

The value for money cycle

In general, each value for money study follows a fixed cycle. In summary, it is as follows:

- The (C&AG) decides what subjects to examine on the basis of advice from NAO teams.
- The study team scopes the study and plans what methods will be most appropriate to deliver the study's objectives.
- The study team carries out the study to an agreed timetable and budget.
- The study team drafts a report including a conclusion on value for money and recommendations for improvements.
- The factual content of the report is discussed ("cleared") with the audited body.
- The report is laid in the House of Commons and published.
- The report is the basis for a hearing of the Committee of Public Accounts (PAC), which publishes its own report
- The Government responds formally to the PAC report, indicating what it will do to implement the committee's recommendations.
- The NAO assesses what action has been taken in response to each of PAC's reports and where appropriate may undertake a follow-up study to scrutinise the response in detail.

All our value for money work is subject to detailed quality assurance arrangements throughout the study cycle, both through internal peer review and through external scrutiny by independent specialists. This ensures that the methods we use to conduct our work are robust, our conclusions are clear and defensible, and our recommendations drive improvements in public service.