

Research for NAO redesign project

By Kira Dhaliwal

May 2022



Goals for this research

Our main goal for this round of research is to validate assumptions in which the staging website was built upon. The assumptions which are the riskiest or have the most uncertainty around them will be tested first. Some assumptions can be tested at later stages.

We are specifically concentrating on testing the ‘Our work’, ‘Topics’ and search functions on the staging website. We identified these as the riskiest areas so we’re testing these first.



Methodology and users



Session design

The session began with an **introduction** to what we wanted to find out. We then asked **opening questions** including finding out usual tasks they carry out on the NAO website.

We then went to the staging website and carried out the **usability test**. Here we asked users to complete different tasks:

Natural scenario: We asked users about their usual tasks and asked them to perform them on the new staging website. We then asked them about their experience and observed how they did on the new website.

Browse Homepage: We asked users for their thoughts of the homepage and what they found useful on it.



Session design

Browse 'Topics': We asked users for their thoughts on the range of topics in the menu, asked them to explore one of the topic pages to see what they found useful.

Browse 'Our work': We asked users if they understood the differences between the content types and asked them to explore one of the pages to see if they found it useful to have these pages.

Using search and filters: We asked users to search for terms they usually look for to see if they found relevant results and if they were able to use the filters on the website.

We then ended the session by asking for any other **feedback**.



Research participants

We spoke to a range of users, our aim was to have a good mix of perspectives. In this research we spoke to:

1 x Journalist

1 x Researcher

3 x Parliamentary users

4 x Public sector guidance seeker

All participants had basic computer literacy skills. We conducted sessions on desktop or laptops, as this is what they use at work.



Findings and insights



Attitudes and perceptions of the NAO

When we asked users about the NAO, they all had positive things to say. Some were confused about the role of the NAO and some of the work they did. But overall, people were satisfied using the website and using the NAO's work to help with their own work.

“I use the NAO's work to pick up evidence about subjects, even when it is not a subject I'm interested in, because there is a lot of transferable interest”
- P2, *London councils representative*

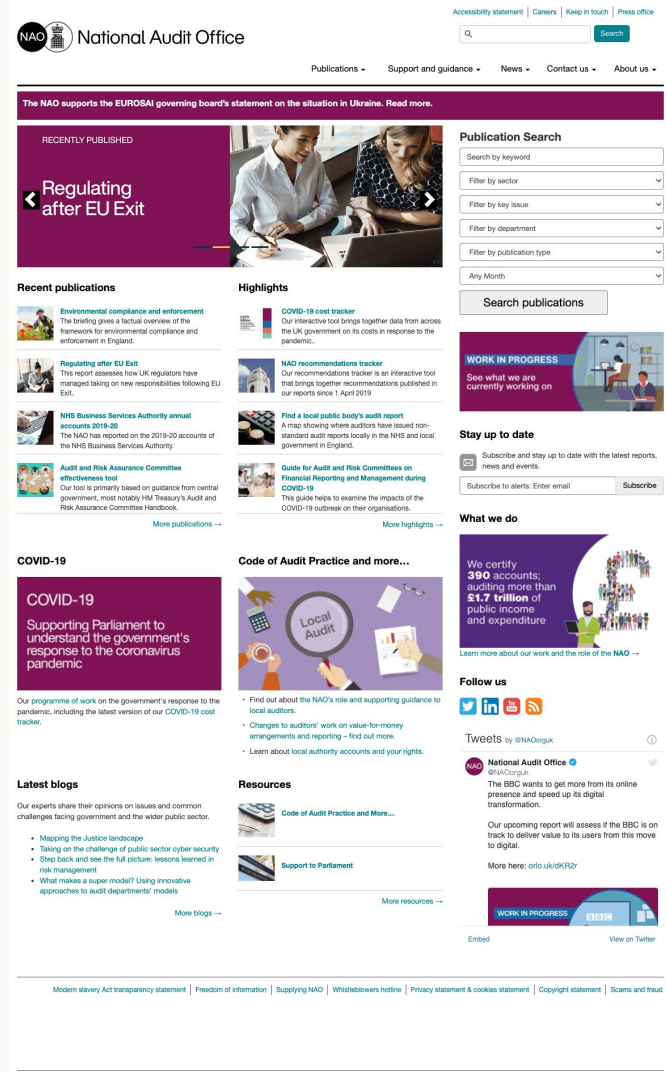


Attitudes and perceptions of the current NAO website

There were a lot of differing views when users were asked about the current NAO website. Overall, the perception was positive but when users were shown the redesign, they much preferred the new one.

“The current landing page is getting way too busy. It doesn’t tell new people who the NAO are or why their work is important” – P3, *low income tax reform group leader*

“It feels more like an evolution than a revolution” [when referring to the new design] – P4, *cabinet office civil servant*



The first task given to users was to do something they usually do on the current website, *everyone undertook the same steps.*

All of the research participants used the 'search our work' bar when asked to do something they would do on the current website. Their main tasks included searching for relevant reports from particular government departments or on a particular topic.

This shows us that users want to get to content as quick as possible, so having the search be as accurate as possible is vital. Users also said they sometimes browse the site for content, so they want to see recent and relevant content first so they are not wasting time.



Homepage



All users said that the new website was a definite improvement from the current one.

All users said that the website “feels clean, organised and fresh looking” (P9, *House of Commons research clerk*). Users liked that the homepage was not as busy as the current website; they could clearly see the different sections and understand what they are for.

Most users pointed out that the ‘Future work’ section is particularly useful as a lot of people look at that content and “more attention should be brought to it”. (P1, *journalist*).



The majority of users did not know how to navigate back to the homepage.

To some, it is a known principle that clicking on the logo of a website takes you back onto the homepage. But with some of our participants, they did not know this and struggled to go back to it.

One user (P3, *low income tax reform group leader*) said “Oh, the homepage isn't on the menu, so I don't know how to go back.”

This is not a high priority issue, but it is something we need to think about with future design decisions so those who are less tech savvy are not at a disadvantage.



Topic pages



Overall, participants were satisfied with the topics pages, they were useful and concise.

When users explored the topic pages, they expressed mainly positive responses. Many participants liked the content in the banner explaining the topic (and those pages without banner content, participants wanted there to be content).

They liked the overall layout of the page, the pictures and the different sized cards to show more important content.

“I like it, the page is interesting to look at, the cards, the colours, the tags, it’s nice.” – P7, *HMRC civil servant*



The screenshot shows the NAO website's 'COVID-19' topic page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Our work', 'Topics', 'Support for Parliament', and 'About us'. The main content area features a large banner for a report titled 'The government's preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk management' dated 19 Nov 2021. Below the banner is a grid of smaller cards, each representing a different report or insight. The cards are color-coded: 'INSIGHT' (yellow), 'REPORT' (teal), and 'OVERVIEW' (red). The cards include titles, dates, and category tags like 'Business and enterprise', 'Commercial and regulation', and 'NHS backlogs and waiting times in England'. At the bottom of the page, there is a search bar and a footer with various links and social media icons.

