

# **Consultation on fee scales 2026-27**

August 2025

## How to respond

Please respond by 19 September 2025.

Responses can be sent to the following address:

Fee scales consultation  
Audit Wales  
1 Capital Quarter  
Cardiff  
CF10 4BZ

Or completed electronically and sent by email to: [info@audit.wales](mailto:info@audit.wales)

If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language please contact us using the details provided above or by telephone on 029 2032 0500.

## Publication of responses – confidentiality and data protection

Information provided in response to this consultation may be published or disclosed in accordance with access to information legislation (chiefly the Freedom of Information Act 2000, but also data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want any information you provide to be treated as confidential, you should tell us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give any assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Auditor General or Audit Wales.

Personal data will be processed in accordance with data protection legislation. Where such data falls within the scope of a request for information from another person, the provisions of data protection legislation and the Freedom of Information Act will need to be considered in the particular circumstances. While no situation can be prejudged, this is likely to mean that information concerning senior officials and public figures is likely to be disclosed while the names and addresses of ordinary members of the public are likely to be withheld.

## Welsh language standards

Audit Wales is required to comply with Welsh Language Standards that provide for the Welsh language not to be treated less favourably than the English language. More information can be found on our Welsh language arrangements on our [website](#). When reviewing this consultation, we would welcome your views on whether you consider there to be anything in this consultation that undermines or supports this requirement. We would also welcome your thoughts on any revisions that could be made to support opportunities to use the Welsh language or ensure we do not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language.

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# Foreword

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You will be familiar with our annual consultation on fee scales. We are required by legislation to do this for local government bodies but choose to consult more widely so that all stakeholders have an opportunity to respond to our fee proposals.

Legislation requires that the fees we charge **may not exceed** the full cost of exercising the function to which the fee relates. **We do not and cannot make profits on our work.** We are acutely aware of the pressures facing the bodies that we audit and constantly challenge our operating model to ensure that our fees provide value for money. At the same time, we continue to invest in audit quality through the skills of our staff and the technology we deploy.

This consultation relates to our hourly fee **rates**. The actual fee that any individual audited body will pay depends not just on our fee rates but on the quantum of work and the skill mix required. We set our audit fees based on our estimated cost base, the estimated skills mix for audit work and the estimated number of days required to complete the work. Audit Wales remains determined to minimise audit fees whilst ensuring that its audit quality continues to meet rigorous standards.

You will remember that for 2025-26 we identified efficiencies which allowed us to increase our fee rates by less than 1.7% despite facing inflationary pressures on our cost base, amplified by fierce competition for public sector auditors, and ever-increasing quality demands.. At the same time, our review of the new ISA315 audit approach allowed us to **reduce** our actual fees for the audit of accounts by an average of 3%.

For 2026-27 we are having to increase our fee rates by an average of 5.5% to meet that same combination of inflationary pressures on our cost base and quality expectations. For a large unitary authority with a turnover of £1billion – this will translate into a cash increase in our typical audit fee of just £14,000. For a smaller body such as a Fire & Rescue Authority, the increase equates to around £2,000.

Taken together, our fee rates over the 2 financial years – 2025-26 and 2026-27 - will have increased by 7.3%. Thanks to the efficiencies we have driven in our work, despite this increase in fee rates, the average fee actually charged for our audit of accounts work will have increased by **just over 2%** over that 2-year period.

Our fees benchmark favourably compared to those in public audit in England. In England, audit fees have increased dramatically in recent years against a backdrop of delayed accounts, delayed audits, and disclaimed opinions. Our position in Wales is much better but we must continue to invest in audit quality, technology and delivery if we are to maintain this position and achieve our objective of delivering all 2025-26 accounts audit work by 30 September 2026 where audited bodies have been able to deliver their accounts to us by the agreed dates.

We plan to continue to provide access to the National Fraud Initiative on a free-of-charge basis.

I hope that this consultation is helpful, and I look forward to hearing your views.

Many thanks



**Adrian Crompton**

Auditor General  
for Wales

# Consultation

## Fee rates 2026-27

Our proposed fee rates for 2026-27 are set out in **Exhibit 1**.

