

# Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010: statement for 2022/23

## Scottish Law Commission Return for Financial Year 2022/23

Under the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 the Commission, along with other public bodies in Scotland, has a duty to publish annual public statements relating to our expenditure in the following areas:

- Public relations
- Overseas travel
- Hospitality and entertainment
- External consultancy

There are further duties to publish certain information relating to the purchasing of goods, the remuneration of employees and the steps we have taken to improve efficiency, effectiveness and economy in our performance as well as the promotion of sustainable growth.

Our statement covering the financial year 2022-23 (1/4/2022–31/3/2023) is set out below:

<b>Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010</b>	
Scottish Law Commission Expenditure for Financial Year 2022/23	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Spend 2022/23</b>
Public Relations	Nil
Overseas Travel	£7,698:33 <sup>1</sup>
Hospitality and Entertainment	£992:22 <sup>2</sup>
External Consultancy	£42,221:64 <sup>3</sup>
Payments with a value in excess of £25,000	See external consultancy entry; otherwise, nil
Remunerations received in excess of £150,000	Nil

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<sup>1</sup> This related to a trip in March 2023 by the Chair and Chief Executive to two conferences in Goa, India, one organised by the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies and the other by the Commonwealth Law Association. Of the total, £3,004:28 related to conference/ membership fees and visas; £2,429:99 to hotel and subsistence costs; and £2,264:06 to flights.

<sup>2</sup> This is made up of £138:93 for hospitality at the launch of the consultation of our 11<sup>th</sup> Programme of Law Reform on 5 May 2022, and the balance was for hospitality for a visit to Edinburgh by Commissioners and senior staff of the Law Commission of England and Wales on 22 and 23 June 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Of the total, £42,000 was paid for a public opinion survey in relation to our project on the mental element in homicide; and £221:64 was for travel and accommodation costs for a trainer (based in London at the Law Commission of England and Wales) who gave training to Scottish Law Commissioners on media communications matters.

## Promotion of sustainable growth through the exercise of our functions

The Scottish Law Commission has a statutory function: to recommend to Ministers ways of simplifying, updating and improving the law of Scotland. Most of our work is carried out in accordance with our Programme of Law Reform. The Programme is prepared following extensive consultation, including discussions with Government. The Programme is submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval, and is laid before the Scottish Parliament. The Commission also from time to time receives references from Ministers to carry out law reform projects. In exercising these functions the Commission seeks to contribute to the promotion of sustainable growth as follows –

- The Commission's business planning takes account of the Scottish Government's purpose: namely to focus on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increased well-being and sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- The law reform projects that the Commission undertakes are designed to contribute to the Scottish Government's National Outcomes, by recommending reforms that will help to provide an improved and modernised legal framework within which these National Outcomes can be pursued. The Commission's current law reform projects contribute to National Outcomes: on Fair Work and Business, the Economy, Communities, and Human Rights.

Recent and current law reform projects have the following general purposes:

- Review of the law on termination of commercial leases, and of the law on moveable transactions (security over corporeal and incorporeal moveable property; assignation of incorporeal moveable property), as well as ongoing support for implementation of our report on trust law: making Scotland a more attractive place to do business;
- Review of homicide law to update long-standing common law rules to make them fit for modern society; and reform of law on tenement property, aimed at the establishment of compulsory owners' associations: making Scotland's communities more resilient and safe;
- Cohabitation, and civil remedies for domestic abuse: modernising rules to bring them into line with contemporary family structures;
- Heritable securities: reviewing the legal regime around mortgages, making Scotland a fairer place in which to work and invest.

## Improving efficiency, effectiveness and economy in our performance

In the course of this financial year, we have continued to review the operating costs of the Commission in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness, and make economies where possible. Steps taken for this purpose include the following –

- A continuing agreement with the Scottish Government Legal Directorate on the provision of a shared library service to the Commission by the Scottish Legal Information Centre;
- Undertaking external meetings predominantly by video or by telephone, thereby greatly reducing our travel costs;

- Office costs: continued review of files, and destruction as appropriate: saving storage space; office cleaning costs reviewed and reduced; continued reduction in spend on postage and stationery, due to online publication only; recycling of stationery;
- Operating costs: continued participation in Scottish Government collaborative procurement agreements, for operating costs; resulting in some savings;
- On staff training, continued reliance for compulsory professional development and for general staff development on free sources of training, for example seminars organised by the Scottish Government and the Government Legal Service for Scotland.