NAO National Audit Office

Our work Topics Support for Parliament About us

Topic
COVID-19

It is too early to tell what the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public spending and public service delivery will be, but it will be profound.

We have already carried out a substantial programme of audit work on the government's response and will continue to do so. Our work will also provide expert insight to help ensure that appropriate lessons are learned for the future.

REPORT 19 Nov 2021

The government's preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk management
COVID-19

INSIGHT 18 May 2021

Initial learning from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic
Business and enterprise

INSIGHT 23 Jun 2020

Guide for Audit and Risk Committees on Financial Reporting and Management during COVID-19
COVID-19

OVERVIEW 22 Sep 2021

COVID-19 cost tracker
COVID-19

REPORT 29 Mar 2022

Investigation into the management of PPE contracts
COVID-19

REPORT 24 Mar 2022

Investigation into the government's contracts with Randox Laboratories Ltd
Commercial and regulation

REPORT 25 Feb 2022

The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in England
COVID-19

REPORT 31 Jan 2022

The Department of Health and Social Care annual report and accounts 2020-2021
COVID-19

REPORT 3 Dec 2021

The Bounce Back Loan Scheme: an update
COVID-19

REPORT 1 Dec 2021

NHS backlogs and waiting times in England
COVID-19

Search all our work on COVID-19

Our work
Reports
Insights
Overviews
Press releases

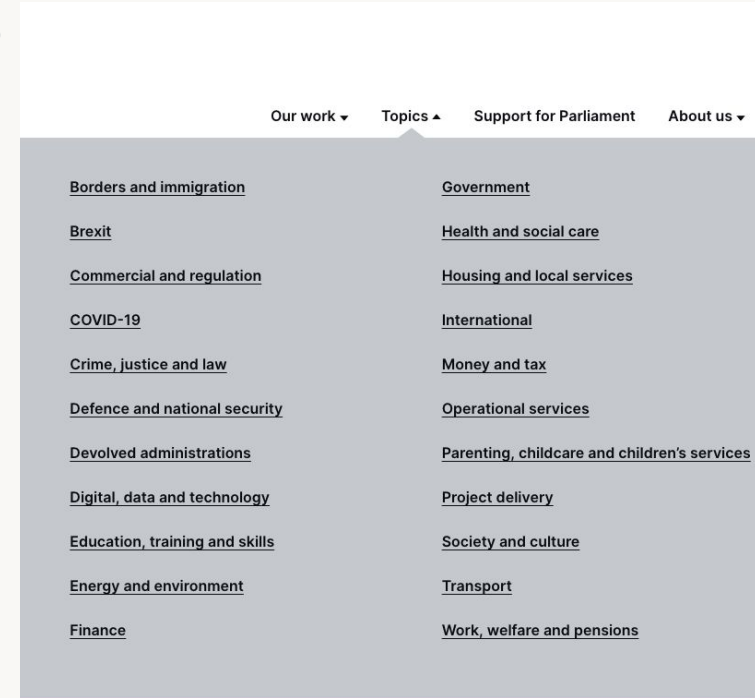
About us
Transparency and governance
Our history
Jobs
Contact us
Whistleblowing
Press office

Copyright statement Terms and conditions Privacy and cookies statement Accessibility statement Modern slavery statement

To most participants, the topics made sense to them and they would know where to find content.

Users pointed out that the topics aligned with the different government departments and this “made sense” to them.

“If I wanted to look at specific department content, I would know where to look. For example, I’d expect to find reports about Treasury and HMRC under money and tax.” – P4, *cabinet office civil servant*.



Topics from NAO staging website



However, 'Government' and 'Project delivery' did not make sense to them.

Participants did not understand why there was a topic for Government. Even after prompting users to read the context banner on the page, they still did not understand why it was a separate category.

"Arguably 'Government' covers all of the other topics." - P4, *cabinet office civil servant*

Some also pointed out that they did not understand what 'Project delivery' was, but after reading the context banner, they understood what it meant (but it does not necessarily mean that it is useful to them). Again, it was acknowledged that this is something that could fall into other topic areas.



Our work / content type pages

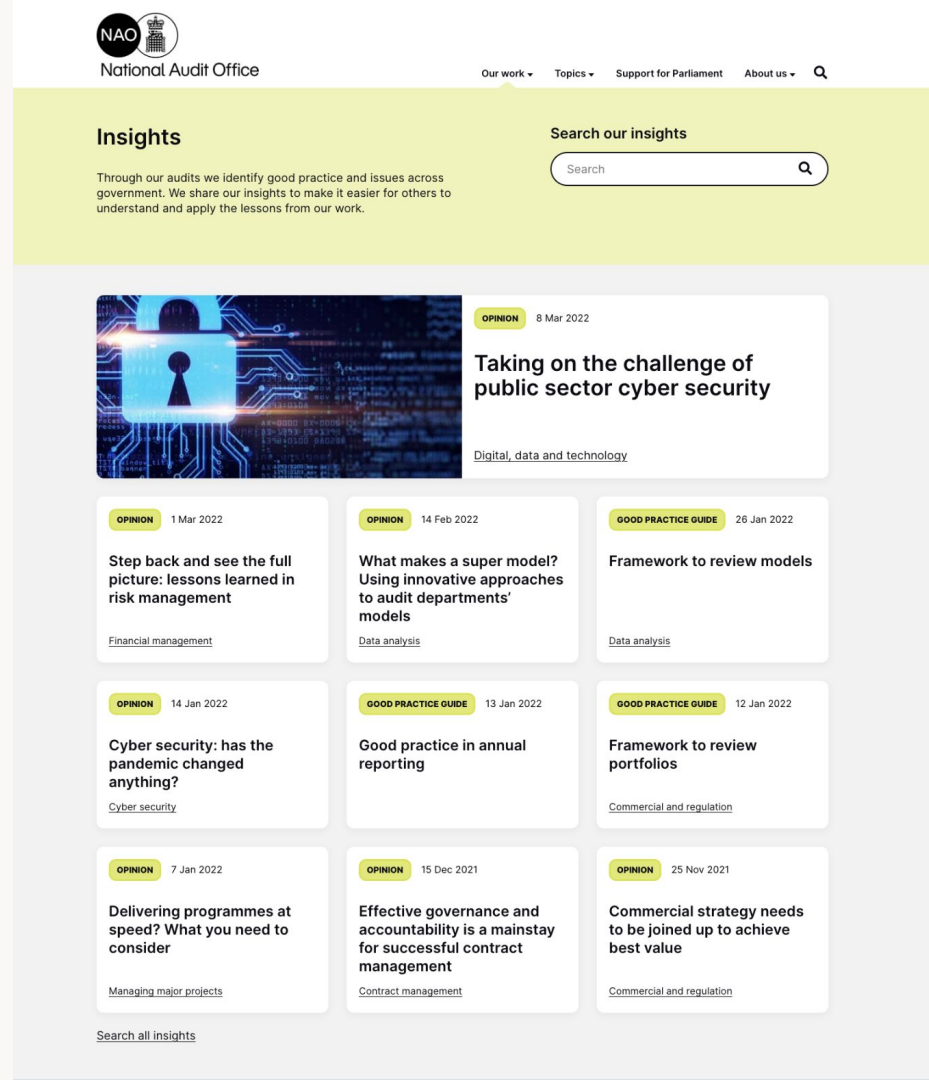


Pages under 'Our Work' were useful to users who wanted to browse particular content types.

