# National Audit Act 1983

# Public Accounts Commission

## Thirty-First Report

Work of the Commission in 2025

HC 1856

# Public Accounts Commission

The Public Accounts Commission is defined by the National Audit Act 1983 and the Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011. The Commission's principal duties under the Acts are to review the National Audit Office (NAO) Estimate and lay it before the House of Commons, to appoint the accounting officer for the NAO, to appoint an auditor for the NAO, to appoint non-executive members of the NAO board (other than the chair), and to report from time to time.

## Current membership

Clive Efford (Labour; Eltham and Chislehurst) (Chair)

Phil Brickell (Labour; Bolton West)

Rt Hon. Sir Alan Campbell (Labour; Tynemouth)

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown (Conservative; North Cotswolds)

Rt Hon. John Glen (Conservative; Salisbury)

Tom Hayes (Labour; Bournemouth East)

Sarah Olney (Liberal Democrat; Richmond Park)

Chris Vince (Labour; Harlow)

Michelle Welsh (Labour; Sherwood Forest)

## Publication

This report was presented for laying before the House of Commons pursuant to section 2(3) of the National Audit Act 1983 on 27 April 2026.

## Contacts

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# Work of the Commission in 2025

## Introduction

1. This is the thirty-first report made to the House of Commons since the establishment of the Public Accounts Commission under the National Audit Act 1983. This report covers the work of the Commission during the calendar year 2025.

2. The Commission has nine members. Two—the Leader of the House of Commons and the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts (PAC)—are members ex-officio. The others are appointed by the House of Commons.

3. The following were members of the Commission in 2025:

- Clive Efford[1]
- Phil Brickell
- Rt Hon. Sir Alan Campbell *[from 5 September 2025]*
- Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown
- Rt Hon. John Glen
- Tom Hayes
- Sarah Olney
- Rt Hon. Lucy Powell *[until 5 September 2025]*
- Chris Vince
- Michelle Welsh

1 Clive Efford was Chair of the Commission throughout 2025.

4. Kevin Candy was Secretary to the Commission and Su Panchanathan was the Operations Officer. The Commission was supported in its work by Alex Knight, Head of Financial Scrutiny, House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, and Lynn Pamment CBE, independent expert audit adviser.[2]

## Statutory functions

5. The Public Accounts Commission was established under section 2 of the National Audit Act 1983. The Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011 put the arrangements for the governance of the NAO on a statutory basis and, in particular, established the National Audit Office (NAO) as a body corporate. It also revised the statutory responsibilities of the Commission.

6. Section 23 of the 2011 Act states that the NAO and the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) must jointly prepare an Estimate of the NAO's resources, including resources necessary for the C&AG's functions. The Commission must review the Estimate and lay it before the House of Commons—modified where it considers appropriate—and in doing so must have regard to any advice provided by the Committee of Public Accounts and HM Treasury.

7. Under paragraph 4 of schedule 2 of the 2011 Act, the Commission also appoints non-executive members of the NAO board (other than the Chair), on the recommendation of the Chair of the NAO. In the event of the Commission not appointing the recommended candidate, the Chair of the NAO must make another recommendation.

8. Under paragraph 24 of the same schedule the Commission must appoint the C&AG (or some other appropriate person) as the NAO's accounting officer. Under paragraph 25 the Commission must approve the appointment of an auditor for the NAO for each year and lay the NAO's Report and Accounts before the House of Commons.

9. Paragraph 1 of schedule 3 of the 2011 Act requires the NAO and the C&AG to prepare and maintain a strategy for national audit functions, including a plan for the use of resources. This strategy (including any revision) must be submitted for approval to the Commission (which may modify it) having regard to any advice given by the Treasury.

10. Under paragraph 8 of the same schedule, the Commission must approve any revision to the Scheme of Audit Fees and, under paragraph 10, must approve a Code of Practice dealing with the relationship between the NAO and the C&AG.

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2 Lynn Pamment was reappointed by the Commission for a further year at its meeting on 21 January 2025.

**11.** Under section 2(3) of the National Audit Act 1983, the Commission is expected, from time to time, to present to the House of Commons a report on the exercise of its functions. It does so by way of an annual report, setting out its activities in the previous year.

