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Press release

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Report cites positive impact of Teachers' Agreement but more work required to demonstrate value for money

The Teachers' Agreement has brought benefits for the teaching profession, but the lack of performance measures makes it difficult to assess the wider impact of the £2.15 billion investment.

These are the main findings of the joint report by the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission, *A first stage review of the cost and implementation of the Teachers' Agreement 'A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century'*.

The benefits of the Agreement include:

- Stable industrial relations between employers and unions as a consequence of the teachers' 23% pay award
- Improved terms and conditions for classroom teachers, with more opportunities for continuing professional development, lesson preparation and marking; and less time being spent on non-teaching tasks due to the recruitment of administrative and support staff
- Improved induction and support arrangements for new teachers, with more students entering the profession and becoming fully qualified teachers more quickly than before.

Iain Robertson, Accounts Commission member, said: "Education is the largest area of local government expenditure and a crucial area of their work. Good early progress has been made in implementing the Agreement with, for example, more recently qualified teachers showing a very strong commitment to Continuing Professional Development. It is vital that this positive start is sustained."

In some areas where change has been introduced the outcomes have been mixed. Reduction in class contact time is working well for classroom teachers but has contributed to an increased workload for some head teachers. Take up of the Chartered Teacher Scheme has been slow to date, but looks likely to increase over time. The report warns that costs associated with this increased uptake would be significant.

Robert Black, Auditor General for Scotland said: "Performance management arrangements need to be strengthened to demonstrate that the Agreement has delivered value for money and is improving education in Scotland. The Agreement is strong in detailing what needs to be done and by when, but it is less clear about how the cost and impact of the changes introduced should be assessed."

The report recommends that the Executive work with other parties to the Agreement to identify and report on a set of comprehensive performance measures. These should include recruitment and retention to the profession; workforce morale; workload and skill mix; the quality of educational leadership; improvements in classroom practice; and, impact on educational attainment.

Ends

Further Information from Leon Thompson tel: 0131 624 9974 or Anne McCubbin tel: 0131 624 9970.

Notes to editors

1. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. Audit Scotland has prepared this report jointly for the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission for Scotland:

Audit Scotland provides services to the Auditor General for Scotland and the Accounts Commission

- The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Executive and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. He investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Executive or the Scottish Parliament.
 - The Accounts Commission for Scotland was set up in 1975 and is independent of both central and local government. The commission checks whether local authorities, fire and police boards spend £9 billion of public money properly and effectively.
2. The full report can be found on Audit Scotland's website – www.audit-scotland.gov.uk