

Audit Scotland's annual statement on public relations expenditure 2023/24



Background

1. The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, section 31(2)(a) requires listed public bodies to publish a statement on expenditure on public relations as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.
2. This statement sets out information on our expenditure in relation to public relations is related to the effective communication to key stakeholders of the work of the Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland in public.
3. Most of our costs are staff costs.
4. Further information on our audit work is contained in our Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24. This is available on our [website](#).

Introduction

5. 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.
6. To ensure objectivity in our work, Audit Scotland is independent of the Scottish Government and Scottish ministers. The independence, quality and timeliness of audit are essential to the public interest.

Public relations expenditure April 2023 to March 2024

Area of expense	Expense £	Description of expense
Media and parliamentary relations	166,406	<p>Media relations: A key means of communicating our findings in public is via the media. Audit Scotland runs a professional media service, including communicating sometimes complex messages to a wider audience, providing a press office service to journalists, dealing with media enquiries, setting up interviews and providing other media products on all our major reports. We also provide an in-house media service, including media training, to senior managers.</p> <p>Parliamentary relations: Audit Scotland works closely with the Scottish Parliament, most notably but not exclusively with the Public Audit Committee. The press office team closely monitor this area and help ensure Audit</p>

Area of expense	Expense £	Description of expense
		<p>Scotland is well informed about a wide variety of issues relevant to Audit Scotland emerging from the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government.</p> <p>In addition to daily updates, the communications team produces a monthly extensive communications digest of media and parliamentary issues for Audit Scotland's senior management team.</p>
Marketing research and evaluation (monitoring)	34,097	<p>Audit Scotland's work covers just about every aspect of public service in Scotland. As a result, much of what is written in the media and debated in parliament is relevant to Audit Scotland's work. Audit Scotland receives comprehensive daily summaries of this coverage from external media & parliamentary agencies, both of whom are based in Scotland. This information is reviewed and where relevant cascaded to managers and other staff.</p>
Branding and design	10,643	<p>Our communications team oversee our branding and style guides for all of our corporate publications such as the annual reports and for all reports and materials produced for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission. They also ensure other means of communication such as our website and external presentations adhere to a professional corporate style and standard.</p>
Corporate communications	24,115	<p>The communications team provides strategic corporate communications direction to the Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland. It organises and produces annual reports for Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission and handles public and media enquires relating to Audit Scotland corporate affairs.</p>
Publications and printing	215,779	<p>Audit Scotland reports are read by a wide variety of stakeholders, including MSPs, journalists, chief executives of public bodies, members of the public etc. Audit Scotland takes great care to produce user-friendly products. Our reports can be highly specialised with complex graphs and charts. Our in-house team ensures these are produced according to house style and that our reports are produced cost-effectively and on time. We publish between 30 – 40 major performance audit or corporate reports annually plus a variety of other documents and</p>

Area of expense	Expense £	Description of expense
		communications, such as videos, infographics, animations and podcasts. We believe in investing in this area to ensure our messages are communicated clearly and effectively. We publish all of our outputs online but may print small numbers of some of our reports where required. We also publish in specific formats and other languages when appropriate (eg, Easy Read formats, Gaelic languages versions) or in response to user requests.
Digital communications	218,870	The use of digital communications continues to be an important and growing part of how we communicate our work and help us to make an impact. We are increasing substantially our use of social media. Combined with the continuing development of our web site, this has resulted in an increase in traffic to the site and an increase in downloads. We also continue to invest in software and skills that has allowed us to publish more detailed, localised information to improve our service to the public. We also produce video material where appropriate.
Advertising and media planning	0	The communications team provide support to the Auditor General and other senior staff attending and often speaking at local, national and international conferences, as part of our ambition to become a world class audit organisation. This can include speechwriting, presentations and the provision of exhibition materials, as well as publicising events. We also provide exhibition material and support for recruitment fairs.
Marketing	0	
Promotional events	0	
External events	0	
Sponsorship	0	
Conferences and exhibitions	0	

Please note:

- i) All headings in the above table are those provided as guidance by the Scottish Government
- ii) Public relations costs are largely borne by the communications team. The work of the communications team covers the Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland. It is not possible to break these into separate cost streams.