### Exhibit 1: proposed fee rates 2026-27

Grade	Rate (£ per hour) 2026-27	Rate (£ per hour) 2025-26
Audit Director	189	183
Audit Manager	146	141
Audit Lead	120	115
Senior Auditor	96	91
Auditor	66	66
Graduate trainee	63	59
Apprentice	50	47

These rates represent a weighted average increase of 5.5% based on our overall staff mix. Increases by grade vary as, to meet the ‘no more than full cost’ requirement, we calculate rates based on actual staff in post, and hence the rates allow for incremental progression where relevant as well as expected pay increases for the year.

The Senedd Finance Committee scrutinises us on our spending, performance and budget plans, and the assumptions in this consultation are subject to their approval of our Estimate in autumn 2025 and our Fee Scheme early in 2026.

Further information on our work and our expenditure is provided in our [Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25](#) and [Annual Plan for 2025-26](#).

### **Our draft fee scales for local government bodies**

The remainder of this document provides the fee scales for local government bodies and for mandatory participants to the National Fraud Initiative. The scales show the range of fees we expect to charge for a typical audited body in that sector with actual fees being set in response to local circumstances. These scales are not required for any other sector.

I would very much welcome your response to this consultation by 19 September 2025, to inform the Senedd's review of our Estimate and Draft Fee Scheme for 2026-27.



## Fee scales for work undertaken under the National Fraud Initiative (data matching)

- 1 We invite your views on continuing participation in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) on a nil-fee basis.
- 2 We are required to consult on and prescribe scales of fees for data matching for mandatory participants in the NFI. The Auditor General conducts the NFI using his statutory data-matching powers under Part 3A of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.
- 3 The NFI matches data across organisations and systems to help public bodies identify potentially fraudulent or erroneous claims and transactions. The NFI has been a highly effective tool in detecting and preventing fraud and overpayments. Our last biennial report identified potential savings and over-payments of £7.1 million across Wales's public services, increasing cumulative savings to £56.5 million since 1996.
- 4 Since April 2015, the Senedd has met the costs of running the NFI through payment from the WCF. This is intended to encourage participation of organisations on a voluntary basis and to simplify arrangements for mandated participants. As required by legislation, the fees for mandatory participants are shown in **Exhibit 2**.

### Exhibit 2: NFI fees

	Fee 2026-27
Unitary authority; police and crime commissioners and chief constables; fire and rescue authorities; NHS trusts; local health boards	Nil
Voluntary participants	Nil
All participants may also be provided with access to the NFI Application Checker (App Check)	Nil

## Fee scales for Local Government bodies

- 5 We invite your views on the proposed fee scales which will apply to Local Government bodies for the audit of accounts 2025-26 and for 2026-27 performance audit work.
- 6 Our audit of accounts fee scale takes account of the average increase of fee rates as set out in **Exhibit 1**.

## Unitary authorities

### Exhibit 3: draft fee scale for the audit of 2025-26 accounts

Gross Expenditure £ million	Fee range			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
100	147	174	200	166
200	177	209	240	200
300	198	232	267	222
400	213	251	289	240
500	226	266	306	255
600	238	280	322	267
700	248	291	335	279
800	257	302	347	289
900	265	311	358	298
1,000	272	320	368	306
1,100	279	329	378	314
1,200	286	336	387	322

**Exhibit 4: draft fee scale for 2026-27 performance audit work**

All unitary authorities	Fee range			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
	116	123	139	118

**Local Government Pension Funds****Exhibit 5: draft fee scale for audit of 2025-26 accounts**

All pension funds	Fee range			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
	45	58	61	56

**Fire and Rescue Authorities****Exhibit 6: draft fee scale for audit of 2025-26 accounts**

Gross Expenditure £ million	Fee range			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
20	43	51	58	49
40	52	61	70	59
60	58	68	78	65
80	63	74	85	70
100	66	78	90	75

**Exhibit 7: draft fee scale for 2026-27 performance audit work**

All fire and rescue authorities	Fee range			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
	20	22	24	18

**National Park Authorities****Exhibit 8: draft fee scale for audit of 2025-26 accounts**

Gross Expenditure £ million	Fee range			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
2	27	32	36	30
4	32	38	44	36
6	36	42	49	40
8	39	46	52	44
10	41	48	56	46

**Exhibit 9: draft fee scale for 2026-27 performance audit work**

All national park authorities	Fee range			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
	23	24	27	23

## Police and Crime Commissioners

- 7 Auditors undertake audits of two statutory bodies in a police area – the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the Chief Constables (CCs). The split of the total fee between the two bodies in a particular police area will be a matter for auditors to determine, based on accounting requirements and the operational arrangements put in place by each of the bodies.

