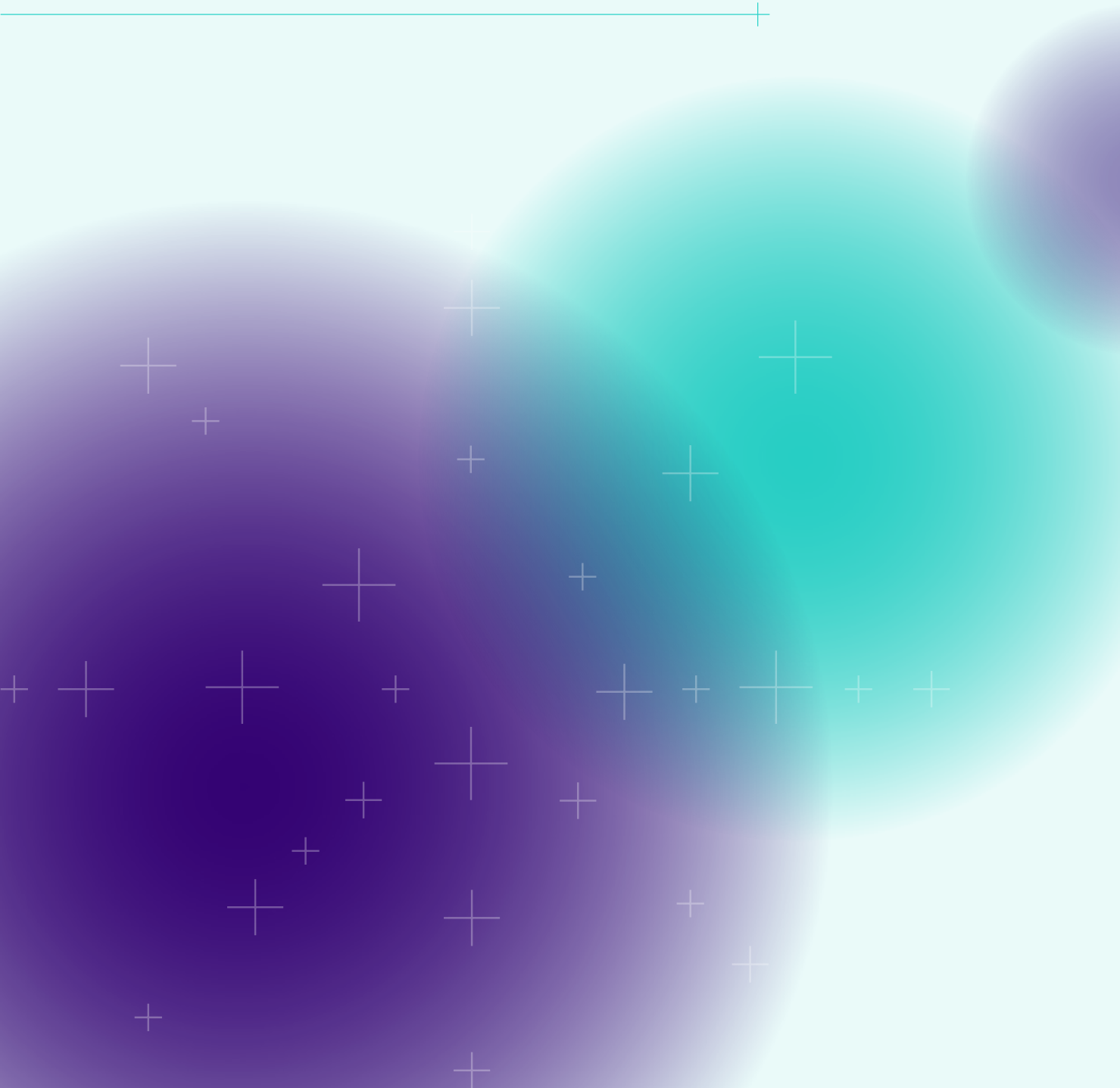


Annual Report 2023



Company information

Directors	Lord Jamie Lindsay Matthew Gantley Professor Michael Mainelli Georgia Alsop Jeffrey Ruddle Lorraine Turner Sarah Veale CBE Dr Jeffrey Llewellyn Professor Adrian Charles Newland CBE Philip Rycroft Paul Greenwood (appointed 19 October 2021, retired 31 March 2023)
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Registered number	03076190
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Registered office	2 Pine Trees Chertsey Lane Staines-upon-Thames Middlesex TW18 3HR
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Independent auditors	Feltons 1 The Green Richmond Surrey TW9 1PL
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UKAS values



Professionalism

We recognise and promote the competency and expertise that enables us to support each other and provide an outstanding service to our colleagues, stakeholders and customers.



Respect

We value diversity and aim to be inclusive in our actions, creating an environment where everyone feels safe, secure and valued.



Integrity

We work with honesty and impartiality and are consistent in the approach we take across all our activities, encouraging each other to be the best we can be.



Dedication

We are dependable and determined to ensure accreditation is used to underpin the quality and safety of products and services that we all rely upon.



Excellence

We operate with distinction and agility, focusing on continual improvement and innovation, driven by a desire to exceed expectations.

Chairman's statement

by Lord Lindsay, UKAS Chairman

After the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent recovery brought over the previous two years, for UKAS the 2022/23 financial year has been one of consolidation and of investment in people and systems.



Even with the ongoing economic uncertainty, UKAS has achieved good operational and financial performance.

Investment has been UKAS's watchword this year. To maximise technical capabilities, UKAS has continued to strengthen operational teams and external assessment resources. We have broadened our sector engagement through appointing new Accreditation Specialists in important areas such as energy, environment and sustainability, digital and the built environment. We have also made major investments in operational tools, in particular our new customer and assessor portals.

