

# Statutory reporting

## Section 22 reports



Prepared by Audit Scotland

### **What is a Section 22 report?**

The Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Auditor General and Audit Scotland. Under Section 22 of this Act, the Auditor General can prepare a report on matters arising from the audit of the accounts of a public body for which she is responsible (including the Scottish Government, NHS bodies, colleges and Non Departmental Public Bodies). This type of report is known as a Section 22 report.

### **What are the reasons for the Auditor General preparing a Section 22 report?**

Reporting under Section 22 of this Act enables the Auditor General to bring to the attention of the Scottish Parliament and the public, matters of public

interest arising from the audit of the wide range of public bodies for which she has audit responsibility. These matters of public interest are generally focused on specific issues or concerns that have been raised by the auditor and highlighted in their annual audit report on a public body. The Auditor General may also decide to prepare a Section 22 report so that she can publicly report on progress with issues raised in a previous Section 22 report.

### **What kinds of issues are highlighted in Section 22 reports?**

The issues highlighted in Section 22 reports can vary, as they depend on the issues that the auditor has highlighted in their audit report. In deciding whether to prepare a Section 22 report, we consider a range of factors including:

- **the auditor's opinion on the accounts**, eg the auditor may have highlighted particular issues by qualifying their opinion on the financial statements or adding an 'emphasis of matter' paragraph
- **materiality**, ie the significance of the issue in terms of its value or its impact
- **relevance**, eg whether the issue is relevant elsewhere within the public body or across public bodies, whether the issue is of future relevance in that other public bodies may have similar problems or may pursue a similar course of action
- **timing**, eg how long it has been since the matter arose or whether the issue is a continuing concern
- **reporting**, eg whether the issue has been reported in public before.
- the valuations of IT assets in [Registers of Scotland](#), [the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service](#) and [Disclosure Scotland](#) (all November 2011).

## What are the arrangements for preparing a Section 22 report?

During the annual audit of a public body, the auditor will draw any significant issues arising to the attention of the public body concerned as well as to the Auditor General. The auditor will also comment on significant issues in their annual audit report which is submitted to the Auditor General once the audit is complete. Working closely with the auditor, the Auditor General will make a judgement on whether Audit Scotland should prepare a Section 22 report.

The auditor and Audit Scotland work together in drafting the Section 22 report. The auditor checks with the public body that the content of the draft report is factually accurate and the Auditor General signs off the final draft. The Scottish Government then arranges for the accounts and the final Section 22 report to be laid before the Scottish Parliament.

Audit Scotland publishes Section 22 reports on its [website](#) along with a press release.

## What happens next?

The Auditor General briefs the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee on the Section 22 report. The Committee may decide to take evidence from the relevant Accountable Officer.

## More information

For further information about Section 22 reporting, please contact Angela Canning at [acanning@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:acanning@audit-scotland.gov.uk) or 0131 625 1500.

Issues raised in recent Section 22 reports include:

- an update on progress against audit recommendations around police reform and matters encountered during the audit of the [Scottish Police Authority](#) (December 2014)
- financial management in [NHS Highland](#) and [NHS Orkney](#) (both October 2014)
- management of an IT contract in [NHS 24](#) (October 2014)
- the [Scottish Government Common Agricultural Policy Futures programme](#) (October 2014)
- governance and financial stewardship in [North Glasgow College](#) (May 2014) and [Adam Smith College](#) (September 2013)
- financial misappropriation in the [National Library of Scotland](#) (December 2010), and a further [update report](#) in December 2011



Audit Scotland, 110 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4LH  
 T: 0131 625 1500 E: [info@audit-scotland.gov.uk](mailto:info@audit-scotland.gov.uk)  
[www.audit-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk)

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