Participants found the different content types useful, especially if they were looking to browse particular content.

They said the design of this page was consistent with the rest of the website, would use this section regularly.

Some participants used the search bar in these pages as well and received their expected results. They found this useful as some people used Reports in their work.



Most users were intrigued to find out more about Insights.

Many users were not aware of 'Insights' so were intrigued to find out more about this section during the research sessions. Several participants mentioned that they did not know the NAO produced this type of content.

“I think they look like interesting things that I would like to read. It's helpful to have my attention drawn to things I didn't know the NAO had done” — *P4, cabinet office civil servant*

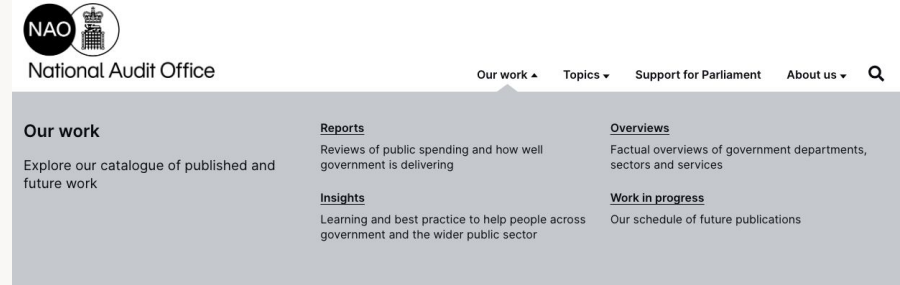


All users said that both sections of the website are useful for different purposes.

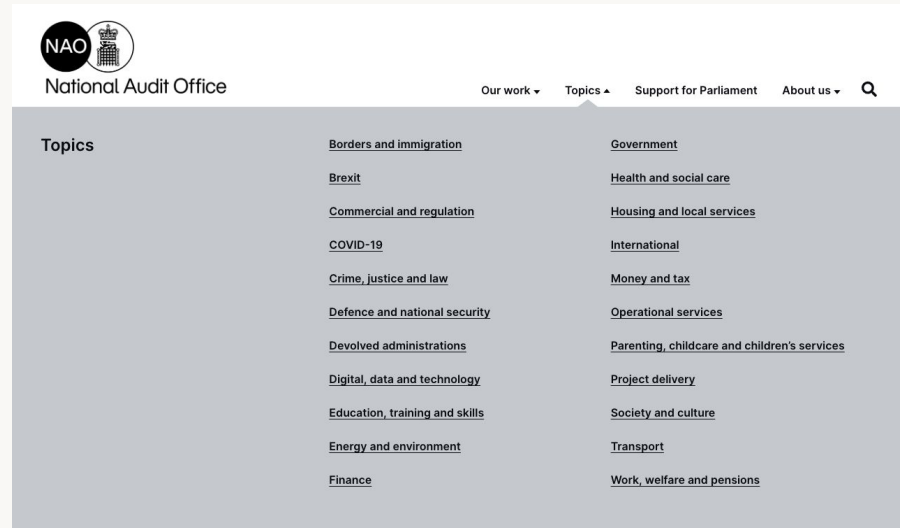
Sometimes users go to the NAO website to browse and said both sections would be useful in those cases, and when they need to find something specific they would be able to use the search function.

How they navigate depends on their job role; for example, some users only look at specific topics, so they would use that section more.

Overall, both sections are useful to all users.



Our work menu



Topics menu

Card design



The card design was well received by all participants.

All users said they liked the card design on all the pages, they thought it was consistent and well laid out.

“It makes things easier to scan.” – P4, *cabinet office civil servant*

Participants also found other elements (like the tag and date) on the cards to be useful.

One participant said, “I like the cards, it has the essential information on it without it being overcrowded.” – P9, *House of Commons research clerk*

Topic

COVID-19

It is too early to tell what the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public spending and public service delivery will be, but it will be profound.

We have already carried out a substantial programme of audit work on the government's response and will continue to do so. Our work will also provide expert insight to help ensure that appropriate lessons are learned for the future.



REPORT 19 Nov 2021

The government's preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk management

COVID-19

INSIGHT 18 May 2021

Initial learning from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Business and enterprise

INSIGHT 23 Jun 2020

Guide for Audit and Risk Committees on Financial Reporting and Management during COVID-19

COVID-19

OVERVIEW 22 Sep 2021

COVID-19 cost tracker

COVID-19

REPORT 29 Mar 2022

Investigation into the management of PPE contracts

COVID-19

REPORT 24 Mar 2022

Investigation into the government's contracts with Randox Laboratories Ltd

Commercial and regulation

REPORT 25 Feb 2022

The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in England

COVID-19

REPORT 31 Jan 2022

The Department of Health and Social Care annual report and accounts 2020-2021

COVID-19

REPORT 3 Dec 2021

The Bounce Back Loan Scheme: an update

COVID-19

REPORT 1 Dec 2021

NHS backlogs and waiting times in England

COVID-19

Search all our work on COVID-19

Our work
Reports
Insights
Overviews
Press releases

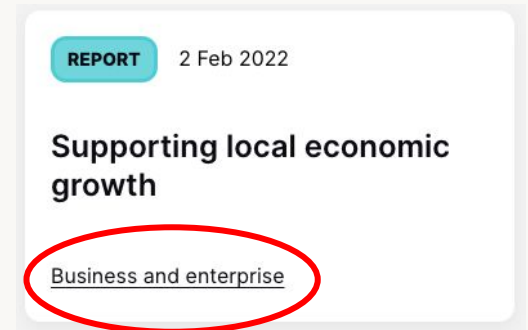
About us
Transparency and governance
Our history
Jobs
Contact us
Whistleblowing
Press office



Some users were confused by the tag on the cards.

All users found tagging very helpful, it made clear to them what the content was about and where they could find it. But some did say that the tag that appeared on the card was clearly not the one that was the most important or relevant.