Increased capacity enables UKAS to respond better to market and public policy needs. UKAS continues to develop its services in the forensic science area where the regulator is moving from a voluntary to a statutory code that requires the accreditation of all forensic science service providers. This is a major area of growth where UKAS is increasing its resource to meet demand against a complex and fast-moving background. UKAS has similarly stepped up its work in the healthcare, environment, food and agriculture, construction and digital areas.

Chairman's statement

UKAS has engaged extensively with government, even during the political upheaval of the autumn of 2022. We have worked with ministers and officials on trade and mutual recognition agreement negotiations and product safety and better regulation policies.

UKAS has introduced a comprehensive programme of work that takes on and puts into practice the lessons learned from the Grenfell Tower tragedy, from the proceedings to this point of the subsequent public inquiry and from our own investigations. The workstreams of "Programme PACE" target the rigour of UKAS's technical work as well as its technical excellence. Delivery of PACE started in 2022 and continues through 2023, further strengthening operational performance. It is through UKAS's stakeholder outreach that we understand how accreditation can best serve market needs. UKAS continues to broaden its engagement, with Make UK becoming the 22nd UKAS member and new members of the Policy Advisory Forum.

Every organisation is only as strong and resilient as its culture and its people and I thank all members of the UKAS team for their continued dedication and commitment. Without their efforts UKAS could not achieve the level of performance and impact we see this and every year.

UKAS has a commitment to act in the public interest. This year we have supported this commitment through a new environmental, social and governance policy. This includes a target to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, to embed a culture of belonging as part of our equity, diversity and inclusion initiative and to foster an ethical corporate environment.

Considering the past year, I see that UKAS has successfully consolidated its position through forward-looking investment, both in people and in operational tools. This has increased the sustainability of the organisation as it builds for the future. UKAS is in good shape to continue to deliver accreditation services for the UK and hence serve its purpose as National Accreditation Body.



