



Government
Internal Audit
Agency

[gov.uk/giaa](https://www.gov.uk/giaa)

BETTER INSIGHTS, BETTER OUTCOMES

A guide to the Government Internal Audit Agency



INTRODUCTION

The Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) has come a long way since it was formed in 2015. In the first three years our priority was building firm foundations and growth. Our internal audit function now covers 75% of central government, at 13 departments and over 120 arm's length bodies.



Our counter fraud and investigation service has delivered services to more than 60 government departments, central and beyond, and arm's length bodies. We have developed common standards, methods and systems, and our specialist teams are expanding their reach. Achieving that in the first three years was no mean feat.

Building on these foundations, we have an ambitious vision and a strategy for getting there, taking the GIAA to the next level.

In 2020, HM Treasury published its Tailored Review of the GIAA, concluding that the Agency plays a “highly significant” role and provides value for money in delivering essential internal audit and assurance services across government.

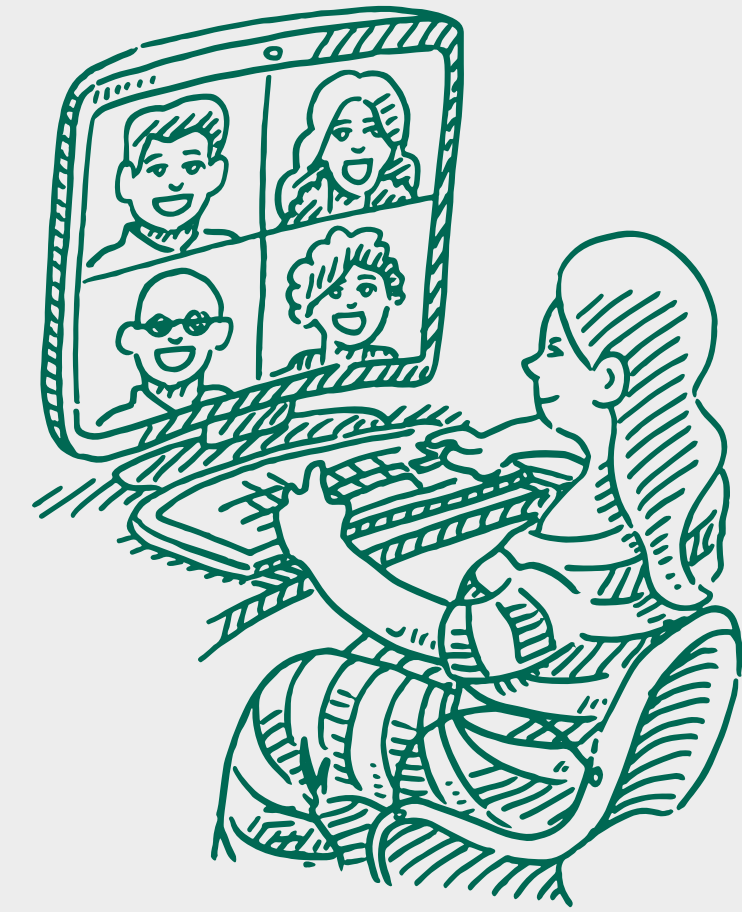
We also underwent the first External Quality Assessment of the expanded Agency, the findings of which strongly affirm our role, commitment to quality, and future aims.

We all care about public service and public money, for the good of the UK and its citizens – that's why we're here and why these principles are reflected in our values. The opportunity the GIAA has to drive better government outcomes, through the insights we bring and the improvements we drive, makes us proud of our achievements to date – and equally excited for our future.

Elizabeth Honer,
Chief Executive, Government Internal Audit Agency
and Head of Government Internal Audit

ABOUT US

Our mission is to provide objective insight so that central government can achieve better outcomes and value for money for the public – better insights, better outcomes.



Our people provide central government with objective, independent insight and assurance, so it can achieve better outcomes with public money by developing better governance, risk management and internal controls.

As the government's primary provider of internal audit services, we lead the government internal audit profession and function. We also provide award-winning counter fraud and investigation services and support finance professionals across government in their role as stewards of public money.

