

# **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Tuesday 4 March 2003  
(*Afternoon*)

Session 1

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## AUDIT COMMITTEE

### 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2003, Session 1

#### CONVENER

\*Mr Andrew Welsh (Angus) (SNP)

#### DEPUTY CONVENER

Mr David Davidson (North-East Scotland) (Con)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab)

Rhona Brankin (Midlothian) (Lab)

Margaret Jamieson (Kilmarnock and Loudoun) (Lab)

\*Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP)

\*Mr Keith Raffan (Mid Scotland and Fife) (LD)

#### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Miss Annabel Goldie (West of Scotland) (Con)

Mr Duncan Hamilton (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)

Janis Hughes (Glasgow Rutherglen) (Lab)

Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

\*attended

#### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Shelagh McKinlay

#### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Joanna Hardy

#### ASSISTANT CLERK

Seán Wixted

#### LOCATION

Committee Room 1



## Scottish Parliament

### Audit Committee

*Tuesday 4 March 2003*

*(Afternoon)*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 14:02*]

**The Convener (Mr Andrew Welsh):** Good afternoon and welcome to the fifth meeting in 2003 of the Audit Committee. I make the usual announcement about mobile phones and pagers: please switch them off. I have received apologies from Rhona Brankin and I believe that David Davidson and Margaret Jamieson hope to be present but are both on Health and Community Care Committee duties. There seems to be a general committee clash this afternoon.

### Items in Private

**The Convener:** Item 1 is to seek the committee's agreement to take items 3, 4 and 5 in private. Items 3 and 4 are to allow the committee to consider two draft reports, one on our 2002-03 annual report and one on our legacy paper for our successor committee. Item 5 is to allow the committee to consider a paper from the clerk setting out issues for our draft report on the youth offending inquiry. Taking the items in private is in line with established committee procedure and, of course, the reports will be published fully in due course. Do members agree to consider the items in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## “Hospital cleaning”

**The Convener:** We move to item 2. We have received a letter from the Scottish Executive on its response to the Auditor General for Scotland's report on “Hospital cleaning”. Members might recall that the Auditor General briefed the committee on the report on 4 February. The committee agreed to write to the Executive seeking information on some of the points raised in the report.

We now have the Executive's response to that request for information. We have clarification of Executive action on the report. The health department has written to all national health service boards and trusts asking them to implement the recommendations in the report. All NHS trusts have agreed action plans to address the recommendations and implementation will be monitored. NHS boards will oversee performance, give guidance and ensure that there is progress.

The Executive has stated that hospital-acquired infection will be addressed in local health plans this year and that both infection control and hospital cleaning will be included on the agenda of the annual accountability review meetings, all of which will take place this summer with individual NHS systems.

NHS Quality Improvement Scotland will conduct—probably in 2004—a review of performance against a cleaning services standard, after which a general report will be published along with individual trust performance reports. The Executive has said that a task force on hospital-acquired infection has been established under the chief medical officer, who expects to report this summer on technical specifications for cleaning processes and frequencies in the NHS.

This response from Mr Trevor Jones is much clearer and allows the committee better to understand the processes and timetable for action on a major national health service problem.

**Sarah Boyack (Edinburgh Central) (Lab):** You are right to say that the response is positive, convener. However, the introduction of new NHS structures and the future status of trusts add another element of uncertainty about the exact implementation of the programme. As a result, there is more of an onus on health boards and individual hospitals. That said, I am very pleased at the general tenor and detail of the response.

**The Convener:** Yes. We have expressed our unhappiness about the vague nature of some of the Executive's previous responses, but it has now supplied details, timetables and other items against which we can check progress.

**Mr Lloyd Quinan (West of Scotland) (SNP):** I appreciate the clarity of the instructions to the health trusts. Given the public concern about HAIs and cleaning standards in hospitals, it is important that the Auditor General has managed to get the NHS trusts to examine the matter correctly. I agree with Sarah Boyack that the issue is at least on the agenda and I hope that it will be built into the new NHS structures. In that respect, the response is very positive.

**The Convener:** We must now, as ever, check against delivery.

I suggest that members note the response and agree that our comments in the *Official Report* be brought to the attention of our successor committee through the legacy report. Are members agreed?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** I will now move the meeting into private session. We will pause to allow the press and public—[*Interruption.*] As ever, I have received good advice from the clerk. I first suspend the meeting for 10 minutes.

14:07

*Meeting suspended until 14:16 and thereafter continued in private until 15:05.*

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