“ A target to reach carbon neutrality by 2030, to embed a culture of belonging as part of our equity, diversity and inclusion initiative and to foster an ethical corporate environment. ”

Chief Executive's report



by Matt Gantley, UKAS CEO

In recent years, the UK's business landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation and the pace of change has been nothing short of extraordinary, with technological advancements, economic fluctuations, trade disruptions, accelerating climate change and shifting consumer behaviours reshaping industries and markets. These challenges are not exclusive to the UK and the solutions must equally be realised on a regional and global scale.



The opportunity for standards and accredited conformity assessment to enable those solutions has never been greater. International good practice standards and the assurance that those standards have been met, evaluated by competent and impartial bodies in a way that is globally recognised, all underpinned by science and sound measurement, can bring trust and confidence to supply chains, to cross-border trade and to governments when they seek to regulate in smarter ways.

In the field of accreditation, there is an opportunity to unlock the potential of the international mutual recognition agreements – you will see more detail later in this report in an article by Pedro Alves from IQNET. Mutual recognition of conformity assessment results can help to reduce unnecessary duplicative evaluation of products and services. This seemingly technical step in reducing trade barriers can have a powerful impact on business competitiveness and help to grow economies.

Regarding the global response to the climate emergency, we see a strong role for the national quality infrastructure of regulation, measurement, standards, and accredited conformity assessment in enabling consistency, confidence and clarity.

Chief Executive's report

There are now so many differing net zero solutions in the market that scalability and transparency are lost, and businesses cannot make reliable investment decisions. UKAS is stepping up our efforts with our national quality infrastructure partners to lay out a clear role for standards and accreditation in supporting the mainstreaming of net zero pathways.

As our Chair has noted, despite a challenging context, UKAS recorded a successful year in 2022/23. We reached the milestone of 300 staff and have since pushed on to 330. As we have grown, we have invested in the quality of our support systems as well as our operations – including our talent development, recruitment, and employee engagement functions.

Echoing the words of our Chair, I offer my personal thanks to the entire UKAS team, both staff and external resources, for their ongoing dedication and hard work. UKAS staff face many demands in their daily work, and they meet them with professionalism, respect, integrity, dedication and excellence, in line with our values.

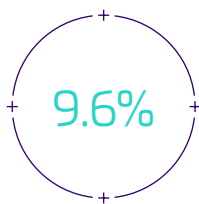
The whole UKAS Executive is proud to support the rest of the team. Together, we seek to achieve our vision to be the world's foremost accreditation body, recognised and respected for the development and delivery of accreditation services for the benefit of society now and in the future.

Financial performance

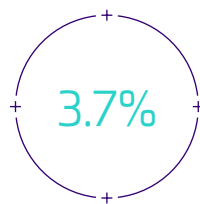
UKAS's financial performance in 2022/23 remained strong. Turnover was £36,756,186, up nearly 9.6% from £33,527,151 in 2021/22. Greater investment in technical resources naturally led to a temporary dip in productivity as we expanded our assessment team in anticipation of greater demand for accreditation. We also held pricing levels stable for two years which meant profitability dropped to £1,376,876 from £2,248,654 in the previous year.

The profit margin of 3.7% is nevertheless within the target range for UKAS to maintain level of reserves so that it can weather market shocks, such as a pandemic, as well as invest in the required infrastructure that enable it to meet the evolving needs of our accreditation community.

UKAS's financial performance is based upon the delivery of 32,516 assessment days, compared to 31,114 days in the previous year. This rise was mainly due to the planned catch up in the healthcare sector, which was a legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic. Administrative expenses of £13,064,200 dropped slightly from £13,145,847 in 2021/22, reflecting increased operational efficiencies.



Increase in turnover
from 2021/22



Profit margin



Chief Executive's report



People

UKAS's people are at the heart of our organisation. UKAS cannot deliver its purpose to provide the national accreditation service without technically excellent operational employees and without the support and outreach teams that enable the delivery of our service and demonstrate the relevance of UKAS in the market.

