

Audit Scotland's annual statement on public relations expenditure 2025/26

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, which ensures effective communication to key stakeholders of the work of the Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland.
3. Further information on our audit work is contained in our Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26. This is available on our [website](#).
4. No separate formal statement under the Act is required on behalf of the Accounts Commission.

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 2025 to March 2026

7. Table 1 sets out our public relations expenditure between April 2025 to March 2026. The areas of expense set out in the table are in line with Scottish Government guidance.
8. Audit Scotland's 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.

Table 1: Public relations expenditure April 2025 to March 2026

Area of expense	Expense £	Description of expense
Media and parliamentary relations	181,511	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. Parliamentary relations: Audit Scotland works closely with the Scottish Parliament, most notably but not exclusively with the Public Audit Committee. The press office team supports teams giving evidence to the parliament and closely monitors parliamentary activity to help ensure Audit Scotland is well informed about a wide variety of issues relevant to Audit Scotland emerging from the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government. In addition to daily updates, the communications team produces a monthly communications digest of media and parliamentary issues for Audit Scotland's senior management team.
Marketing research and evaluation (monitoring)	37,200	Audit Scotland's work covers nearly 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 and parliamentary agencies. This information is a valuable source of Audit Scotland's audit intelligence, as well as forming part of our wider horizon-scanning. This information is reviewed and where relevant cascaded to managers and other staff.
Branding and design	12,443	Our communications team oversee our branding and style guides for all reports and materials produced for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission and for all our corporate publications such as annual reports. They ensure our reports and all other means of communication - such as our website and external presentations - comply with accessibility legislation and adhere to a professional corporate style and standard.
Corporate communications	26,649	The communications team provides strategic corporate communications direction to the Auditor General, the Accounts Commission and Audit Scotland. It organises

Area of expense	Expense £	Description of expense
		and produces annual reports for Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission and handles public and media enquires relating to Audit Scotland corporate affairs.
Publications and printing	266,717	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 that comply with all accessibility requirements and cater to a diverse range of stakeholders. 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 around 750 reports annually plus a variety of other documents and 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 our outputs digitally 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 language versions) or in response to user requests.
Digital communications	286,373	The use of social media and digital communications continues to be an important and growing part of how we communicate our work and helps us make an impact. 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 Marketing Promotional events External events Sponsorship Conferences and exhibitions	0 0 0 0 0 0	While we don't have external spend on these areas, our communications team supports the Auditor General and other staff attending and speaking at local, national and international conferences, as part of our ambition that public money is well spent to meet the needs of Scotland's people. This can include speechwriting and presentations, and rarer occasions the provision of exhibition materials, as well as publicising events. We also provide exhibition material and support for recruitment fairs.