

Public Services News - November 2013

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The offices of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy in Robert Street, London.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy – International Public Financial Management

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) is the only body in the world dedicated to public finance. Governments and global organisations turn to them as experts in professionalising public financial management. I am a fully qualified member and an examiner in Management Accounting for the Certificate in International Public Financial Management.

People can study for the suite of public financial management qualifications with one of CIPFA's accredited training partners. If successful, they become a member of the global body for public finance and see their career take off.

International Public Financial Management (IPFM) is a programme with four stages, each a qualification in its own right:

- Certificate in IPFM – approximate duration: 6 months
- Diploma in IPFM – approximate duration: 12 months, CIPFA membership type: Affiliate membership (with a minimum of 50 days' practical experience)
- Advanced Diploma in IPFM – approximate duration: 12 months, CIPFA membership type: Associate membership (with a minimum of 150 days' practical experience)
- Professional Qualification in IPFM – approximate duration: 6 months, CIPFA membership type: full CIPFA membership and the use of the CPFA designation (with a full practical experience portfolio).

Tuition courses and examinations for the IPFM qualification are currently offered in countries where CIPFA has partnerships with local tuition providers, professional accountancy organisations, governments or others with a desire to improve public financial management at a local or national level. The programme is currently available in South East Europe and in Nigeria and Lesotho. CIPFA is also working with Free Balance to deliver tuition for the qualifications in various countries.

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In August 2013, CIPFA announced a training partnership with LCBS a major training provider in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The move continues the growth of CIPFA's international public financial management training provision.

The partnership with LCBS Dhaka will allow accountancy students in Bangladesh to study for CIPFA's professional qualifications in International Public Financial Management. These qualifications will allow students from across the world to achieve chartered public finance accountant status. They are the only accountancy qualifications based on International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

IPSAS are designed to improve government transparency and accountability, allowing for greater comparability between countries and public sector bodies and are designed, set and supported by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).

CIPFA's International Director, Alan Edwards, commented:

"Specialised training for Government and public sector staff in public financial management will make an enormous contribution to the stability of public finances in countries around the world."

"CIPFA's continued international growth will help ensure that the next generation of public sector managers has the skills and expertise necessary to effectively lead and manage their country's public services."

"Our new partnership with LCBS Dhaka in Bangladesh is another example of how CIPFA is working to strengthen the accountancy profession around the world"

LCBS's Chief Executive, M A Kalam, said,

"We are proud to announce that LCBS Dhaka, Bangladesh, has been awarded Accredited Training Partner (ATP) status to conduct training and tuition programs for different CIPFA qualifications locally."

"This partnership is a milestone for both parties and is the first of its kind. We hope LCBS Dhaka, being the very first global ATP, will be a role model for all future ATPs established elsewhere. I wish this new CIPFA ATP scheme great success."

The Management Accounting module for which I am the examiner is one of three modules comprising the Certificate in International Public Financial Management. It is designed to provide candidates with the technical knowledge, comprehension and skills required to perform budgeting and management accounting tasks within the context of the public sector. As an examiner I like to feel that I am making a small contribution towards improved public financial management internationally including in developing countries.

The module covers budgeting from the perspective of its role in medium term financial planning including, where appropriate, the use of a Medium Term Expenditure framework (MTEF) approach, and in relation to the implementation of government policy intentions through programmes, projects and other delivery mechanisms. It also covers the maintenance of management accounting records and the key aspects of standard costing and budgetary control.

The module develops the candidate's understanding of the nature of costs in producing products and delivering services. This knowledge and understanding of cost and cost behaviour provides the basis for efficient and effective decision making.

The learning outcomes for this module are designed around the day to day application of budgeting and management accounting practices and tasks. The syllabus reflects the tasks found in typical job descriptions in the public sector.

The overall aims of the module are that the successful candidate will be able to:

- Explain the scope of management accounting in public sector organisations, including the importance of sustainability of resources.
- Describe the role of budgets, budget execution and budgetary control in relation to medium and short term financial plans.
- Record cost data and use costing techniques.
- Apply management information to decision making.