Resourcing remains one of our greatest challenges and we have therefore strengthened our HR team working on recruitment, onboarding and induction. We have appointed two Talent Acquisition Managers to put greater focus on growing our technical resources, both for internal operations and external contracted resources. We have also strengthened our teams working on market outreach. This includes completing the cohort of Accreditation Specialists in specific sectors, such as energy, environment and sustainability, the built environment and digital, as well as growing the External Affairs and Marketing teams. Additionally, we have introduced a new team of experienced resources to focus on training and development within Operations.

We support our colleagues throughout their employment, and this has an impact on our high retention rates. We are committed to fostering a culture of belonging at UKAS where everyone feels welcomed, understood,

included, supported and connected. We recognise that everyone brings a unique perspective, skill set and background to our team and that by embracing and celebrating our differences, we drive innovation, creativity and excellence.

In 2022 we published our equity, diversity and inclusion commitment and since then we have run belonging workshops for leaders, managers and teams across the organisation. In addition, we have created an employee resource group to help foster our culture of belonging and inclusivity as well as special support groups, for example, a menopause support group and a mental health first aid support group.

We are proud that employee engagement and morale continues to improve at UKAS. The results of our last employee engagement survey show morale across the organisation to be at 78%. Our engagement surveys tell us that employees feel they understand how their performance affects their colleagues; believe line managers are approachable and helpful and trust them to be open and honest; colleagues are committed to doing good quality work and are happy to support colleagues with their development.

Risk management and business resilience

2022/23 saw major progress within the key risks identified and managed through our Risk Register. We have seen the end of the global COVID-19 pandemic and business returning to pre-pandemic practices resulting in the removal of this specific risk from the register (although we continue to monitor the impact that similar events could have). UKAS came through the pandemic in good shape, continuing to provide a valuable service to our customers, and we are confident that, from our experiences over the past three years, we shall be able to effectively manage events of a similar nature in the future.

Chief Executive's report

The UK's exit from the European Union continues to provide challenges, and therefore related risks continue to be included within the register. These are generally connected to the recognition of UKAS-accredited services by national authorities of EU Member States, and the confusion that this can have within voluntary conformity assessment, where UKAS accreditation remains technically equivalent to EU-based Accreditation Bodies.

The continued recognition of the EU's CE marking on products being placed on the Great Britain markets may impact UK Approved Bodies and has the potential for a reduction in the number of accreditations within this regulated area. UKAS is working with both government and Approved Bodies to manage the risk that this presents.

New and/or revised risks were also introduced to the Risk Register during this period, including the reputational risk of UKAS customers not adhering to international sanctions, the increased threat posed by cyber-attacks (either against UKAS or against our customers), and the potential risk of disruptors or alternatives to accreditation entering the UK marketplace. In addition, UKAS continues to act upon lessons learned from significant events, such as the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the ensuing Inquiry, to ensure the service that we provide can continue to provide public confidence.

Strategic investment

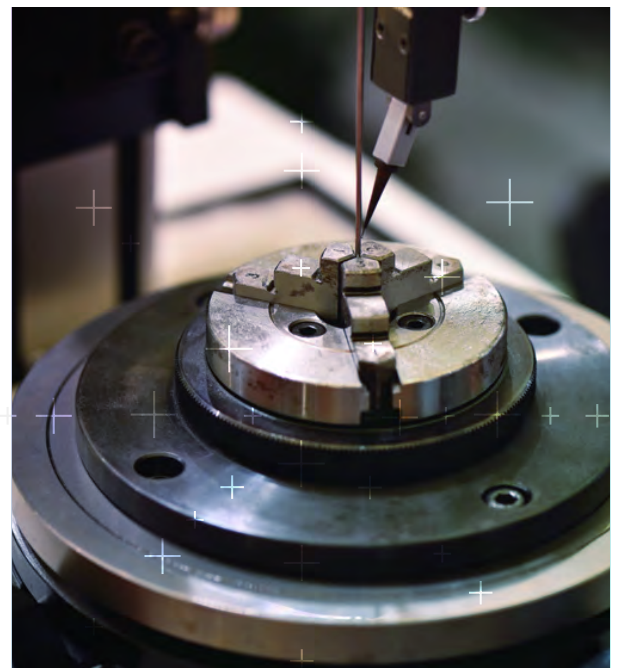
In line with our Strategic Development Plan, we have continued to invest to ensure that UKAS and the accreditation we provide remains fit for purpose in an ever-changing world. We have recently launched our customer and assessment portals, enabling customers to 'self-serve' information regarding their activities with UKAS and streamlining the management of non-conformities identified during assessments. We have continued to evolve our UKAS CertCheck system, providing