## Work in 2025

**12.** The Commission held five formal meetings in 2025. Formal minutes of these meetings are published on the Commission's website.[3] Oral evidence was taken from witnesses in public at three of these meetings and was webcast on the parliament live website.[4]

**13.** Two written parliamentary questions were tabled to the Chair of the Public Accounts Commission during 2025.[5]

**14.** On 25 March 2025, the Commission considered the NAO's main supply estimate for 2025/26.[6] The estimate sought approval for a net resource requirement of £111 million and a net capital requirement of £4 million. As part of the process, the Commission had regard to advice from the HM Treasury on the main estimates for 2025/26,[7] and also to the view of the Committee of Public Accounts.[8] Oral evidence was taken from Gareth Davies, Comptroller & Auditor General, Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE, Chair, and Rebecca Sheeran, Executive Leader, Strategy and Operations, National Audit Office. Following this, the Commission agreed the estimate requested by the NAO in full and it was laid before the House of Commons on 1 April 2025.[9] At the same meeting the Commission, having had regard to Treasury advice, approved the NAO's strategy for 2025–2030 and published it on the Commission's website.[10]

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3 Commission's formal minutes for 2025
4 Parliamentlive.tv
5 Question number 48957 was answered on 1 May 2025, and Question number 78950 was answered on 15 October 2025.
6 Public Accounts Commission, Oral evidence: *National Audit Office Strategy 2025–30 and Main Estimate 2025/26*, 26 March 2025
7 Letter from the Treasury Officer of Accounts regarding Estimate 2025–26,18 March 2025
8 Letter from the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts to the Chair of the Commission, dated 13 February 2025
9 Votes and Proceedings, 1 April 2025
10 Pursuant to Paragraph 1 of Schedule 3 to the Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011.

**15.** On 16 July 2025, Commissioners were briefed by Richard Evans, a Partner at Crowe,[11] on the latest economy, efficiency and effectiveness studies relating to the NAO, on (i) The Audit Transformation Programme and (ii) on Hubs and Insights. The Commission agreed to lay both studies before the House.[12]

**16.** On 19 November 2025, Commissioners were briefed by Ian Mansfield, Senior Quality Assurance Inspector, and Kevin Trenter, Inspection Director (AQR), the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), on the FRC's report on the NAO's audit quality for 2024–25. The Commission was also briefed by Lynn Pamment CBE, the Commission's expert audit adviser, in preparation for a planned public evidence session on the NAO's audit quality.

**17.** At the same meeting the Commission considered a supplementary estimate which sought a net resource increase of £1.2 million for 2025/26. The Commission took evidence in public on this request from Gareth Davies, Dame Fiona Reynolds, and Rebecca Sheeran, NAO.[13] Having considered the oral evidence and advice received from the Treasury, the Commission approved the supplementary estimate in full and it was subsequently laid before the House on 24 November 2025.[14]

**18.** On 3 December 2025, the Commission took oral evidence from Gareth Davies, Comptroller & Auditor General, Kate Mathers, Executive Director, and Gaenor Bagley, Chair, Audit Quality Board, NAO, on the NAO's audit quality for 2024–25.[15] A copy of the transcript of the session was published on the Commission's website.

**19.** At the same public meeting Dame Fiona Reynolds presented Alistair Connor as a candidate for re-appointment as a non-executive director on the NAO Board.[16] Commissioners questioned Dame Fiona on the re-appointment process and Mr Conner on his experience and vision for a second term on the NAO Board. The Commission agreed to re-appoint Alistair Connor as a non-executive member of the NAO Board for a three-year term.

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11 Crowe is the NAO's auditor

12 In accordance with paragraph 26 of Schedule 2 of the Budget Responsibility and National Audit Act 2011.

13 Public Accounts Commission, Oral evidence: *NAO Annual Report 2024–25 and Supplementary Estimate 2025–26*, 19 November 2025

14 Votes and Proceedings, 24 November 2025

15 Public Accounts Commission, Oral evidence: *NAO Financial Audit Quality 2024–25*, 3 December 2025

16 Public Accounts Commission, Oral evidence: *Re-appointment to NAO Board*, 3 December 2025