Further information is available on the CIPFA website at: <http://www.cipfa.org/training-and-qualifications/more-qualifications/international-public-financial-management-qualifications>

Medium Term Expenditure Framework

The Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) is a process established by the World Bank to ensure transparent planning and budget formulation. It is intended to assist central agencies to design credible contracts for allocating public resources to their strategic priorities that also ensures fiscal discipline. The framework has two main objectives:

- Setting fiscal targets.
- Allocating resources to strategic priorities within these targets.

Strategic priorities are first determined by central government or individual ministries and resources are then allocated to those priorities. Transparency requires that the government's priorities are explained in a budget policy statement while the priorities of individual ministries are explained in their corporate plans.

Understanding the political economy of government is seen as important in designing a medium term expenditure framework. For example, it is important to consider the length of appointment of the government and whether it is formed by a single party or a coalition of parties.

The organisation of central agencies is also important. If there are separate agencies involved in a programme then managing the individual objectives to ensure the overall objective will be more complex.

It is usual for a medium term expenditure framework to cover five or even ten years. The World Bank expects that as those setting the medium term expenditure framework gain experience of doing so then the time horizon for the medium term expenditure framework can reach further into the future.

Forecasts must be as reliable as possible. If the medium term expenditure framework is not fairly precise then it will not be useful in managing resources and achieving objectives. It is recognised that the uncertainty and limitations of forecasts increases with the length of time into the future with which they are made. As with any forecasting, errors are likely to be made. It is important to ensure that management and other stakeholders are made aware of any uncertainties and their potential impact on the overall outcomes in advance to maintain their commitment to the medium term expenditure framework process.

Once these issues are understood it is considered important for government to make reliable commitments of resources to the agencies, priorities and budget areas that are to deliver the programmes. It is considered that if government is not able to make commitments that other agencies can rely on, its ability to hold the rest of the public sector accountable is massively reduced and it would not be in a position to make reforms to improve the performance of other public bodies.

The medium term expenditure framework must be transparent and so it is a requirement that governments publish a fiscal update, fiscal framework statement, budget policy statement and the corporate plans of ministries.

Once the medium term expenditure framework is in place, indicators must be set for measuring progress against plans.

Medium term expenditure frameworks are designed to improve budget processes through:

- Ensuring that there are clear policy objectives.
- Improving the predictability of budget allocations.
- Ensuring a comprehensive coverage over all public services.
- Improved transparency in the use of resources.

However, it is considered that this would only be achieved where focused improvements are made on improving the areas where budgeting problems exist. For example:

- Where the release of budget funds is unpredictable then it is difficult to have confidence in medium term forecasts.
- If ministers and budget holders are not held accountable then attempting to link budget outcomes to policy objectives will not make any difference.
- If overall policies are unclear or inconsistent then transparency of budget allocations would not be achievable.

Once a public sector organisation has guidance from government regarding priority areas and required outcomes they would set their own internal budgets. This is likely to start with a medium term financial plan (MTFP) that would reflect the ways in which the organisation would contribute to achieving the medium term expenditure framework. These would include strategic, tactical and operational budgets.

In South Africa, for example, the transition to a democratic state contributed to the development of a new budget management system that changed the governance of public finance. This transition entailed major transformation of government policies aimed at achieving overall social and economic policy stability in the long-term. The budget process operates under the medium term expenditure framework that was introduced in 1997 and promulgated in 1998.

The medium term expenditure framework is a transparent planning and budget formulation process within which the cabinet and central agencies establish credible contracts for allocating public resources to their strategic priorities while ensuring overall financial discipline. The process entails two main objectives: the first aims at setting fiscal targets; the second aims at allocating resources to strategic priorities within these targets.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary for relevant stakeholders to engage in the budget process. This implies that when crafting the overall budget authorities take a medium-term (three year) outlook. The forthcoming year is the official budget year while the two other years serve as baselines or indicators for the upcoming budgets. Parliament votes only on the forthcoming year. An important aspect of the South African budgeting process is the medium term budget policy statement (MTBPS) that provides medium-term macro-economic trends and projections including estimates of revenue and expenditure.