The GIAA was established in April 2015, after a 2013 Review of Financial Management in Government recommended pooling expertise from across government to create a single integrated audit function for the whole of government.

Since then, we have been helping to combat inefficiencies highlighted in that review, such as duplication of services, inconsistent approaches to audit and assurance, and over-reliance on the private sector.

To achieve better outcomes with public money, it's vital to consider risks and controls across government, as well as within central government departments and their arm's length bodies. As an arm's length body ourselves, with unrivalled access and trusted relationships throughout government, we are uniquely placed to do this.

Through our functional and professional leadership roles, and our wide-ranging cross-government work, we continue to demonstrate the value that a one-government approach to audit and assurance can bring.

A workforce of more than 450 people based across the UK providing services to:

13 out of **16**
central government
departments

67
counter fraud
customers

119
government
bodies

“The GIAA goes from strength to strength as it continues to bring together audit teams across government into one organisation. The combined power of its people’s expertise and the rigour with which they carry out their work has ensured that the Agency supports and creates real value for the government and the whole of the public sector.”

Cat Little, Director General Public Spending,
HM Treasury

“The GIAA ensures value for money by providing a shared centre for excellence. It is uniquely positioned to map risks and share understanding across the whole of government and is committed to harness the possibilities of its networks in order to provide insights and improve standards across government.”

HM Treasury Tailored Review of the GIAA,
October 2020

OUR SERVICES

We offer several assurance services, predominantly internal audit and counter fraud and investigation.



Because our services are provided for government, by government, our customers know that we share their public services values and are responsive to the external context in which we all operate. These strengths enabled us to provide departments with critical support during their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We continue to mature and develop new specialist capabilities in response to our customers' increased need for assurance in key areas. We also provide independent assurance to the European Commission in respect of several EU-funded programmes.

We can provide other assurance services tailored to our customers' needs. And if our people cannot provide that service, we have ready access to the best skills in the private sector.

INTERNAL AUDIT

Internal audit evaluates an organisation's effectiveness at managing risk, processes and controls. Our internal audit services help our customers manage risk effectively and improve public service delivery.

We provide central government organisations with independent and objective assurance and advice, which is designed to add value, improve operations and achieve better outcomes. We apply a risk-based approach when developing our annual programme of work with our customers, which allows us to be as responsive as possible to changes in the risk environment.

All GIAA internal auditors are members of a recognised professional accountancy/audit body such as the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors UK & Ireland.

A common misconception is that internal audit is solely concerned with accounts or financial processes. However, unlike external auditors such as the National Audit Office, internal auditors also evaluate risks in many other areas such as environmental impact, cybersecurity, health and safety, supply chain failure, and reputation, depending on the customer's needs.



82%
overall customer
satisfaction

1,364
audit engagements
in 2019-20

Assurance services

Our assurance services give our customers an independent, objective assessment of their governance, risk management and control arrangements and how to improve them.

These include:

- Risk-based audit – the effectiveness of risk management processes in the area under review, in relation to the risk appetite.
- Programme assurance – the effectiveness of programme and project management for the delivery of major change.
- Systems audit – the effectiveness of design controls and the extent to which they operate in practice.
- Compliance audit – the extent to which controls already known to be effectively designed operate in practice.

Consulting services

Our consulting services give our customers advice on how to improve their governance, risk management and control arrangements and how to develop them for new areas of work. We can provide consultancy services on a wide range of business areas, but they might typically focus on new systems, or areas undergoing significant change, where there is no system of risk management or control framework to assure.

Specialist services

Our specialist internal audit services are an important part of strengthening our quality and impact. We are broadening the range of our specialist services but so far, they include:

- Cyber risk
- Digital, data and technology
- Commercial activity
- Project and programme management
- Finance
- Human resources

