

Technical Guidance Note

TGN/HCS/24

Auditor Assurance on 2023/24 Health Board
Consolidation Schedules



 AUDIT SCOTLAND

Prepared for appointed auditors in the health sector

4 April 2024

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Return overview

Description of return

The consolidation schedule from each health board is used by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Government external auditor to facilitate the preparation and audit of the Scottish Government Consolidated Accounts.

Submission to auditors

31 May 2024

Auditor submission target date

30 June 2024

Risk areas

1. Information in the consolidation schedules is inconsistent with the audited annual report and accounts.

Address for certified claim

Email: nhsaccounts@gov.scot (Scottish Government) and
ATomlinson@auditscotland.gov.uk (Scottish Government external auditor)

Technical Guidance Note publication date and relevant year

4 April for 2023/24

Address for consulting with Innovation & Quality (I&Q)

TechnicalQueries@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Introduction

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Technical Guidance Note (TGN) from Audit Scotland's I&Q is to provide appointed auditors of health boards (HB auditors) with guidance on examining and reporting on consolidation schedules which boards are required to submit to the Scottish Government (SG) for 2023/24.

Nature of return

2. The SG provides a template for the consolidation schedules for health boards to complete. The schedules require to be completed using information from each board's annual report and accounts. The SG then incorporates the financial information into the Scottish Government Consolidated Accounts which are audited by the external auditor of the SG (SG auditor).

Responsibilities of HB auditors

3. HB auditors are required by paragraph 81 of the Code of Audit Practice to examine and report on the consolidation schedules as core annual audit activity. This is highlighted at paragraph 104 of the [Guidance on Planning 2023/24 Annual Audits](#).

4. HB auditors are required to report the results of their examination in an Assurance Statement.

5. This TGN:

- provides guidance for HB auditors on the examination of the consolidation schedules
- sets out and explains the testing and reporting procedures that HB auditors should carry out (all summarised in the checklist at Appendix 1)
- provides an Assurance Statement at Appendix 2
- clarifies for the SG and the SG auditor the nature of the work undertaken by HB auditors in providing their Assurance Statement.

Submission of return to auditor

6. Health boards are required to submit the consolidation schedules based on the unaudited accounts to the SG and to their auditors by 31 May 2024.

Consulting with I&Q

7. Auditors should consult with I&Q by sending an email to TechnicalQueries@audit-scotland.gov.uk.

1: Testing procedures

Test procedures

Auditors should examine the completed consolidation schedules and conclude whether they are consistent with the financial statements.

8. The consolidation templates provided by the SG are in the form of an excel spreadsheet. They comprise the following worksheet tabs:

- Performance Report
- Remuneration and Staff Report
- Accountability Report
- A separate tab for each of the financial statements and notes
- Tabs for the Scottish Financial Returns (SFRs). SFRs are not included in the annual report and accounts and therefore are outwith the scope of HB auditors' work.

9. Health boards are responsible for completing the consolidation templates in accordance with guidance provided by the SG. Boards should have arrangements in place for the accurate and timely completion of the templates.

10. HB auditors should:

- evaluate the adequacy of the board's arrangements and controls for the preparation of the templates
- evaluate whether the template includes all the required tabs within scope
- select a sample of entries on the templates and agree each to the corresponding item in the annual report and accounts
- confirm that any adjustments to the annual report and accounts during the audit process are reflected in the template
- investigate error messages, and confirm that negative balances are correctly reported
- agree a sample of inter-board trading figures to supporting documentation.

11. HB auditors should then conclude as to whether the templates are consistent with the audited annual report and accounts. When auditors identify an inconsistency, they should bring it to the board's attention so that it can be eliminated.

2: Reporting procedures

Reporting procedures

Auditors should complete the Assurance Statement and submit it along with the consolidation templates to the SG and SG auditor by 30 June 2024.

12. An Assurance Statement is provided at Appendix 2.

13. HB auditors should complete the Assurance Statement as indicated by the square brackets. This includes providing:

- details on any control weaknesses or instances of fraud
- a list of unadjusted statements.

14. If auditors do not identify any material inconsistencies with the annual report and accounts, no other local changes should be necessary to the wording in the Assurance Statement unless there is a modified opinion on the annual report and accounts.

15. If an identified material inconsistency is not eliminated, auditors should:

- add the phrase - “Except for the following matter” - to the start of the conclusion paragraph
- add a paragraph immediately following the conclusion paragraph providing a description of the inconsistency.

16. Auditors should submit the completed consolidation schedule template and accompanying completed Assurance Statement as follows:

Addressee	Email addresses
SG	nhsaccounts@gov.scot
SG auditor	ATomlinson@auditscotland.gov.uk
Audit Scotland	outputs@auditscotland.gov.uk ASG staff should store the schedule and statement in the appropriate body's 'Financial audit - outputs' library on SharePoint and email a hyperlink to outputs@auditscotland.gov.uk .

17. The target submission date is 30 June 2024.

Appendix 1: Auditor Action Checklist

	Yes/No/N/A	Initials/date	W/P ref
1. Do the board's arrangements and controls for the preparation of the consolidation templates appear adequate?			
2. Are all of the required tabs within scope included in the template?			
3. Do the selected entries on the templates agree with the corresponding items in the annual report and accounts?			
4. Have any adjustments to the annual report and accounts during the audit process been reflected in the template?			
5. Have you investigated any error messages?			
6. Are cells identified as negative in the templates consistent with the corresponding balances in the annual report and accounts?			
7. Do inter-board trading figures agree to supporting documentation?			
8. Have you provided details of any control weaknesses or instances of fraud?			
9. Have you provided a list of unadjusted errors?			
10. Have you completed the Assurance Statement and submitted it with the consolidation templates to the SG, SG auditor and Audit Scotland by 30 June?			

Appendix 2: Assurance Statement

Report by the auditors of [insert name of health board] on the consolidation templates for the financial year 2023/24

Conclusion

The consolidation templates, which comprise the [specify the content of the consolidation templates] are derived from the audited annual report and accounts of [insert name of health board] for the year ended 31 March 2024.

[I/We] have concluded that the accompanying consolidation templates are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited annual report and accounts.

There are no significant control weaknesses or instances of fraud to draw to your attention [[I/We] draw the following control weaknesses / instances of fraud to your attention [provide details]].

Audited annual report and accounts and [my/our] report thereon

[I/We] expressed unmodified audit opinions on the audited annual report and accounts [or refer to an unmodified opinion] in [my/our] report dated [insert date of Independent Auditor's Report]. [My/Our] audit work appropriately addressed the risks of material misstatement identified during the course of the audit.

Unadjusted misstatements

There are no unadjusted misstatements to draw to your attention. [[I/We have provided a list of unadjusted misstatements with this Assurance Statement].

Board responsibility for the consolidation templates

The board is responsible for preparing the consolidation templates in accordance with guidance issued by the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates.

Auditor's responsibility for the consolidation templates

[My/Our] responsibility is to report to you [my/our] conclusion as to whether the consolidation templates are consistent with the audited annual report and accounts. [I/We] carried out [my/our] review of the consolidation templates in accordance with the approach set out in Audit Scotland's Technical Guidance Note TGN/HCS/24. [I/We] can confirm that there are no independence issues to draw to your attention and that ethical standards have been complied with.

[Electronic signature of auditor]

[Name of auditor], [Full postal address], [Full date]

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