

Transcript to accompany video on NAO Strategy 2013-14 to 2015-16

We are an independent organisation, the UK's authoritative voice on how government spends taxpayers' money.

Our recommendations help government improve public services and our work saved more than 1 billion pounds in 2011.

Our job is to help parliament hold Government to account for its use of taxpayers' money.

There are two main ways we do this: financial audit of government accounts and value for money studies.

With our expertise and our independence we provide high quality audits of all central government departments, agencies and other public bodies.

Our investigations of the way government uses public funds provide independent assurance to parliament and to taxpayers on whether value for money is being achieved and how services can be improved.

Our powers and responsibilities to do this are set out in law.

Although we investigate government bodies, projects and policies, we never comment on whether a policy is right or wrong. Our focus is how well policies are implemented and whether they have achieved value for money.

We aim to be a high performing organisation that develops and applies knowledge to influence public bodies so they provide better value for money.

We practice what we preach. We are on track to reduce our costs by 15% over 3 years and we will keep looking for ways to maximise our cost effectiveness, just as we recommend to the bodies we audit.

We also work to help improve government performance by focusing on areas where we can support positive change across government, including:

- Improving financial management;
- The use of information in government; and
- How policies can be implemented cost effectively.

In 2011/12 we worked with government to make more effective use of ICT and improve risk management.

We are taking on new responsibilities including auditing new financial regulation bodies and probation trusts across England, and producing more studies that address issues relevant to local public bodies.

The public sector faces some tough challenges. We will provide independent assurance and recommendations on value for money on Government efforts to reduce costs, stimulate growth, reform the civil service and change the way services are being provided.

The NAO plays an important role in the UK, acting as the nation's spending watchdog and supporting parliament in holding government to account.