I have provided training in financial management to officials of regional and local government in South Africa through the University of Cape Town.

Cumbria County Council prepares Budget for 2014/15

In common with all other local authorities in England, Cumbria County Council is in the process of putting together its budget for 2014/15 in the context of significant reductions in central government funding. As part of the process, the Council is consulting residents on their draft financial plan 'Cumbria: Our Area, our Future'. The plan starts:

"The government is taking a big bite out of our budget as part of its efforts to balance the nation's books. This is your chance to get involved in the conversation about our priorities for the next three years."

The Council has already made savings of £88million over the last three years – and another round of reductions in government grants over the next three years (2014 to 2017) means further savings of around £80million are needed. This adds up to around one in every four pounds that the Council used to receive to fund services. The Councils' response is as follows:

"We will never take risks with the services which some of the most vulnerable people in our communities count on which is why, despite the tough financial times, we will continue doing all we can to protect and modernise frontline services for those who rely upon them most."

"The scale of savings which the County Council needs to make, though, means we have to look closely at the things we currently do and think about how we can do things differently in the future to make more savings."

The Council has identified a vision for Cumbria:

"For the people of Cumbria to benefit from sustainable economic growth and an enhanced quality of life."

And a vision for the County Council:

"To be an effective and efficient organisation that delivers the best possible services for the people of Cumbria within its available resources, protects the vulnerable, and works with others in the community to shape services and help find solutions for the future."

And a core purpose:

"To serve the people of Cumbria."

The Council also states that it welcomes change and the opportunities this brings:

"As a Council, we view change as our friend. It's something we all need to embrace because not even our landscape stays the same forever. New technology, new roles and new ideas are embraced to help us deliver the services that our communities need."

"To deliver the best service, we're constantly looking to forge new partnerships and work with communities. Whether with voluntary services or through creating more joined-up services with our partners, we know we can learn from other people and they can learn from us.

"as a Council, we know that having the right organisational culture is critical to our success in meeting our priorities and delivering good quality services to the people of Cumbria. In the three year life of this plan, the Council will undergo significant change, and we will embed our new behaviours framework to support the development of a 'one team' culture."

The Council makes six commitments that are designed to ensure that it becomes a modern, efficient Council:

- Reshape the organisation by reviewing management structures and reducing management costs.
- Make our internal support services much more efficient.
- Commission and procure services in a more efficient way, reducing duplication, improving services and meeting the wider aims of the Council.
- Rationalise our property and improve our office accommodation.
- Change the culture of the organisation and support our members and employees as we go through change.
- Pursue opportunities for more efficient service delivery by closer working with the other tiers of local government.

This is clearly a bold agenda for a County Council that, in the past, has been regarded as somewhat traditional and bureaucratic.

The paper then goes on to identify specific proposals to:

- Safeguard children and ensure that Cumbria is a great place to be a child and grow up.
- Enable communities to live safely and shape services locally.
- Promote health and well-being and tackle poverty.
- Protect and enhance Cumbria's world class environment
- Provide safe and well maintained roads and an improved transport network
- Promote sustainable economic growth and create jobs
- Support older and vulnerable people to live independent and healthy lives.

These proposals are described by Councillor Jo Stephenson (Liberal-Democrat) Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources as 'sobering'. In November 2013 he wrote in the 'Cumberland & Westmorland Herald' that:

"The propositions in the County Council's 'Our area, our future' budget consultation make for sobering reading. They envisage a post-2014 scenario where some services are reduced (although not vital core services such as protecting children from harm and care for vulnerable adults), some charges are introduced or increased and a large number of council employees lose their jobs.

"A grim picture indeed but let nobody be under any illusion about the origin of the problem. Since 2010 the government has imposed upon local authorities an austerity programme which is due to last until at least 2017. It has done this by cutting the funding authorities receive from the Treasury to run local services.

