

# Briefing: quango fees and levies

May 2025

## Introduction

A quango is a quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation. While there is no single definition of a quango, the Cabinet Office classifies what it calls 'arm's length bodies' (ALBs) as public sector organisations that operate outside of direct ministerial authority. ALBs fall into three main categories: executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and non-ministerial departments.<sup>1</sup>

Quangos are funded through a mix of income streams, including government grants, contract income, donations and the collection of fees and levies. While some depend largely on public funding, many raise significant revenue by charging individuals, businesses or sectors they regulate. These funding arrangements are central to understanding how quangos operate, their accountability and the financial burden they place on taxpayers and the wider economy.

This note examines the total fees and levies charged by quangos in 2022-23. This is the first time the Cabinet Office has published data on quango income from fees and levies, so comparisons with previous years are not possible. However, the figures offer a starting point for greater scrutiny of ALB funding.

## Key findings

- ALBs charged a total of **£9.5 billion** in fees and levies in 2022-23, accounting for **2.6 per cent** of the **£363 billion** total income budgeted for ALBs in the year.
- Homes England** raised the most in levy and fee income in 2022-23, at **almost £1.1 billion**. This was **21 per cent** of the total budgeted income for the ALB during the year.
- In 2022-23, **17 ALBs** received **100 per cent** of their budgeted income via fees and levies.
- A total of **21 quangos** received at least **£100 million** in fees and levies, and **104** at least **£1 million**.
- Executive NDPBs** raised **over £5.8 billion** from fees and levies in 2022-23, an average of **£49.4 million per body**. This was **62 per cent** of the total across all ALBs.
- The **Driver Vehicle and Standards Agency** received **£401.9 million** in fees and levies, this was over **94 per cent** of the total budgeted income for the ALB in 2022-23. Three quarters of driving test centres are currently at the maximum 24-week wait time to book a practical test.<sup>2</sup>

## Data

**Table 1: 20 ALBs raising the most in fees and levies and percentage of total budgeted income, 2022-23**

Quango	Budgeted fees and levy income (£)	Percentage of total budgeted Income (%)
Homes England	1,083,173,000	21.1
Nuclear Decommissioning Authority	1,059,000,000	27.6
British Council	873,000,000	83.6
Environment Agency	487,017,000	25.9
HM Revenue and Customs	436,052,000	1.0
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency	401,890,000	94.4
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	368,659,753	72.7
British Transport Police Authority	346,400,000	98.4

<sup>1</sup> Cabinet Office, *Guidance – Public Bodies*, 7 January 2025, [www.gov.uk/guidance/public-bodies-reform](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-bodies-reform) (accessed 13 May 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Edgington, T. & Reuben, A., *Three quarters of driving test centres at maximum wait time*, BBC, 23 April 2025, [www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvg91n5v44ko](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvg91n5v44ko), (accessed 13 May 2025).

Quango	Budgeted fees and levy income (£)	Percentage of total budgeted Income (%)
Government Legal Department	308,900,000	95.3
The Statistics Board	230,600,000	26.7
HM Prison and Probation Service	220,345,000	4.5
Care Quality Commission	218,588,932	90.3
Construction Industry Training Board	204,337,000	100
The Patent Office	199,378,000	100
UK Hydrographic Office	189,127,000	100
Disclosure and Barring Service	188,700,000	100
Birmingham Organising Committee	148,548,000	37.8
National Crime Agency	135,179,000	16.4
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency	123,338,000	70.1
Insolvency Service	115,100,000	62.8

**Table 2: ALBs which raised 100 per cent of their total budgeted income via fees and levies, 2022-23**

Quango	Budgeted fees and levy income (£)
Construction Industry Training Board	204,337,000
The Patent Office	199,378,000
UK Hydrographic Office	189,127,000
Disclosure and Barring Service	188,700,000
Reclaim Fund Ltd	102,143,000
Office of the Public Guardian	85,200,000
Financial Reporting Council	50,900,000
Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board	47,657,000
National Gallery <sup>3</sup>	43,153,000
Trinity House	37,519,984
Water Services Regulation Authority	32,568,000
Engineering Construction Industry Training Board	26,260,165
The Housing Ombudsman	22,080,000
Vehicle Certification Agency	21,788,000
Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre	15,004,000
Legal Services Board	4,287,000
Security Vetting Appeals Panel <sup>4</sup>	80,000

## Methodology

This note was compiled using data from the Cabinet Office's release 'public bodies 2023'. ALBs received at least £353.3 billion from the UK government in 2022-23. Fees and levies refer to income received by ALBs from other sources. The Cabinet Office discloses fee and levy income as 'other income'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Received £30.7 million in grant-in-aid from DCMS in 2022-23. Unclear whether this is included in Cabinet Office dataset.

<sup>4</sup> Unclear how the Security Vetting Appeals Panel raised this income.

<sup>5</sup> Cabinet Office, *ALB Budgets*, 17 December 2024, [co-public-bodies.github.io/ALB\\_Landscape\\_Analysis\\_2022\\_23/Budgets.html](https://co-public-bodies.github.io/ALB_Landscape_Analysis_2022_23/Budgets.html) (accessed 13 May 2025).