



Meeting: **Public and Not-for-Profit Sector Panel**  
Location: **Virtual**  
Date: **02 December 2024**

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## PRESENT:

Edith Yembra (Chair), Dinusha Weerawardane, Evans Chisala, Alia O'Callaghan, Michelle Gurung, Anna Hudson, Claire Jenkins, Sugar Ahmed, Kevin Ellis, Christine Hellings

## APOLOGIES:

Chibuzo Okpala, Sidra Harris, Ben Bulman, Angela Ireland, Steph Beeston-Clarke, Rekha Tailor, Brian Pine, Maryam Khan, Nadeem Hanif, Sian Evans, Ben Kewin, Will Kewin, Lip Sy Choo, Anna Mylvaganam, Svetla Taneva, Deep Shah, Peter Lewis, Sailesh Shah

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Alka Ahuja (guest), Bridget Foley (ACCA), Mel Venes (ACCA), Petra-Louisa Kuyembah (ACCA), Susan Love (ACCA)

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## Welcome and Introduction

Edith welcomed the group and reviewed actions from the previous meeting. Maryam's LinkedIn initiative is ongoing, and Alia's action item will be reviewed later. Anna H provided an update on sustainability, highlighting the importance of the TCFD framework for the public and charity sectors. All other action items were confirmed as completed.

## Sector Statistics

Petra presented November 2024 sector statistics:

- Total ACCA Public and Not-for-Profit Sector members and affiliates: 9,261
  - Breakdown by subsector:
    - Education: 2,587
    - Local Government: 1,820
    - National Government: 1,826
    - Not-for-Profit: 3,028
  - Regional Membership:
    - N/A: 4
    - UK Region: 12
    - South West: 735
    - South East: 1333
    - North West: 766
    - North East: 662
    - Greater London: 2359
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- Isle of Man: 33
- East of England: 896
- East & West Midlands: 1061
- Wales: 670
- Scotland: 707
- Channel Islands: 73

## **Business and Sector Insights**

### **Financial Pressures**

The public sector continues to face significant financial pressures. Increased National Insurance contributions, reduced funding from central government, and rising costs have had a substantial impact on organisations across the sector. Healthcare providers, law enforcement agencies, central government organisations, and charities are all grappling with these challenges.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

Attracting and retaining skilled staff remains a critical issue, with uncompetitive salaries, negative perceptions, and bureaucratic processes hindering recruitment. The sector is particularly struggling to recruit and retain specialised staff, such as accountants, auditors, and finance professionals.

### **Operational Challenges**

Public sector organisations are contending with a wide range of operational difficulties, including increased workloads, staffing shortages, and complex regulations. The pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges, leading to increased demand for services and disrupted operations. Additionally, the increasing complexity of financial regulations and reporting requirements has placed additional burdens on organisations.

### **Digital Transformation**

The panel discussed the increasing importance of digital transformation within the public sector. This includes the use of technology to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance service delivery. However, challenges such as cybersecurity threats, data privacy concerns, and the digital divide need to be addressed.

### **Government Policy Impact**

Government policies continue to influence the public sector, with changes in NHS funding, social care, tax laws, and education policies impacting various organisations. The panel discussed the potential impact of recent policy changes on the sector, including the implications for public finances, service delivery, and workforce planning.

### **Talking Series**

Potential topics for the Talking Series were discussed:

- Charity Sector: Led by Edith Yembra
- Sustainability within Central Government: Led by Anna Hudson
- Local Government: Led by Angela Ireland

Petra will coordinate planning meetings to finalise content and schedules.

### **Relaunch of E-Bulletin**

Plans were discussed for relaunching the Public and Not-for-Profit Sector E-Bulletin in the new year. The E-Bulletin will feature in-depth articles, case studies, interviews, and industry updates. Petra will lead the creation of the first issue.

### **Next Steps**

The next meeting will take place on 25 February 2025.