"Councils across the country have had to deliver the most challenging austerity programme since the second world war. Indeed, if all areas of the public sector had been cut back on the scale that councils have, then the country's balances would no longer be in deficit.

“During the first three years Cumbria County Council has had to save £88million and, although every effort was made to protect front-line services this led to more than 700 redundancies. In the next three years, we are required to save a further £80million.

“By 2017 the Council will have lost around £1 out of every £4 it had to spend before the cuts began. Anyone running a business or managing household budget will understand the impact of this. The delivery of council services is a labour-intensive operation. We no longer have the money to pay the number of staff we used, or would like, to employ.

“In considering this matter, Cumbrians should not allow themselves to be deceived by voices suggesting these measures are unnecessary or that the savings could easily be found in other ways, unspecified but pain free, If there were really such seductive alternatives they would most surely have been found by now.

“‘Our area, our future’ which lasts until 20th January also asks for a response to the idea of a modest rise in Council Tax as a way of minimising the need to reduce services. I would urge everyone to respond to the consultation... The Council wants to hear from you.”

Further information is available on the Council's website at: www.cumbria.gov.uk/ourarea .
The closing date for feedback is 20th January 2014.

Local Authorities and the Autumn Statement

The Local Government Association has lobbied the government in advance of December's autumn statement, saying that the next two years will be 'make or break' for the viability of many councils and the government must not impose extra cuts on local authorities.

In a submission to the Treasury in November 2013, Sir Merrick Cockell, the Conservative Chair of the Local Government Association, called on Chancellor George Osborne to provide councils with a 'stable environment' to allow them to plan for funding reductions still to be implemented. He warned that if the Chancellor were to make extra cuts to local government it would put the future of some councils at risk.

Councils are currently half way through a 43% cut in funding from central government, which is the result of the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review followed by that of June 2013.

The Local Government Association has argued that this 'severe squeeze' on local funding must not be exacerbated. They calculate that, combined with the growing demand for social care, cuts mean the amount available to deliver non-social care services is predicted to shrink by 66% by 2020. In addition, councils in many areas face not having enough money to provide legally mandated services.

Sir Merrick Cockell said:

“The next two years are make or break for many councils and the chancellor has it in his power to either deliver a stable environment in which they can plan for the unprecedented challenges ahead, or he can deliver uncertainty and risk which will put even more stress on vital local services and push councils toward failure.

“This government is testing the resilience of councils to breaking point and in many areas the cracks are starting to show. 2015/16 is shaping up as the crunch year and we expect some councils to be placed in a position where they do not have the money they need to meet their statutory obligations.”

The Local Government Association also called on the Treasury to reverse its plan to withhold an additional £1billion of local government funding in 2015/16, over and above the 10% cut planned that year. This additional cash is being held back to cover Whitehall financial risks and to pay for policy changes which, under the 'new burdens' rules, should instead be paid for by central government, the group said.

Councils also called for the full localisation of growth from the local share of business rates, including from inflation, without any corresponding reduction in grant funding. Under current arrangements, councils retain half of local business rate growth – the so-called local share. However, this does not include any business rate increases to meet inflation, which instead reverts to the Treasury.

Transformation Challenge Award

Local government was exempted from further budget reductions in 2013 to 2014 at the Autumn Statement. This was designed to give local authorities time to drive through further savings reforms by:

- Transforming front line service delivery
- Growing their local business rate income
- Improving procurement practices
- Completing back office changes

Further to this, Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis announced in October 2013 that eighteen local authorities will share a £6.9million reward for radically overhauling how they do business, a part of the government's pledge to transform public services. Successful schemes will:

- Accelerate integration of local health care services
- Create shared finance and HR for emergency services
- Create a shared asset management company partnership
- Use service data to drive efficiency and better delivery

The winners of the Transformation Challenge Award will receive funding for demonstrating their ability to remain at the cutting edge of service transformation, while delivering efficiency savings.

The award paves the way for further support for councils radically transforming local service delivery, enabling better outcomes to be achieved for less. In particular, as announced in this year's Spending Review, in 2015 there will be a £100million Transformation Fund to help even more councils to set up shared services, combining their operations for service delivery, including with other public and private sector service providers.