COUNTER FRAUD AND INVESTIGATION

218

fraud investigations
in 2019-20

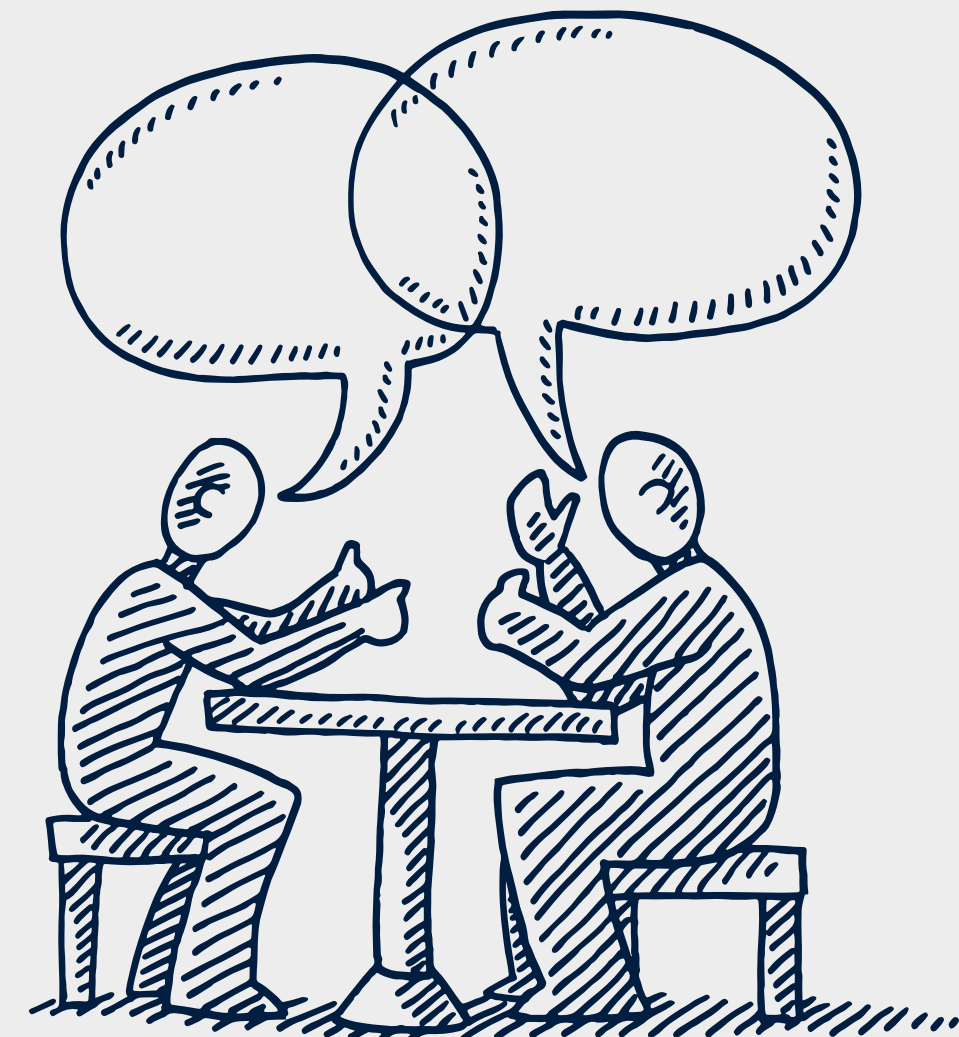
67

counter fraud
customers

We provide comprehensive, high quality, cost effective counter fraud services to help our customers enhance their counter fraud response, aligned to the Government Counter Fraud Framework and associated functional standards.

By offering blended counter fraud and internal audit services under one roof, we can share expertise and continually improve services across the board.

Since its formation in 2016, our award-winning counter fraud service has helped to save taxpayers over £4 million.