### Exhibit 10: draft fee scale for audit of 2025-26 accounts

Combined Gross Expenditure of PCC and CC £ million	Combined fee range for PCCs and CCs			Previous Year
	Minimum £'000	Median £'000	Maximum £'000	Median £'000
50	74	86	97	82
100	88	101	115	97
150	97	112	128	107
200	104	120	137	115
250	109	127	145	122
300	114	133	152	127
350	119	138	158	132

## Town and community councils with annual income or expenditure under £2.5 million

- 8 Town and community councils in Wales are subject to a limited assurance audit regime.
- 9 In October 2020, the Auditor General published a paper setting out how these audits will be carried out on a three-year cycle as set out in **Exhibit 11**.

### Exhibit 11: three-year audit cycle for town and community councils

	Group A	Group B	Group C
2024-25 audits	Full audit	Basic audit	Basic audit
2025-26 audits	Basic audit	Full audit	Basic audit
2026-27 audits	Basic audit	Basic audit	Full audit

- 10 Charges for this work are based on time taken to complete the audit at fee rate charges as set out in **Exhibit 1** on **page 6**.
- 11 **Exhibit 12** provides a range of fees for differing sizes of councils as measured by income and expenditure. These updated ranges take into account Audit Wales' experience of fees arising from the 2021-22 to 2023-24 audits.

### Exhibit 12: estimated time charges for the audit of 2025-26 accounts of town and community councils

	Band 1 (<£10k)	Band 2 (<£25k)	Band 3 (<£50k)	Band 4 (<£100k)	Band 5 (<£500k)	Band 6 (>£500k)
Full audit	£250- £500	£300- £700	£500- £900	£600- £1,010	£600- £1,260	£800- £1,510
Basic audit	£200- £300	£200- £300	£200- £300	£250- £350	£250- £350	£250- £350

## Fee rates for other work in local government

- 12 Other than those types of bodies for which fee scales have been prescribed as shown above, there are a small number of other types of local government body where our prescription of the fee scale is a matter of converting the resource requirements into fees directly based on the costs of delivering the work or by applying the fee rates as set out in **Exhibit 1**. This will include audits of Corporate Joint Committees. It remains the case that for audits of these bodies we apply a zero-based approach to audit planning.
- 13 For all types of local government body, to meet his statutory responsibilities, it is sometimes necessary for the Auditor General to carry out work which goes beyond general duties (those set out in section 17 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and in section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015). Additional work can include reports in the public interest, extraordinary audit, special inspections, and further work in relation to elector challenge and the prevention of unlawful expenditure. Charges for this type of work will reflect the nature of the work required.
- 14 Auditors may also undertake grant certification work at local government bodies on behalf of the Auditor General. The amount of grant certification work undertaken in any year is dependent on the number of schemes subject to audit and the number of audited bodies participating in those schemes. Charges for this work are made on a per-hour basis and reflect the size, complexity and/or any issues in respect of the grant in question as set out in **Exhibit 13**.

**Exhibit 13: estimates of the relative proportions of audit staff grades to be used for different types of grants work**

	<b>Complex grants staff mix</b>	<b>All other grants staff mix</b>
<b>Grade of staff</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Engagement Director	1 to 2	0 to 1
Audit Manager	4 to 6	1 to 2
Audit Lead	18 to 21	12 to 16
Auditor/graduate trainee/apprentice	71 to 77	81 to 87

Complex grants include:

- BEN01 Housing and council tax benefits scheme
- LA01 National non-domestic rates return
- PEN05 Teachers' pensions return





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We welcome correspondence and  
telephone calls in Welsh and English.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a  
galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.