people leads)  
personal staff issues need 1-1 dialogue  
invest in our relationships as forum members

# Partnership Forum Agreement

Owned and maintained by:	Human Resources
Date checked:	October 2014
Next review date:	October 2016

This document provides a shared sense of purpose and objectives of the Partnership Forum between Audit Scotland and the Audit Scotland Branch of the Public & Commercial Services Union (PCS). The agreement covers:

- Purpose of the agreement
- Who it relates to
- Methods of communication
- Principles underpinning the partnership forum
- Effective consultation and negotiation
- Arrangements for reviewing the agreement

## Purpose of agreement

Audit Scotland's management and PCS have a strong record of successfully sharing information, engaging in productive consultation and negotiating upon certain terms & conditions of employment.

Since Audit Scotland was formed in April 2000 both parties have worked together. Since 2002 this has included regular Partnership Forum meetings and more informal communication.

This agreement records the main principles of the way in which Audit Scotland's management and Audit Scotland's PCS Branch Executive Committee ("BEC") communicate, provide information to each other and negotiate. The document is therefore classified as a partnership agreement.

## Parties to this agreement

Audit Scotland's management team represent the employer organisation.

The PCS Branch Chairperson and members of the BEC represent the majority of employees across Audit Scotland and is therefore well placed to act as the primary employee representative group. Employees who are not PCS members may still raise issues of concern with Audit Scotland's management or through Human Resources. Such issues will be dealt with through the most appropriate forum or method.

## Methods of communication

Audit Scotland will continue to communicate with employees through a range of direct and indirect channels. Examples of these are shown below. This list is indicative of the commitment that Audit Scotland makes to effective communication with employees. It is not intended to be exhaustive.

### Indirect communication channels through representative groups

- The Audit Scotland / PCS Partnership Forum

The objective of the Forum is to allow communication of information and consultation with PCS on all critical and strategic issues affecting all employees of Audit Scotland.

This represents the main, scheduled method of communication with PCS and meets no less frequently than every three months. Items for discussion are tabled by both parties and, whenever possible, necessary information is provided in advance.

Audit Scotland is represented by the Chief Operating Officer, the Human Resources & Organisational Development Manager, a business group Director and a Human Resources Consultant.

PCS is represented by the PCS Chairperson and three additional members of the BEC (elected by the BEC annually). Occasionally, as and when required, a full-time official from PCS HQ may also attend.

Summary information of each meeting is sent to all attendees via email following the meeting. Minutes are published through [ishare](#)<sup>1</sup> thereafter for all employees to view.

### Local Business Group / PCS Partnership Meetings

A Director and other Assistant Directors /CSG Senior Managers will meet with local PCS representatives no less frequently than twice a year to engage in dialogue about matters which affect that Business Group.

This could include local travel issues, staff allocation to audit clients when there are major changes to audit appointments, trainee auditor scheme, local restructuring etc.

A member of the Human Resources team will attend these meetings if requested, to ensure that any discussions and agreement is aligned to corporate policies and to identify any implications for other parts of Audit Scotland.

### Health & Safety Committee

The H&S Committee meets no less frequently than every three months. Membership is made up of the Chief Operating Officer, the Human Resources & Organisational Development Manager, the HR Officer with H&S training and a senior manager from either Performance Audit and Best Value or Audit Services. In addition, two members of the PCS BEC (elected annually) are members of the H&S Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> i-share is Audit Scotland's intranet site for all employees.

Details of how this committee operates are shown on [i>share](#). Minutes are published on i>share and are available to all employees.

### **Other Committees/Project Groups**

The Partnership Forum may determine that limited life committees or project groups are established to deal with specific issues arising (eg reviewing lease car scheme employee benefits). Membership of such groups will be drawn from the appropriate employees and managers in relation to the matter being dealt with, including member(s) nominated by the PCS Chairperson.

Other groups may be established across Audit Scotland in connection with operational matters (e.g. specific issues connected to individual business groups) and again membership will be drawn from the most appropriate group of employees and managers depending on the nature and scope of the issue.

### **Direct Communication**

- Team Meetings

Between business unit management team members and local teams. These will take advantage of cascading information and feeding information back from employees to more senior business group management.

- Abacus

Audit Scotland's online magazine that carries a mix of news and information including past performance, future developments, charity updates etc.

- Corporate Performance Report

This provides information upon past performance, our business plan and the resources / processes that will be deployed to achieve success. All employees receive a copy of the report.

