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Press release

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Scotland's public sector spends more than £5m a year developing its leaders of the future

Scotland's public sector has good examples of investment in leadership but many individual organisations do not have clear policies and most are unable to link the spending to improvements in their performance.

Public bodies need to do more to track this investment and make sure it results in better managed organisations and better public services, says Audit Scotland.

An Audit Scotland report published today, *How government works: Leadership development*, says good leadership is essential in Scotland's public sector to ensure it provides high-quality services and effectively manages public resources.

The report finds that the country's public sector spends at least £5m a year on identifying and training leaders. It says there are clear examples of good practice and of collaborative working, particularly between the NHS and councils.

However three-quarters of bodies are unable to say what impact their spending on leadership development has on their organisations' performance.

Further, 60 per cent of organisations have no policies to direct their spending, and one in five does not know how much it spends on leadership development.

The report also finds that bodies rarely share their examples of good practice or experiences and expertise with the rest of the sector.

Auditor General for Scotland Robert Black says: "The need for effective leadership of public services is now widely accepted and it is encouraging to find some excellent Scottish examples of leadership investment programmes.

"But the picture across Scotland is highly variable. There needs to be a more rigorous approach to tracking this investment and evaluating whether it is improving public sector organisations

"The Scottish Executive is well placed to develop a clear policy framework that will ensure a consistent and effective approach. I hope that this report will help to encourage and inform thinking about how to deliver effective leadership development across Scotland's public sector.

"I would invite the Executive to consider how best it can build on the work of the Scottish Leadership Foundation. Working with other employers the Executive might consider sponsoring a co-ordinating body that can support the development of cross-sector training and spread best practice in the procurement, delivery and evaluation of leadership development programmes."

Case study: The report contains a study of Dalry Primary School in North Ayrshire. The strong leadership of head teacher Maureen Denningberg has directly affected the achievements and experiences of the children and staff.

For further information contact Simon Ebbett tel: 0131 624 9924 or Leon Thompson tel: 0131 624 9974.

For further information about Dalry Primary School contact Alec Wattie at North Ayrshire Council, tel: 01294 324 157.

Notes to editors

1. This report is the third in the *How government works* series. The series comments in detail on specific aspects of the business of the public sector in Scotland which cut across a range of organisations. The reports comment on the way the cross-cutting issues are handled by different parts of the public sector and the impact they have on the delivery of services.
2. In November 2002 the Auditor General published the first, *How Government Works in Scotland*, which explained the organisation of government in Scotland, the responsibilities of public servants and how they are held accountable, and the role of public audit in both holding public bodies to account and supporting democratic scrutiny. This was followed by *HGW: Initiative funding* and *HGW: Leadership development*, both in November 2005.
3. 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.
4. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. It provides services to the Accounts Commission and the Auditor General for Scotland.
5. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 can be found on Audit Scotland's website. www.audit-scotland.gov.uk