The Transformation Challenge Award will support some of the best performing councils who are at the cutting edge of innovation and leading by example in developing best practice for the rest of country to follow.

Reforms will also establish a service model that fits the public rather than forcing the public to fit a service model; ensuring residents get a better experience too.

Local Government Minister Brandon Lewis said:

"While councils have a vital role to play in tackling the inherited deficit, the government has always been clear councils should not close services. Instead councils should demonstrate the best in innovation and ministers will champion councils that successfully redesign services."

“The tide of change that began with chief executives and sharing management teams is now going further to include shared service delivery across council boundaries. These reforms will be key to protecting services while reducing costs to the taxpayer.”

Ministers consider that starting the ball rolling can be the hardest part and this money will help eighteen councils with the initial outlay they need to get shared service projects up and running. They say that successful bidders have proved that they can be examples for others and that they will be looking at opportunities to spread their knowledge and expertise throughout the country.

The government believes that by implementing reforms now, local authorities will be able to tackle complex issues that place heavy demands on local services or that can help boost local growth and business rates income.

This will allow them to invest in changes to their management structures, procurement methods or service delivery with the long term savings these reforms generate giving a better deal to local residents.

Councils that are already pursuing particularly innovative reforms may already be receiving Efficiency Support Grants. If these councils demonstrate that they have gone even further and faster on efficiency savings then they will be eligible for a further award of up to 25% of their Efficiency Support Grant allocation.

Collecting Performance Information in Devolved Britain

The localist agenda in England encourages a ‘sector-led’ approach to collecting performance information is voluntary and appears to be partial. In April 2012, Eric Pickles, the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, justified this approach as follows:

“For too long central government has kept Town Halls hunched over desks crunching numbers or wielding clipboards asking the public intrusive questions. We know councils are most effective when they are free to innovate and respond to what local people want without undue interference from Whitehall.

“That is why we are chopping great chunks of pointless red tape out of the system – radically reducing the demands, burdens and restrictions put on Town Halls by central government. In next to not time at all we have scaled this back more than a quarter.”

This approach provides an opportunity to escape the top-down target-driven compliance-based system and provides an opportunity to review performance management, measurement and systems to focus on achieving strategic objectives and outcomes. However, it means that there is less comparative performance information available.

The Local Government Association in England has responded by proposing a system of sector-led improvement based on five principles:

- Councils are responsible for their own performance and improvement and for leading the delivery of improved outcomes for local people in their area
- Councils are primarily accountable to local communities (not government or the inspectorates) and stronger accountability through increased transparency helps local people drive further improvement.
- Councils have a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole (evidenced for example by sharing best practice and offering member and officer peers)

- The role of the local Government Association is to maintain an overview of the performance of the sector to identify potential performance challenges and opportunities – and to provide tools and support to help councils take advantage of this new approach
- We all need to continue to lobby for further reductions in inspection, assessment and data reporting.

In Scotland and Wales the devolved governments still collect performance information and their sector-led approaches are stronger and more deeply embedded in local public services. However, there is still a move away from top-down prescriptive approaches to bottom-up approaches based on outcomes.

In Scotland, the Local Government Scrutiny Co-ordination Strategic Group at the Scottish Parliament noted in 2011 that:

“Inconsistencies in coverage and the quality of information across services, outcome areas and corporate processes are still apparent and it will take time before all councils have fully effective self-evaluation arrangements in place. In particular, the use of benchmarking data to assess costs, quality and performance remains under-developed in many places.

“Service user views and customer satisfaction information are central aspects of self-evaluation and this remains a continuing gap in existing information in many councils... Credible public assurance relies on clear, evidence-based, independent evaluations and easily understood public reports.”

Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

The Public Services (Social Value) Act of 2012 aims to strengthen the social enterprise business sector and make the concept of 'social value' more relevant and important in the placement and provision of public services. Its key provisions are to:

- Place a duty on the Secretary of State to publish a 'national social enterprise strategy' to encourage engagement in social enterprise
- Amend Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 so that local authorities are required to include in their sustainable community strategy proposals for promoting engagement with social enterprise in their area. They must also include a statement of the measures suggested to enable social enterprise to participate in implementing these proposals
- Require local authorities, when entering into public procurement contracts, to give greater consideration to economic, social or environmental wellbeing during the pre-procurement stage.

The Social Value Act could have a huge impact on community wellbeing – but only with genuine local involvement and an imaginative and unfettered approach. The Act requires local authorities and other commissioners of public services to consider how their services can benefit people living in the local community, in particular they must take account of the social impact of contracts before starting the procurement process.

Some local authorities are further advanced in their implementation of the Act than others, with many involving their local voluntary and community sector, other service providers, staff, service users and the wider local community in developing their approach.

The pursuit of social value that should include economic, social and environmental value, can only be truly addressed within the wider localist agenda. After all, social value objectives will be different in different places and between different neighbourhoods and communities. Accordingly, they need to be very local.

The new Act is hugely important and has the potential to have a major impact on community wellbeing. However, its greatest contribution should be to encourage changes in behaviour rather than to enforce 'compliance'. The behavioural changes that could turn the Act into a powerful driver of social, economic and environmental change include:

- Harnessing the power and scale of public sector procurement to drive the wider social, economic and environment agendas and not simply to purchase services and goods (the Act specifically does not apply to goods but the same approach can be applied); and moving on from simply price-driven procurement
- Involving the local voluntary and community sector, communities, service users, staff and other potential providers in defining local social value objectives; and to determine what is / might be possible
- Pushing the boundaries and avoiding feeling constrained by risk-averse procurement rules and officials, and lawyers
- Adopting a comprehensive approach, which includes seeking social value throughout supply chains – even those that might include internationally based suppliers
- Taking a place-based approach through collaboration with other public sector bodies to adopt a shared approach across local government, the NHS, police and other public agencies

Political leadership is essential. Council leaders and senior Cabinet members, and their equivalent in other public bodies such as police and crime commissioners and government ministers, should commit to using the Act as part of their wider leadership agendas. They should signal to staff and others that this is important and matters. And critically, they should encourage staff to be imaginative and to push the boundaries.

Every public body spends a great deal of money every year on goods and services from the business and social sectors. They also spend money on 'in-house' public services. They should always consider how they can maximise the impact and value of this spend, especially in a period of austerity and budget cuts. They should have the means to identify and evaluate social benefits – not in ways that are bureaucratic, mechanistic or burdensome, but rather which encourage innovative and responsive outcomes.

The voluntary and community sector, and indeed the wider social sector organisations, should not 'presume' that everything they do maximises social value. They have to be able to demonstrate their contribution and impact. Social value is not unique to any one sector – the public sector has a strong record but actually the business sector can and does also add social value in the right conditions.

Local authorities and other public bodies will have to decide how much they wish to take into account wider ethical standards from their suppliers and how far they will be comfortable testing providers' ethical, governance and values given the ambiguity of the law. I hope the government will legislate to enable this to become the norm – surely a key part of developing a responsible capitalism. However, bold public leaders will wish to and can go a long way within the current legal framework.

Traditionally public benefit and the pursuit of social value have been regarded as 'nice to have' add-ons to public contracts and public services. The real challenge is to move them from a 'nice to have add on', to being core.

The requirement to consider social wellbeing may prove relevant for social housing. In February 2013, the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust published research on the social impact of housing providers. This concluded that it is possible to put a cash value on things that enhance or detract from people's social wellbeing and that this value is around £1,000 for things like neighbour noise, damp or poor internal lighting. The research also found that a social home provides £1,000 a year more in social benefits than a private rented home. This means that social housing has a greater social benefit than is sometimes supposed. It also means that it should be possible to combine financial and social benefits in the evaluation of options for investment both at national and local level.