Some figured out that it was alphabetical, but this was not a logical order to them. They would have preferred if the most relevant tag appeared on the card rather than just an alphabetical order.



Users found that some tags were not the most important or relevant to the report



Topic

Education, training and skills

The screenshot shows a grid of 12 report cards. Each card has a title, a date, and a tag. The tags are either 'REPORT' or 'OVERVIEW'. The tag 'Business and enterprise' is highlighted in red on the 'Employment support: The Kickstart Scheme' report card. A red arrow points to this tag.

Report Title	Date	Tag	Actual Tag
Regulating the financial sustainability of higher education providers in England	9 Mar 2022	REPORT	Education, training and skills
Employment support: The Kickstart Scheme	26 Nov 2021	REPORT	Business and enterprise
Financial sustainability of schools in England	25 Nov 2021	REPORT	Education, training and skills
School funding in England	1 Jul 2021	REPORT	Education, training and skills
Guide to the education sector annual reports and accounts 2019-20	11 May 2021	OVERVIEW	Education, training and skills
Support for children's education during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic	17 Mar 2021	REPORT	Commercial and regulation
Investigation into the free school meals voucher scheme	2 Dec 2020	REPORT	Commercial and regulation
Financial sustainability of colleges in England	5 Sep 2020	REPORT	Education, training and skills
Supporting disadvantaged families through free early education and childcare entitlements in England	13 Mar 2020	REPORT	Education, training and skills
Investigation into university technical colleges	30 Oct 2019	REPORT	Education, training and skills
Departmental Overview: Department for Education 2019	28 Oct 2019	OVERVIEW	Education, training and skills
Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in England	10 Sep 2019	REPORT	Education, training and skills

Search all our work on Education, training and skills

Some users became confused when they clicked on a particular topic and that topic tag was not shown on the card.

They soon realised that when they clicked onto the content, they could see the other tags but were still confused why the other tag appeared instead.

This is not a major issue as only a few participants mentioned it, but we should reconsider which tag should be shown on the card, rather than it just being an alphabetical order.

Participants were confused why 'Business and enterprise' is shown rather than 'Education, training and skills'.



Aggregated search pages

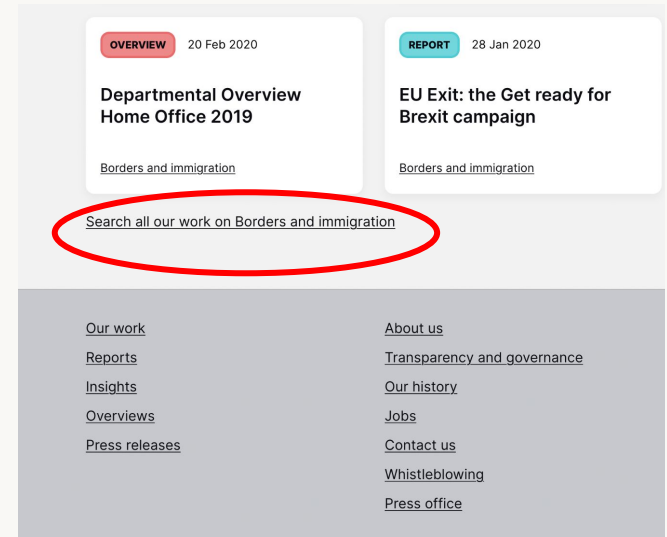


Some users had an unexpected result when they clicked on “Search all [type]”.

Some users expected more cards to load on the page instead of going onto the search page. They all said this was not a problem that the search page appeared as they could easily look through the list to find more relevant content.

However, they would have preferred if more cards had loaded as they preferred scanning the cards.

"My preference would be to show the next 12 cards that preceded these in publication order" – P6,
House of commons research clerk



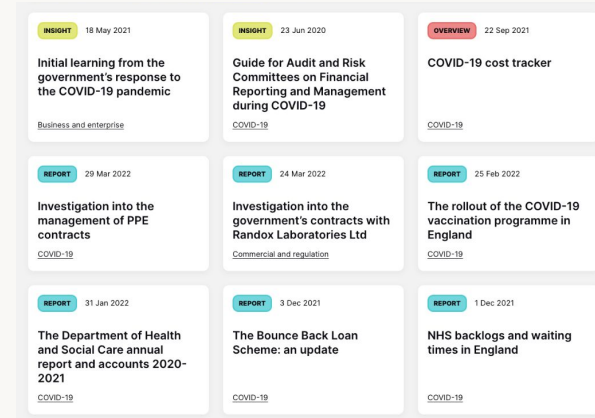
Taglines would help users understand the content before clicking onto it.

Users said it would be helpful to have a tagline underneath titles to explain what the content is about, rather than clicking into the page and reading the description.

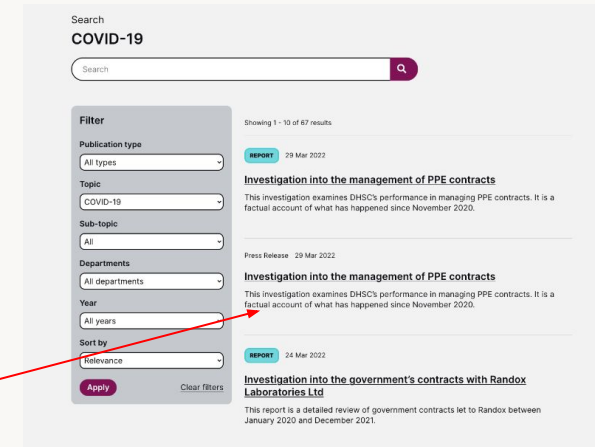
This is also why some users preferred the aggregated search page view because there was a tagline explaining what the content is about.

"I want to see the text to help me understand whether I want to click into it" – P7, *HMRC civil servant*

Participants pointed out that this tagline is useful for them to get a quick overview of what the content is about



Card design layout



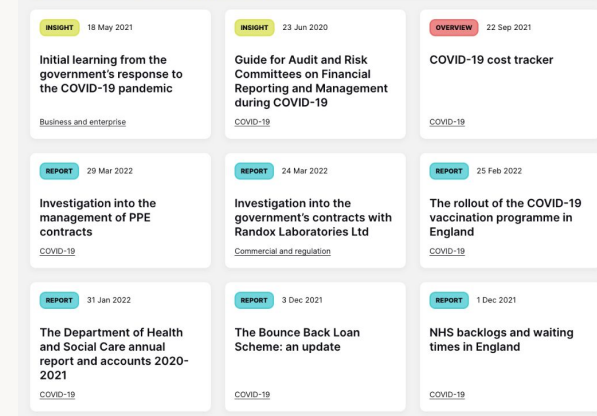
Aggregated search results page or “list view”

Filters are important to users, as they can quickly narrow down their search.