greater analytics, and reporting for our customers and enabling UKAS to report fully on UK-based accredited certification for the annual ISO Survey.

In addition, we have enhanced our in-house data analysis capabilities through investment in PowerBI and the recruitment of two dedicated business analysts. These initiatives support the digital transformation of UKAS and our data as part of our strategy to ensure the continuing relevance and importance of accreditation.

Customers and stakeholders

UKAS continues to practice continual improvement through several mechanisms. Key among these are our customer satisfaction surveys which provide valuable feedback on our ongoing performance and the identification of areas where improvements could be made. These mechanisms have consistently demonstrated the expertise and value of our assessment teams with scores in the 'excellent' bracket, while indicating areas where additional effort has been required to address extreme challenges that some areas of our business have experienced.



Chief Executive's report

It is not enough that our services satisfy our customers; they must also be effective in meeting stakeholder demands and providing public confidence. To achieve this, it is important that we continue to seek the views of stakeholders and interested parties. We have therefore invested in an enhanced network of Technical Advisory Committees, either managed through UKAS or through relevant and credible external expert groups. This investment relates not only to an increased technical and sectoral reach of expertise, but also to the development of an internal governance secretariat to ensure that these committees operate effectively and achieve their set goals.

The two main surveys that we employ are our post-assessment survey, where we seek direct feedback from our customers on the performance of our assessment teams, and the wider customer satisfaction survey which examines how satisfied our customers are with our overall service over a 12-month period. Using the Net Promoter Score system, we can quantify the level of satisfaction and focus on improvements where the scores are indicating that action is required.

UKAS engages ever more broadly with our stakeholders through the UKAS members, through our Policy Advisory Forum and Council and through our Technical Advisory Committees – more can be seen in the piece from Richard Collin, External Affairs Director, later in the report.

This year we have continued to expand UKAS membership, with Make UK becoming the 22nd UKAS member early in 2023. We have developed our engagement with government, working closely with the Office for Product Safety and Standards within the Department for Business and Trade and across many other departments, regulators and agencies. We have increased engagement with the Scottish Government, for example on trade and better regulation policy.

We have also increased parliamentary and opposition party engagement, such as participation in All Party Parliamentary Groups and attendance at party conferences.

Technical excellence

UKAS aims to be the world's foremost accreditation body providing leadership to our international peers, who look to us for advice and guidance, and support to our customers and stakeholders through our focus on and reputation for technical excellence. This we maintain through the recruitment and development of our assessment staff. This year we have invested in dedicated resources to support the recruitment, onboarding, and induction of our operational teams, with an aim to ensure we bring the highest calibre staff to work at UKAS and enable them to thrive and develop during their career.

One area UKAS has been leading on over the last year, alongside our Commonwealth partners from the Australian accreditation bodies NATA and JASANZ, is in relation to the role of accreditation in digital trade. As part of this collaboration, UKAS has supported the production of a white paper by UN/CEFACT on Digital Product Conformity Certificate Exchange which outlines ways for the conformity assessment sector to support the future digitisation of trade. Further details can be found in the article from Brett Hyland, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, NATA, later in the report.

New service development

UKAS continues to be very active in the development of new areas of accreditation: we have received over 200 enquiries during the year, and nearly 50 underwent further work, matching the previous year.

Notable areas for development this year were the energy and sustainability sectors including net zero, healthcare and forensics.

