

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010: statement for 2023/24

Scottish Law Commission Return for Financial Year 2023/24

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 2023-24 (1/4/2023–31/3/2024) is set out below:

Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010	
Scottish Law Commission Expenditure for Financial Year 2023/24	
Activity	Spend 2023/24
Public Relations	Nil
Overseas Travel	Nil
Hospitality and Entertainment	£1,579
External Consultancy	Nil

Payments in excess of £25,000 (2023/2024)			
Payee	Amount	Date	Description
Guardian Moving & Storage	£36,000	01/08/2023	Move of office premises from 140 Causewayside to Parliament House
Avison Young	£55,205	02/10/2023	Occupancy costs for premises in Parliament House covering period June to December 2023
Avison Young	£25,000	08/11/2023	Occupancy costs for premises in Parliament House covering period January to March 2024
Avison Young	£25,000	01/03/2024	Occupancy costs for premises in Parliament House covering period April to June 2024

Remunerations received in excess of £150,000	Nil
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Promotion of sustainable growth through the exercise of our functions

The Scottish Law Commission has a statutory function, which is 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 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;
- A service level agreement with the Government Legal Service for Scotland for the provision of resourcing and learning & development services to the Commission;

- Undertaking external meetings predominantly by video or by telephone, thereby greatly reducing our travel costs;
- Office costs: move of premises in June 2023 to smaller, more efficient office space as part of wider Edinburgh Justice Campus re-organisation;
- 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.