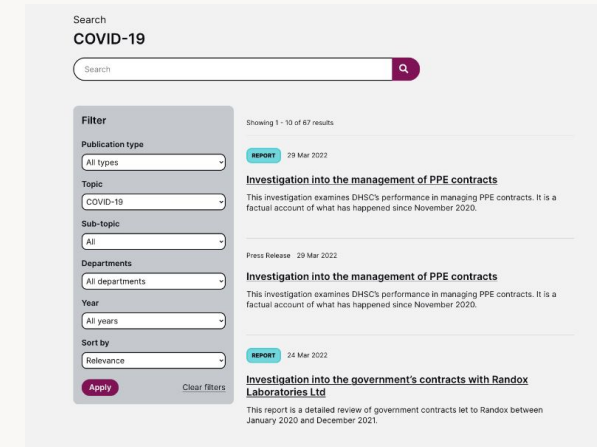
Another thing that one user pointed out was that they “would be able to use the filters on this page, the other page I would have to browse for what I'm looking for, here I don't have to do that”. - P8

Some even said they preferred lists because they find them easier to scan.

There are a lot of differing views on which page participants preferred to use, having them both available so users can choose between them is the best option.



Card design layout



Aggregated search results page or “list view”

Tags



All users found the coloured tags very useful as they could easily scan the page and see which products they were looking for.

"Yes it is useful because I usually look for reports, so I can easily find them now" - P3, *low income tax reform group leader*

Some users would have found it useful if **'Work in Progress'** and **'Press Releases'** had a colour tag as well.

Also stating if a WIP would be a report, overview or insight in the future.



Having the sub content type tags as coloured tags confused most users.

Most users found it confusing when the sub content type was the coloured tag instead of stating 'report, overview or insight'.

The colour coding for the tags is new so it's not known to users what the colours mean.

During a session, one participant used the search and became confused. She thought she had done something wrong when searching for filtered reports.

“I thought I'd done something wrong when I saw the tags, I expected them to say 'Reports'” - P8

The screenshot shows a search results interface. On the left is a 'Filter' sidebar with dropdown menus for 'Publication type' (set to 'Report'), 'Topic' (set to 'All'), 'Sub-topic' (set to 'All'), 'Departments' (set to 'All departments'), 'Year' (set to 'All years'), and 'Sort by' (set to 'Relevance'). There are 'Apply' and 'Clear filters' buttons at the bottom of the sidebar. The main content area shows a header 'Our reports' with a sub-header 'Reviews of public spending and how well government is delivering' and a link 'Browse all reports'. Below this, it says 'Showing 1 - 10 of 1995 results'. The first report is titled 'VALUE FOR MONEY 29 Mar 2022' with a sub-header 'Investigation into the management of PPE contracts'. The second report is titled 'VALUE FOR MONEY 28 Mar 2022' with a sub-header 'Managing reductions in Official Development Assistance spending'. A red arrow points from the 'Filter' sidebar to the 'VALUE FOR MONEY' tag on the second report title.

Participants said they didn't understand why it now says 'Value for money' instead of 'Report'

The page the user saw when searching for reports

"I don't understand why they would make it inconsistent" [referring to changing the name of the tags] - P8, *parliamentary user*



Explaining what the sub content types are would help users understand what they are reading.

Several users mentioned that they needed some context of what the sub content type tag meant.

“I thought they were quite different but they are the same colour, that is a bit confusing.” [when referring to the good practice guide and opinion]- P6, *House of commons research clerk*

Other users also mentioned that they did not understand the different insights or the difference between departmental and financial overview.



Insights

Search our insights

Through our audits we identify good practice and issues across government. We share our insights to make it easier for others to understand and apply the lessons from our work.

The screenshot shows a grid of nine content cards. Each card has a colored header indicating its type: yellow for 'OPINION' and green for 'GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE'. The cards are arranged in three rows and three columns. The top card is a featured article titled 'Taking on the challenge of public sector cyber security' with a date of 8 Mar 2022. Below it are three rows of smaller cards. Two red arrows point from the bottom of the page to the 'Cyber security: has the pandemic changed anything?' card and the 'Good practice in annual reporting' card.

Card Title	Tag	Date
Taking on the challenge of public sector cyber security	OPINION	8 Mar 2022
Step back and see the full picture: lessons learned in risk management	OPINION	1 Mar 2022
What makes a super model? Using innovative approaches to audit departments' models	OPINION	14 Feb 2022
Framework to review models	GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE	26 Jan 2022
Cyber security: has the pandemic changed anything?	OPINION	14 Jan 2022
Good practice in annual reporting	GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE	13 Jan 2022
Framework to review portfolios	GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE	12 Jan 2022
Delivering programmes at speed? What you need to consider	OPINION	7 Jan 2022
Effective governance and accountability is a mainstay for successful contract management	OPINION	15 Dec 2021
Commercial strategy needs to be joined up to achieve best value	OPINION	25 Nov 2021

Participants would like to know the differences between sub topic types

Content pages



Content pages were well received by all users.

All users liked the content pages overall. They liked the layout, particularly the way content was arranged on the page.

On the left side, the navigation to different sections was also useful to users because they could easily scan the page and find what they were looking for.

Participants liked this as they could jump to relevant sections in the page

Participants liked the 'background to the report' as it quickly summed up key points

Value for Money
Financial sustainability of schools in England
Date: 25 Nov 2021
Topics: Education, training and skills, Finance, Financial and services sustainability
Departments: Department for Education

On this page
[Background to the report](#)
[Areas of the report](#)
[Report conclusions](#)
[Downloads](#)
[Publication details](#)
[EISL 03044](#)

Background to the report
A financially sustainable school system is vital to the learning and development of the country's children. Schools are financially sustainable when they successfully provide a good-quality education to all their pupils within the income that they receive.
[Jump to downloads](#)
The NAO last reported on the financial sustainability of schools in 2016. We found that, overall, the financial position of primary schools had been relatively stable, however, there were signs of financial challenges in secondary schools. We concluded that the Department for Education's (the Department's) overall schools budget, as set out in the 2015 Spending Review, was projected in real terms but did not provide for funding per pupil to increase in line with inflation. Therefore, mainstream schools would need to find significant savings to counteract cost pressures. At that time, the Department was developing guidance and support to help schools improve their financial management, but had not completed work to help schools secure crucial procurement and workforce savings.

Scope of the report
This is the second of two reports which follow an aspects of our 2016 report. In July 2021, we reported on School funding in England, covering revenue funding for mainstream schools and cost pressures, and how funding is distributed to schools. Alongside the work on school funding, we have also examined the financial sustainability of mainstream schools in England. This report covers:

- schools' financial health (Part One); and
- whether the Department has supported schools effectively to improve their financial sustainability (Part Two).