COUNTER FRAUD AND INVESTIGATION



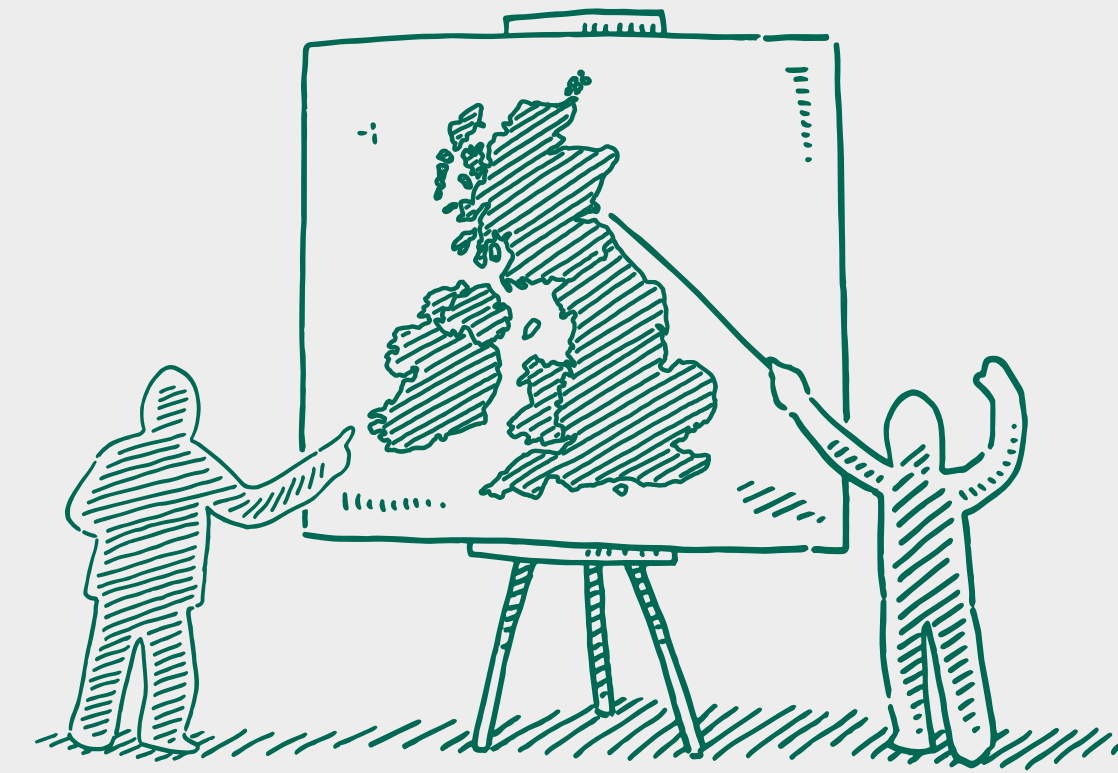
95%

overall customer
satisfaction

Counter fraud and investigation services

- Prevention and deterrence – education and awareness activities, intelligence, insight, and collaborative working across boundaries.
- Investigation – professionally accredited, security cleared investigators delivering at pace and to the same standards as criminal prosecutions.
- Risk assessment – enabling organisations to identify, understand, assess and categorise their fraud risks.
- Intelligence and analysis – understanding the current and emerging ‘fraudscape’ and vulnerabilities.
- Data and analytics – gathering and using fraud data to identify patterns, trends and anomalies.
- Detection – conducting proactive fraud detection exercises.
- Whistleblowing services.

AUDIT SERVICES FOR EUROPEAN UNION-FUNDED PROGRAMMES IN THE UK



On behalf of the UK Government, we provide the European Commission with independent and impartial assurance in respect of several European Union-funded programmes in England. This includes multi-billion-pound initiatives such as the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, Horizon 2020 research initiatives, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, and several farming, fishery and rural development programmes.

Our annual assurance work protects and makes best use of the UK's public money. We identified over £13 million of mis-payments last year alone, and made sure grant recipients and administering government departments took remedial action.

In line with Articles 137 and 138 of the Agreement on the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, we continue to deliver our audit services for programmes funded by the EU's multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020, with an expected conclusion by March 2025.

WHAT OUR CUSTOMERS SAY

“Extremely useful report, with great insight and diagnosis. Hugely relevant and helpful recommendations. Not all comfortable reading for BEIS, but that’s besides the point. Thank you.”

Tom Taylor, Director, Finance and Portfolio & Chief Financial Officer, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

“My officials report that that engagement and working arrangements ... have been productive and effective. Additionally, the support has provided the investigative resource at a time of increased activity ... enabling the Agency to deliver on its requirement to protect public funds. As a result, I would like to convey my own personal thanks for your continued expertise and professional support in respect of this service.”