AWICS announces 2014 series of Seminars and Workshops

The 2014 series of seminars and workshops has now been announced. They are as follows:

All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance:

- London – 26th February 2014
- Huddersfield – 10th June 2014
- London – 11th November 2014

Details are available on our website at: <http://www.awics.co.uk/lahfin.asp>

All You Want to Know about Housing Association Finance:

- London – 11th March 2014
- Huddersfield – 11th June 2014

Details are available on our website at: <http://www.awics.co.uk/hafin.asp>

All You Want to Know about Budgets and Management Accounts:

- London – 12th March 2014

All You Want to Know about Service Charges:

- London – 29th April 2014

All You Want to Know about Scottish Social Housing Finance:

- Falkirk – 13th May 2014.

Developments in Social Housing Finance in England:

- London – 8th July 2014

All You Want to Know about Welsh Social Housing Finance:

- Cardiff – 10th September 2014

All You Want to Know about Local Authority Finance

- London – 7th October 2014

Value for Money and Performance Management in Housing & Local Government:

- London – 8th October 2014

All You Want to Know about Welfare Reform:

- London – 12th November 2014

Further information is available on our website at: <http://www.awics.co.uk/seminars2014.asp>

Or by emailing me at adrian.waite@awics.co.uk

ADVERTISEMENT



Service Charges – An Introductory Workshop

2nd December 2013, Renaissance Hotel, Manchester.
1.00pm to 5.00pm.

Attend this workshop to get up to speed on key issues in service charges including providing value for money, great customer service and identifying key challenges for you and your team. It will also give you an excellent grounding in the legal issues, how to bring case to the Leaseholder Valuation Tribunal (LVT), and the alternatives.

Speakers include:

- Adrian Waite Managing Director, AWICS
- Lucy Walsh Senior Associate, Trowers & Hamlin
- Emma Duke Senior Associate, Anthony Collins Solicitors

Who should attend the workshop?

Finance managers and directors, Leasehold services managers, Heads of housing and directors of housing, Housing managers and senior housing officers, Members of audit committees, Senior accountants, Chief executives, Company secretaries, Auditors, Accountants, Rent managers, Service charges managers, Care and support managers, Leasehold accountants, Operations managers and directors, Section 20 managers, Commercial services managers, Sales and marketing staff.

Fees: Member £99; Associate member £115; Non-member £125.

To download a programme for the conference and workshop go to <http://www.housing.org.uk/events/browse/service-charges-an-introductory-workshop-1>

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About 'AWICS',

'AWICS' is a management consultancy and training company. We specialise in providing support in finance and management to clients in local government and housing in England, Scotland and Wales. We are well known for our ability to analyse and explain complex financial and management issues clearly.

Our mission statement is 'Independence, Integrity, Value'. We therefore provide support to clients from an independent standpoint that is designed to help the client to achieve their objectives. We are passionate about working with the utmost integrity. We believe that we offer the best value for money that is available today!

For more information about us and our services please visit our website at www.awics.co.uk or contact me at Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk.

Services that are available from 'AWICS' include:

- Regional Seminars - <http://www.awics.co.uk/regionalSeminars.asp>
- In-House Training – <http://www.awics.co.uk/inHouseCourses.asp>
- Management Consultancy – <http://www.awics.co.uk/ManagementConsultancy.asp>
- Interim Management – <http://www.awics.co.uk/interimmanagement.asp>
- Independent Residents' Advice – <http://www.awics.co.uk/IndependentTenantAdvice.asp>
- Publications – <http://www.awics.co.uk/TechnicalBooks.asp>
- Information (including free newsletters and briefing papers - <http://www.awics.co.uk/informationsservice.asp>

Our next session of 'All You Want to Know about Local Authority Housing Finance 2013' will be held in London on Tuesday 12th November 2013. It will provide attendees with a fully up to date introduction and overview of local authority housing finance. Details are on our website at:

http://www.awics.co.uk/local_authority_housing_finance_2013_training_course.asp

I have a blog at <http://www.awics.co.uk/Blog.asp> and a Twitter feed at [@AdrianWaite](https://twitter.com/AdrianWaite)