Report conclusions
The financial health of the mainstream school system has held up well despite the funding and cost pressures that schools have faced in recent years, although the data do not yet reflect the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had. Most maintained schools and academy trusts are in surplus, but there are significant pressures on some maintained secondary schools. The concern in relation to the academy sector is that a sizeable minority of academy trusts are building up substantial reserves, meaning they are spending less than their annual income on their pupils. Ofsted inspection ratings suggest that mainstream schools have generally maintained educational quality, although there are indications that the steps schools are taking in response to financial pressures may adversely affect aspects of their provision.
Since we last reported in 2016, the Department has implemented a range of sensible programmes to support schools to improve their resource management and achieve savings, which have generally been well received by the sector. The programmes have added value and helped schools to achieve savings. We found, however, that the Department's data have not been sufficiently complete or reliable to assess whether the programmes are having the impact it intended or achieving value for money. The Department has started to improve its data but until it has better information, it cannot make fully informed decisions about the support it offers to schools and how continuously to improve it.

Downloads
[Report - Financial sustainability of schools in England \(pdf - 441 KB\)](#)
[Summary - Financial sustainability of schools in England \(pdf - 157 KB\)](#)
[EISL - Financial sustainability of schools in England \(epub-zip - 1 MB\)](#)

Publication details
ISBN: 978178043986 (Buy a hard copy of this report)
HC 862, 2021-22

Press release
[View press release \(25 Nov 2021\)](#)

More reports
[REPORT | 29 Mar 2022](#)
Investigation into the management of PPE contracts
COVID-19

[REPORT | 29 Mar 2022](#)
Managing reductions in Official Development Assistance spending
Cost reduction and affordability

[REPORT | 29 Mar 2022](#)
The Police Offlit Programme
Crime, justice and law



Participants found that some aspects of pages were more useful than others.

Participants also found the elements in the banner to be useful, particularly the topic tags. This allowed them to explore other related topics.

Participants did not find the right-side navigation box useful. They questioned why it needed to be there when you can access reports via the menu.

Report – Value for Money

Financial sustainability of schools in England

Date: 25 Nov 2021

Topics: [Education, training and skills](#), [Finance](#), [Financial and service sustainability](#)

Departments: [Department for Education](#)

Participants liked the elements in the banner. They explored topics and found 'departments' useful

Our reports

Reviews of public spending and how well government is delivering

[Browse all reports](#)

Participants did not find this box useful to have



Users were confused when they saw the 'more reports' section on the content pages.

Most participants thought that the additional reports listed were not related at all to the main content they were reading. Users said it would make sense if the reports that are recommended were related to the content on the page, perhaps ones with the similar tags.

“This is rubbish... I don't want to know about these [topics], I want to browse work relevant to what I'm reading.” - P5

More reports

REPORT 29 Mar 2022

Investigation into the management of PPE contracts

[COVID-19](#)

REPORT 28 Mar 2022

Managing reductions in Official Development Assistance spending

[Cost reduction and affordability](#)

REPORT 25 Mar 2022

The Police Uplift Programme

[Crime, justice and law](#)

“I don't understand why these [reports] were surfaced. Are they the most recent, most popular or what they [NAO] want people to pay attention to?” - P3



Search and filter



Some participants had unexpected search results because they didn't know how to use the search and filters on the website.

All participants used the search and filters during their research sessions. Some had good experiences and found what they were looking for immediately.

“It makes you want to use it, rather than fight for what you are looking for.” - P9

However, some users were confused by some of the search results they had. They all navigated to the ‘Search our work’ bar and typed in a phrase, but when the results showed, they were confused by them.

When they didn't receive the results they expected, participants tried typing in a different phrase or tried to play around with the filters and some even found that they had no results appear.



The main problem was that participants were not reading the prompt text when 'no results' appeared on the search page.

When some participants did receive no results, they kept searching different terms and fell down a rabbit hole of 'no results' because they were not clearing filters or searching for terms that were irrelevant to what they were looking for.

No results

Sorry, but we don't have any results for that search.

Try clearing the search term and search filters, by clicking 'Clear filter' at the bottom of the filter.

Then, to continue your search:

- use the search field above to search for a word or phrase and click the search icon
- select one or more of the filters on the left and then click the 'Apply' button

The search will default to searching everything on the website. If you want to narrow the search to our reports, insights and overviews then click 'All work' in the Publication type filter.

You can sort the search results by relevance, data or in alphabetical order, using the drop down at the bottom of the filter.



Our participants are using sophisticated search engine like Google for their everyday searches, so they expected the same for the NAO website.

Users are used to having sophisticated search engines to use everyday, so when they looked at the NAO search results they were disappointed that the content they were looking for was not higher up on the search results.

This is not a significant problem because we observed that most users were able to find what they were looking for with the current search once they knew how to search properly, and how to use filters to refine their search.



For example, P6 searched for ‘Transport’ and he was unsure why BEIS content was appearing first. Once he noticed that there was a department filter, he had much better search results.

Search - Our Work

Transport

transport



Filter

Publication type

All work

Topic

All

Sub-topic

All

Departments

All departments

Year

All years

Sort by

Relevance

Apply

[Clear filters](#)

Showing 1 - 10 of 398 results

Work In Progress Autumn 2022

Decarbonising the power sector

This report will examine how BEIS is set up to achieve power sector decarbonisation while maintaining security of electricity supply.

Work In Progress Summer 2022

Measuring and reporting public sector greenhouse gas emissions

This study will examine how the public sector measures and reports on carbon emissions.

VALUE FOR MONEY 11 Oct 2016

Investigation: The Department for Transport's funding of the Garden Bridge

The Department for Transport agreed to make a £30m grant towards construction of the Garden Bridge despite its concerns over value for money. The NAO's review does not assess the value for money of the project as a whole.

VALUE FOR MONEY 18 Jul 2018

Implementing the UK's Exit from the European Union: Department for Transport

Provides information on how the Department for Transport is organising itself to support a successful exit from the EU.

VALUE FOR MONEY 25 Oct 2012

Funding for local transport: an overview

As the funding and provision of transport decentralises, this report gives an overview of the landscape and highlights issues and risks.



For most users, having 'most recent' as the default 'sort by' filter makes the most sense, as the most recent reports are the most relevant.

All users said that the most recent content is always the most relevant to them.

During the research sessions, participants used the search and found their results were irrelevant, but when they changed the 'sort by' filter to 'most recent', they had much better results.



Most participants found the filters useful to narrow their searches

Overall, participants found that all the filters were useful. When conducting searches, participants used the filters and found that their search results were accurate.

We asked directly about the department filter and most participants said that this filter is definitely useful to them because some participants' job role is solely related to one department.

