

Certification of claims and returns - annual report

Suffolk County Council

Audit 2010/11

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Findings

This report summarises the findings from the certification of 2010/11 claims. It includes the messages arising from my assessment of your arrangements for preparing claims and returns and information on claims that we amended or qualified.

Certification of claims

- 1 As the Council's auditor, I am required to certify the Council's claims and returns on the following basis:
 - claims below £125,000 are not subject to certification;
 - claims between £125,000 and £500,000 are subjected to a reduced, light-touch certification; and
 - claims over £500,000 are subjected to a certification approach determined by my assessment of the control environment and management preparation of claims. A robust control environment leads to a reduced certification approach for these claims.
- 2 In 2010/11, my audit team certified five claims with a total value of £74.3 million. None of these claims required significant amendment before audit certification. However, I issued qualification letters to the grant-paying bodies for two claims (Sure start, early years and childcare grant; and School centred initial teacher training grant). Appendix 1 sets out a full summary.

Significant findings

- 3 Generally the Council's corporate arrangements to manage and check grant claims before submission to audit are strong. However, a number of administrative issues have arisen in previous years regarding the returns that the Council are required to make to the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). These returns comprise Annual Grant Reports and Income and Expenditure Accounts relating to the Suffolk and Norfolk school centred initial teacher training grant. The Council are the accountable body for this two county scheme.
- 4 My team have now completed our certification work on the 2010/11 School centred initial teacher training grant. Although the claim was not submitted by the stipulated deadline, significant improvement was noted regarding the preparation of the Annual Grant Reports and Income and Expenditure Accounts and their accuracy. The issues that I reported to the TDA in my qualification letters are considered minor in nature.

Certification fees

5 The fees I charged for grant certification work in 2010/11 were £28,595 (£34,935 in 2009/10). Full details are reported in appendix 1.

Appendix 1 Summary of 2010/11 certified claims

Table 1: **Claims and returns**

Claim or return	Value of claim/return (£)	Qualified/amended	2010/11 fee (£)	2009/10 fee (£)
EEDA Single Programme; Economic Participation (RG30)	716,962	No.	2,380	2,425
EEDA Single Programme; Suffolk Food and Drink Distribution Hub (RG30)	150,000	No.	1,487	-
Teachers pensions return (PEN05)	43,768,465	No.	3,405	3,035
Sure start, early years and childcare grant (EYC02)	26,576,370	The claim did not require amendment but was subject to a qualification in the following area: We were unable to complete the Sure start capital expenditure reconciliation required by paragraph 35 of the Certification Instruction, as the Council's capital budget in this area was reduced during the year. This issue did not impact directly on the claim and my letter simply brought the issue to the attention of the department.	5,400	3,135

Claim or return	Value of claim/return (£)	Qualified/amended	2010/11 fee (£)	2009/10 fee (£)
School centred initial teacher training grant (EDU06)	3,048,430	<p>The Annual Grant Reports required some minor amendments to be made The Income and Expenditure Accounts were certified subject to qualifications in two areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Salary contributions for an Initial Teacher Training (ITT) leader had been allocated to an incorrect accounting period. ■ The award of a full salary grant and training grant to a student in a placement at a sixth form college did not comply with the TDA Funding Manual. 	15,923	20,145
Local Transport Plan: Major projects (TRA11)	n/a	Claim not required in 2010/11	-	6,195
Total			28,595	34,935

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Audit Commission

1st Floor

Millbank Tower

Millbank

London

SW1P 4HQ

Telephone: 0844 798 3131

Fax: 0844 798 2945

Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946

www.audit-commission.gov.uk

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