

Public Audit Forum

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Audit bodies join forces to drive value for money agenda

The UK's five leading audit bodies have developed a suite of indicators to help public sector managers challenge and improve the value for money of their corporate services.

A joint report, published today by the Audit Commission, Audit Scotland, the National Audit Office, the Northern Ireland Audit Office, and the Wales Audit Office, includes five sets of indicators which allow organisations to assess the value for money performance of their:

- finance;
- human resources;
- information and communication technology;
- estates management;
- procurement.

These services have been identified by the government as priority areas for increasing efficiency and releasing resources for use in delivering front line services.

Local authorities and central government departments across the UK are facing pressure to make significant efficiency savings in the coming years, alongside more effective service delivery. The indicators are therefore underpinned by a focus on better outcomes for service users as well as value for money.

The indicators have been designed to ensure that public bodies will be able not only to assess their own value for money performance but also compare their results against other public sector organisations everywhere in the UK.

In a joint foreword to the report, the five audit agency heads said: 'Our organisations work closely together on many issues, although much of this cooperation is not immediately visible. It is therefore a particular pleasure to be able to publish together the results of a project that we have successfully pursued as a joint venture, which we believe

will enable public sector organisations to get better value for money from their corporate services.’

A report which includes the indicator sets is available at www.public-audit-forum.gov.uk

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies in England, which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money each year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

2. 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 and covers all public bodies in Scotland, which spend a combined £31bn a year.

3. The Comptroller and Auditor General, Sir John Bourn, is the head of the National Audit Office which employs some 850 staff. He and the NAO are totally independent of Government. He certifies the accounts of all Government departments and a wide range of other public sector bodies; and he has statutory authority to report to Parliament on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and other bodies have used their resources.

4. The Comptroller and Auditor General is Head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (the Audit Office). He and the NIAO are totally independent of Government. He certifies the accounts of Government Departments and has a range of other public sector bodies. He has statutory authority to report to Parliament on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which departments and public bodies use their resources. His reports are published as Parliament papers.

5. The Wales Audit Office was created in April 2005 through the Public Audit (Wales) Act, 2004, which expanded the functions of the Auditor General for Wales and enabled the transfer of staffs from the Audit Commission in Wales and National Audit Office in Wales to his employment. The Wales Audit Office is independent of government and is responsible for the annual audit of some £19 billion of annual public expenditure. Its mission is to promote improvement, so that people in Wales benefit from accountable, well-managed public services that offer the best possible value for money. It is also committed to identify and spreading good practice across the Welsh public sector.

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