“That’s a good one...” [when asked about the department filter] - P6

Filter

Publication type

All types

Topic

All

Sub-topic

All

Departments

All departments

Year

All years

Sort by

Relevance

Apply

[Clear filters](#)

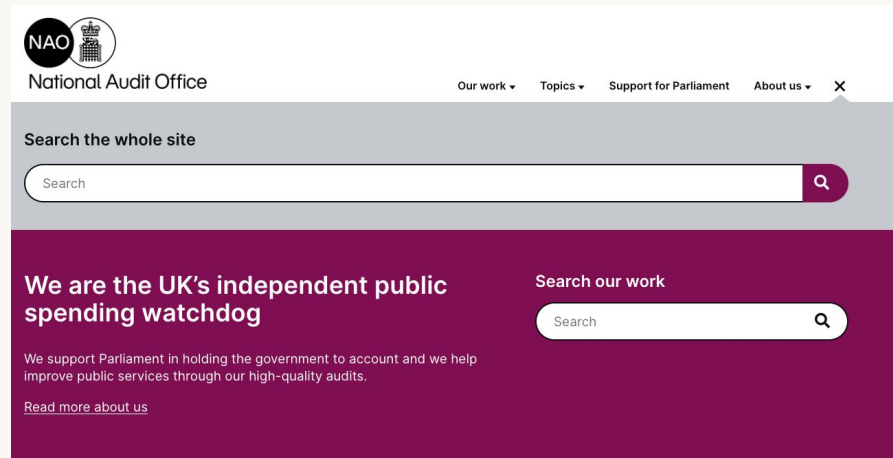


Most participants were confused by the doubling up of search bars.

Most users did not understand why there were two search bars on the website. After asking them why they think there might be two, some compared it to the current website, and some said the ‘search whole site’ makes it clear why it is there.

However, most did not understand *why* they would *need* to use both searches.

Three users said the same thing “why not just have one search which searches through everything?”



“I don’t want to be limited [in my search]” – P7

Other pages



Most participants said there should be relevant links on the ‘Support for Parliament’ page so people are informed.

Most users that visited this page said that having links to the PAC would help visitors to the site stay informed and understand the content further.

“The two are intimately connected.” – P3



On this page

[Resources for Parliament](#)

[Resources for MPs](#)

[How the NAO supports MPs in their work](#)

[Keep up to date](#)

[Contact us](#)

We place our skills at the service of Parliament as a whole, supporting in particular the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), other select committees from both Houses and individual MPs in their scrutiny of public spending and service delivery. The Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) and his staff are fully independent of government. The NAO does not assess the merits of government policies but assess the value for money with which bodies implement those policies.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) takes evidence from senior officials of the organisations under scrutiny on the basis of our reports which are laid in Parliament. PAC's evidence sessions draw on the full range of our work including value for money studies, investigations and reports on financial statements. PAC usually publishes its own report with recommendations, to which the Government must respond.

We also support other select committees' annual reviews of government departments and provide information and analysis to support inquiries on specific issues where we have expertise.

Resources for Parliament

The National Audit Office (NAO) works on behalf of Parliament and taxpayers to hold government to account for the use of public money and to help public services improve performance. In 2019-20 we published 42 value for money reports, certified 404 sets of accounts, completed 14 investigations and responded to 1,312 pieces of correspondence from MPs and the public. We supported 34 Committee of Public Accounts (PAC) evidence sessions, and provided other Select Committees with a wide range of briefings and other support.

Resources for MPs

Departmental Overviews are a summary of how government departments spent their money in the past year, their major areas of activity and performance, and the challenges they are likely to face in the coming year. They are based on the insights from our financial audit and value for money work.

Outputs for Select Committees: The NAO produces briefings and memorandums to support committees in their scrutiny work.

How the NAO supports MPs in their work

MPs and their staff can use the NAO to support their work by:

- Requesting a personal briefing on areas of the NAO's work that are of interest to your MP or their constituents
- Raising concerns about instances where value for money may be at risk, or general queries about public spending
- Signing up to receive embargoed copies of NAO reports on subjects of interest to your MP or their constituents
- Requesting advice on scrutinising departments' annual report and accounts

Keep up to date

[Sign-up to NAOdirect](#) to receive automatic notifications of reports on topics of interest.

[Reports](#) – browse reports or search by topic or department

[Work in progress](#) – summaries of our upcoming work

Read the NAO Blog and follow us through the social media links in the footer below.

Contact us

For enquiries please contact Adrian Jenner, Director of Parliamentary Relations at:

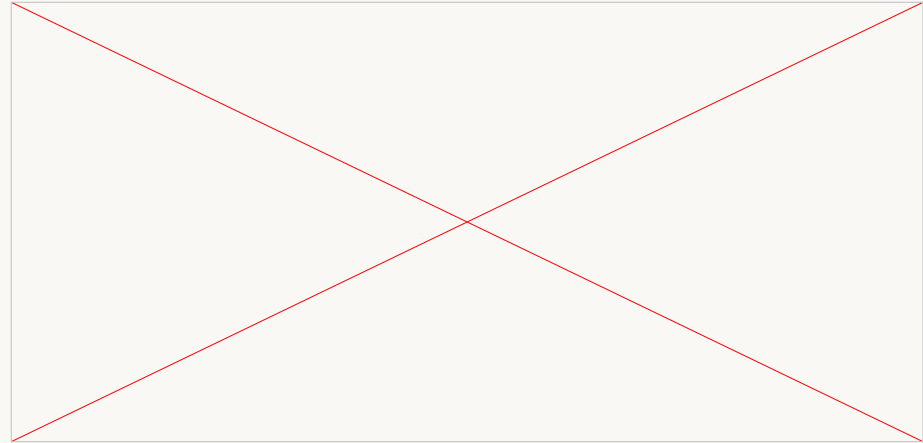
Dedicated Parliamentary phone line 020 7798 7665

parliament@nao.org.uk

Most participants understood the 'mega menu' and could easily find the content they needed.

Most of the participants found the menu easy to use and understandable.

They said the amount of content in the menu is not overwhelming, and has the right amount of topics or other menu items, as they would be able to explore the topics they would need to.



Although some participants struggled with the 'mega menu', thinking they clicked onto a different page.

Some of our participants became confused when they clicked onto the menu. They had thought that they had clicked onto a different page.

This happened with two participants, so this will need further research to see if this is also a major problem for other users.



Recommendations



Further testing is recommended to make sure users notice when and why no search results show.

When the ‘no results’ page appeared, **none of the participants read the content.** We would need to do more research on this to find out why they are not reading the prompt text.

Potential solutions to help solve this problem could be: **change the length of the content** –this might encourage users to read the text and to change the way they search. Or **highlight important parts** of the content so users can easily scan the content.

No results

Sorry, but we don't have any results for that search.

Try clearing the search term and search filters, by clicking 'Clear filter' at the bottom of the filter.