Government minister with a portfolio under the Department for Education, a GIAA counter fraud and investigation customer

“Really good engagement. Supportive as well as challenging in a constructive way. Felt like a help-service as well as a check. Really appreciated the spirit, style and professionalism.”

Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

“The audit went very smoothly throughout. There was significant flexibility and responsiveness to our customer needs, particularly in matters such as providing the confirmation of assurance on the Headline Key Performance Indicators to the agreed very tight timescale.”

David Cross, Evidence and Analysis Manager, Forest Services, Forestry Commission

“A good outcome and also a good and useful learning experience of how we can adapt the audit process to the remote working model.”

Security Industry Authority

HOW WE WORK

Although we are an arm's length body, we are partners in common with the government bodies we support. But crucially, we have an independent voice and are objective in our assessments, no matter how challenging.



We work with our customers in the following ways.

With individual accounting officers and senior leaders, we have a confidential and trusting relationship and ready access. We assess the extent to which basic controls are robust but flush out more strategic risks too.

For ARAC (audit and risk assurance committee) accounting chairs and members, we help them understand the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance in the organisation they support, evidencing our findings and opinion.

For the Cabinet Office and functional leaders, we provide insights on how well they are doing to improve the government's delivery, improving policy implementation and value for money. We look at a function across departmental boundaries, extracting and sharing good practice while being sensitive to the effects of different contexts and to confidentiality.

For government senior leaders collectively, we provide insights into systemic risks in government. We analyse our work for individual departments to identify common weaknesses, playing these back into delivery plans for our individual customers.

For smaller government bodies, our service is based on a combination of risk and resources, recognising that small size is not synonymous with low risk. Our emphasis is on critical control audits, with more strategic work and specialist counter fraud and investigation services being agreed case by case.

Beyond the government bodies we work with, we also have open and productive relationships with the National Audit Office, our commercial providers and private sector internal audit practices, sharing insights and learning as appropriate.

OUR PEOPLE



Employing more than three quarters of all the internal auditors working in central government, we also boast a cross-government team of counter fraud professionals, all supported by the expertise of our comprehensive corporate team. Our talented, diverse workforce represents a broad range of areas across England, Scotland and Wales, bringing local knowledge and insight. Our people's unrivalled breadth of experience – gained in government departments, arm's length bodies and the private sector – enables us to offer high quality services based on an incisive understanding of our customers' needs.

Our people are proud to be working in the GIAA and are fully committed to our vision and values. Those values of professionalism, trustworthiness, collaboration, principles and respectfulness are demonstrated in everything we do.

Our teams are not only diverse, but also inclusive, actively seeking different perspectives, backgrounds, experiences and ambitions. People aspire to work with us because the benefits are clear – access to all levels of government, breadth of subject matter, flexible ways of working and opportunities for career development.

We value all roles, recognising their interdependence, whether on the front line, in corporate services or providing support in a business management role. We invest in our people to ensure that we have the technical and people skills we all need. We invest in apprentices, trainees and continuous development to build a great future together.

OUR EXCELLENCE

Our expertise is recognised both globally – through supporting the UK Overseas Territories and sharing best practice with our international counterparts – and at home, where we are the leaders of both the Government Internal Audit Profession and the Government Internal Audit Function.

In 2019, our counter fraud and investigation team won the Outstanding Contribution to the Government Counter Fraud Profession award at the Government Counter Fraud Awards. And in 2020, we successfully concluded our first comprehensive External Quality Assessment, which recognised our commitment to providing high quality services through continuous improvement.



OUR INFLUENCE



We apply the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and our single audit and assurance methodology consistently across government. This approach makes our services efficient, flexible and resilient.

We are the government's single centre of excellence for various audit and assurance specialisms. Our central Innovation Hub supports our work and adds insight through data analytics. Our central position reduces the cost of audit and assurance for the whole government by minimising duplication of work and reliance on private sector consultants.

Our counter fraud and investigation team is a recognised centre of excellence for supporting organisations in their implementation of the Government Functional Standard *GovS 013: Counter Fraud, Bribery and Corruption*, providing specialist advice and access to best practice.



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Find out more

For more on the GIAA and what we do,
go to gov.uk/giaa

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