- I>share

Audit Scotland's intranet provides a means of communicating with all employees. It is used by both PCS and Audit Scotland management. It includes key information within the Human Resources site relating to policies, procedures and terms & conditions of employment. PCS also has an iShare site containing information for members and for non members who wish to join the union and discussion boards for members

- Business Plans

Each function and business group produces clear business plans which are available for all employees to read. These set out the main goals of Audit Scotland and the key resource and organisational requirements necessary to achieve success.

- **Staff Survey**  
Audit Scotland, working with PCS, will continue to seek employee opinion across a wide range of issues through regular attitude surveys undertaken in accordance with good practice<sup>2</sup>. The results will be shared with employees.
- **Notice Boards**  
Notice boards are available in all Audit Scotland offices.
- **PCS AGMs and special meetings**  
PCS consults staff at its annual general meetings and special meetings as required
- **PCS Newsletter**  
PCS produces a regular newsletter for members.
- **Surveys**  
PCS surveys its members on areas of interest, for example attitudes to the PAD process.

### **Examples of what is covered by this agreement**

Audit Scotland is committed to proper and effective communication by providing timely information, consultation and negotiation. The following provides an indication of Audit Scotland's commitment. Please note it is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Information on Audit Scotland's corporate objectives and operational updates
- Information and consultation on the situation, structure and development of employment within Audit Scotland and on any anticipated measures, in particular where there may be any likely threat to employment
- Information and consultation on decisions likely to lead to substantial changes in work organisation or in contractual relations.

### **Principles relating to providing information under this agreement**

Audit Scotland and PCS agree that open communication and building strong working relationships are necessary for the Forum to function effectively, to support effective consultation and negotiation.

Audit Scotland will provide relevant information to employees or employee representatives in a timely manner so that effective communication, consultation and negotiation can take place. PCS representatives may also request additional information.

Occasionally, information may be commercially sensitive and/or confidential. Audit Scotland may impose a confidentiality restriction on any information or document provided to employees or employee representatives. This will only be the case when Audit Scotland believes this to be justified in the legitimate interests of the organisation.

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<sup>2</sup> Past surveys include the Best Company surveys 2009 - 2014. Results will be benchmarked against external employer performance in order to assess Audit Scotland's relative performance and the survey will be managed by an independent survey provider to ensure good practice standards are maintained.

## Principles relating to effective consultation

Audit Scotland will seek to take account of employee's views before making a decision covered by this agreement. Consultation is defined as 'an exchange of views and establishment of dialogue' between Audit Scotland and employees or employee representatives. Audit Scotland will seek to ensure that consultation is fair:

- Consultation will take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage
- Adequate information is provided upon which employees or their representatives can respond
- Adequate time is provided for a response and,
- Proper consideration will be given to the response following the consultation process

## Principles relating to effective negotiation

Audit Scotland has agreed with PCS key areas in which it will also negotiate, in addition to engaging in consultation. These areas include terms and conditions of employment relating to all employees within grades A to G.

When the parties agree, the Audit Scotland / PCS Partnership Forum may provide a negotiating mechanism for these aspects of Audit Scotland's pay and terms and conditions of employment.

In addition, both parties will engage in collaborative negotiation in order to obtain agreement, wherever possible, upon an outcome which meets the long-term needs of Audit Scotland and its employees. To facilitate effective negotiation it is agreed that:

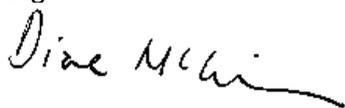
- Joining the union and serving on the BEC will not affect staff career prospects.
- BEC members will be given reasonable time to carry out their TU duties and consult with member

## Arrangements for reviewing the Partnership Forum Agreement

This agreement will be reviewed as and when necessary at the request of either Audit Scotland or PCS, as the main employee representative group. It will be formally reviewed every three years as part of the triennial review process.

The agreement may be terminated by either Audit Scotland or PCS by providing written notification and three months notice of the intention to withdraw from this agreement.

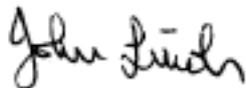
Signed on behalf of Audit Scotland Management:



(Diane McGiffen, Chief Operating Officer)

Date: 4 December 2014

Signed on behalf of PCS:



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(John Lincoln, Branch Chair of PCS, Audit Scotland)

Date: 4 December 2014