

Audit Scotland's annual statement on efficiency, effectiveness and economy for 2013/14

The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, section 32(1)(b) requires listed public bodies to publish a statement in relation to efficiency, effectiveness and economy as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.

The following statement sets out the steps that Audit Scotland has taken in 2013/14 to improve its efficiency, effectiveness and economy in the exercise of its functions. Further information on this and our audit work is contained in our Annual Report and Annual Review 2013/14 which is on our website at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk

Introduction

Audit Scotland is a statutory body that supports the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission in making sure public money in Scotland is used properly, efficiently and effectively by undertaking audits and investigations of Scottish public bodies.

To ensure objectivity in our work, Audit Scotland is independent of the Scottish Government and ministers. Maintaining our independence from those we audit limits our ability to share services. However, where sharing is possible we have done so.

Efficiency, effectiveness and economy improvements during 2013/14

The Scottish Commission for Public Audit (SCPA), established under Section 12 of the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000, examines our proposals for the use of our resources and expenditure and reports on them to the Parliament. Our budget proposals can be found on the Scottish Parliaments website.

As our income comes from parliament and the public bodies we audit, reducing our costs will help, albeit in a small way, their cost pressures through, for example, reduced audit fees. Overall, we are aiming to reduce the cost of audit to public bodies by at least 20 per cent over four years to 2014/15. The cumulative fee reduction since 2009/10 is now 23.5 per cent in real terms, which is above our target. In the last completed audit year (2012/13), we reduced audit fees to public bodies by six per cent.

In 2013/14, we delivered £1.6 million of efficiency savings, against a target of £0.8 million. This was 6.8 per cent of our overall budget.

Sharing services and resources within the public sector allows economy of scale cost and efficiency savings. Where sharing does not impact our independence we have done this. For example:

- We use the Public Contracts Scotland portal to procure services for Audit Scotland, the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission where it is beneficial to do so.
- We use competitive contracts secured by Scottish Procurement, leading to savings on our utility costs, computer accessories and managed print services.

See also our annual statement on sustainable economic growth.