Then, to continue your search:

- use the search field above to search for a word or phrase and click the search icon
- select one or more of the filters on the left and then click the 'Apply' button

The search will default to searching everything on the website. If you want to narrow the search to our reports, insights and overviews then click 'All work' in the Publication type filter.

You can sort the search results by relevance, data or in alphabetical order, using the drop down at the bottom of the filter.



Show users that filters are in use.

Some users faced the problem of not clearing the filters when making a new search, so they were not able to get search results. They did not realise that they had filters on. **We would need to find a way to make it more obvious to users that the filters are being used.**

One potential solution could be to show on the UI that the filters are active.



The image shows a grey filter panel with the following elements:

- Filter** (Section Header)
- Publication type**: A dropdown menu with "Report" selected.
- Topic**: A dropdown menu with "Crime, justice and law" selected.
- Sub-topic**: A dropdown menu with "All" selected.
- Departments**: A dropdown menu with "Ministry of Justice" selected.
- Year**: A dropdown menu with "2021" selected.
- Sort by**: A dropdown menu with "Relevance" selected.
- Apply**: A purple button.
- Clear filters**: A text link.

It might help users if we highlight which filters are in use



Change the 'Sort by' filter default from 'Relevance' to 'Most recent'.

All users agreed that the most recent content is always the most relevant to them. When participants changed the 'sort by' filter to 'most recent', they found much better results.

So we should change this default from 'relevance' to 'most recent'.

Filter

Publication type
All types ▾

Topic
All ▾

Sub-topic
All ▾

Departments
All departments ▾

Year
All years ▾

Sort by
Most recent ▾

Apply [Clear filters](#)



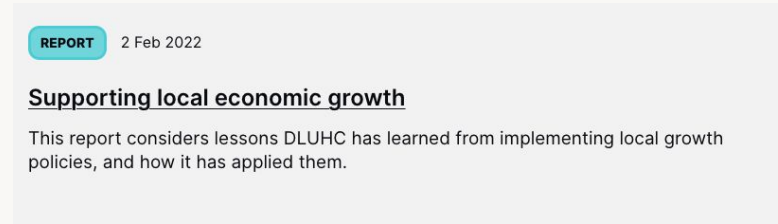
Show taglines underneath titles on cards.

Users said it would be helpful to have a tagline underneath titles to explain what the content is about, rather than clicking into the page and reading the description.

This could be easily done as the aggregated search page already does this.



Card (taken from topic page)



Search result (from aggregated search results page)



Order tags on card by relevance instead of alphabetically.

Users said that the tag that appeared on the card was clearly not the one that was the most important.

So we need to change how tags appear with content and change the ordering from alphabetical to relevance.



Card (taken from commercial and regulation topic page)



Include colour tags for work in progress and press releases.

Users said it would have been useful if these two types had colour coding as well because they are widely used and people would be able to quickly scan for them on the page.

Work In Progress Summer 2022

Managing central government property

This report will consider how well placed the Cabinet Office is to oversee and manage central government property effectively.

Press Release 10 Feb 2022

Investigation into the implementation of IR35 tax reforms

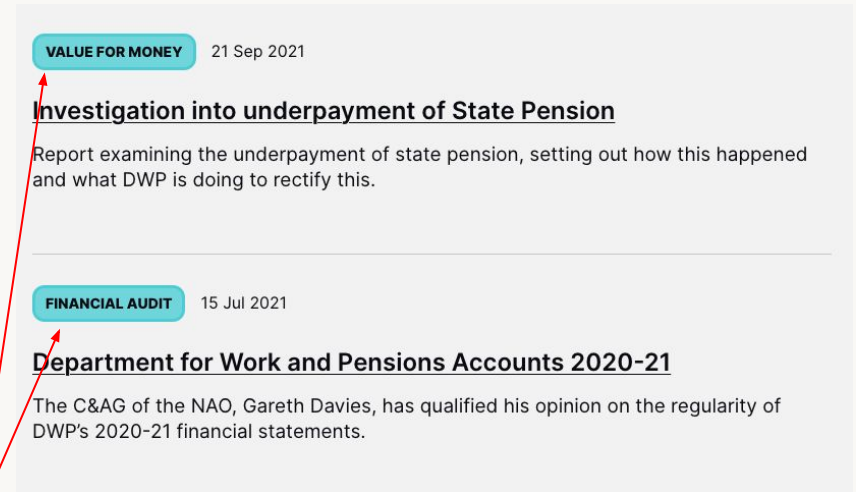
This investigation sets out how HMRC introduced the 2017 IR35 reforms, and what lessons it has learned and taken forward.

Work in progress and
Press release do not have
colour tags



Keep colour tags as the main content types.

The colour coding for the tags is new so it's not known to users what the colours mean, so we should just keep the tags as 'Reports', 'Overviews' or 'Insights' to keep consistency and not to confuse users when they are searching for content.



VALUE FOR MONEY 21 Sep 2021

Investigation into underpayment of State Pension

Report examining the underpayment of state pension, setting out how this happened and what DWP is doing to rectify this.

FINANCIAL AUDIT 15 Jul 2021

Department for Work and Pensions Accounts 2020-21

The C&AG of the NAO, Gareth Davies, has qualified his opinion on the regularity of DWP's 2020-21 financial statements.

Users don't know that these are reports, so we should keep it simple.



Explain what sub content types to users on the content pages.

Several users mentioned that they needed some context of what the sub content type meant.

One potential solution is to include an explanation of the content on the page. This would help the user understand the differences between the sub content types.



Conduct further research on the navigation box to see if it's useful.

Participants did not find the right side navigation box useful. They questioned why it needed to be there when you can access reports via the menu.

We could do further research on this to see if this box is used by users or not. We could tag the link through analytics and see if it's used once the site is live. We should not get rid of it just now as we only spoke to 9 users.

Our reports

Reviews of public spending and how well government is delivering

[Browse all reports](#)



Make additional content relevant to the main content on the page.

Most participants expressed that the content below (e.g. ‘**More reports**’ or ‘**More insights**’) was not related at all to the content they were reading. Users said it would make sense if the content that is recommended were related to the content on the page, perhaps ones with the similar tags, instead of surfacing the most recent content.

More reports

REPORT 29 Mar 2022

Investigation into the management of PPE contracts

[COVID-19](#)

REPORT 28 Mar 2022

Managing reductions in Official Development Assistance spending

[Cost reduction and affordability](#)

REPORT 25 Mar 2022

The Police Uplift Programme

[Crime, justice and law](#)

More insights

INSIGHT 1 Mar 2022

Step back and see the full picture: lessons learned in risk management

[Financial management](#)

INSIGHT 14 Feb 2022

What makes a super model? Using innovative approaches to audit departments' models

[Data analysis](#)

INSIGHT 26 Jan 2022

Framework to review models

[Data analysis](#)



Thanks!