Chief Executive's report

The Development Team participates in the IAF's sustainability working group and continues to develop accreditation for the validation and verification of Peatland Code programmes and certification for the Pastures for Life scheme; it has rolled out Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering (MPACE) to new healthcare areas under standard BS 70000, and it has supported the development of accreditation for fire scene investigation, collision investigation and cell site analysis to support the Forensic Science Regulator.

This year, we have increased the focus on the assurance of scheme integrity. The Development Team has become a centre of excellence for scheme review, developing and championing eLearning across UKAS operational teams.

More information on the development of new UKAS services appears later in this report.

Operational performance

In this financial year, UKAS's operational teams delivered a record number of assessment days, over 32,500. This brought 133 new grants of accreditation and 1,126 extensions to accredited scope. UKAS continues to grow its resources in line with demands in various sectors, with an increase of employees by 12.5% from 2021-2022 and the development of 27 trainee assessors during this year.

The desire for accredited quality and assurance in healthcare continues, with initiatives such as GIRFT ("Getting It Right First Time") at the forefront of the quality objectives in NHS England. In addition to this, developments such as the inclusion of "Point of Care" requirements in ISO 15189:2022 and a subsequent desire to hold accreditation in services such as Community Diagnostics Centres, has driven our need to build capacity in this area.

In forensics, the work continues with the Forensic Science Regulator to build

accreditation into the services the sector provides, particularly in support of the criminal justice system.

Confidence in the safety of our built environment is also a continued focus and we are busy developing our resources in our construction and engineering departments to match.

Toward the end of the year UKAS was sad to see the departure of our Operations Director, Paul Greenwood, but we were equally delighted to welcome Lynsey Poyner to UKAS as his replacement. Lynsey has reflected on her start in UKAS and on the breadth of our accredited work in an article later in this report.

Outlook

A year ago, I reported that UKAS was well-placed to move successfully through choppy economic waters. Those waters ended up being choppier than expected, but my view is unchanged. This past year of consolidation and investment puts us in a good place for the future.

We have redoubled our focus on the technical excellence and rigour of our assessments and have an operational model that flexes and grows as demand rises. We have solid foundations in our corporate structures and the support mechanisms for our operational teams. We have excellent stakeholder outreach and buy-in and are continually expanding our market engagement, helping us to maintain our relevance.

This report shows how accreditation brings value to society in many ways: through promoting economic growth, through responding to new business areas, through supporting regulation, promoting public safety and enabling the net zero transition; and through the sheer breadth of our operations. This is how we seek to fulfil our mission: to build a world of trust and confidence in the products and services we all rely on.

Introduction



by Mark Bohun, Commercial Director

Welcome to the UKAS Annual Report for 2023, which this year is centred around the multitude of ways accreditation delivers value to society at large. Different aspects of this theme are explored in a wide range of informative and insightful contributions from both the UKAS Executive and stakeholders.

The Chair, CEO and Financial Director provide a review of the year's challenges, opportunities, achievements, investments and performance. Some of the key programmes initiated and schemes launched, including those in the sustainability, healthcare and forensic science arenas, are outlined by the Development Team. Following its introduction last year, there's an update on the global reach and user-led enhancements incorporated into UKAS's CertCheck service. The report also highlights how accreditation is evolving to continue providing the ideal framework for demonstrating competence and generating confidence for many years to come.

Regular, meaningful and effective engagement with both stakeholders and customers remains a vital part of UKAS's operations and success. Both the Chair of the UKAS Policy Advisory Forum and the External Affairs Director discuss the benefits of building strong relationships with a broad spectrum of stakeholders to accurately reflect perspectives, underpin impartiality and raise accreditation's profile. Our new Operations Director summarises the steps UKAS has taken to meet increasing customer demands, whilst the focus on customer feedback is further emphasised by the Technical Quality and Risk Group, which has introduced an additional customer satisfaction metric to its annual survey.

Managing sustainability, emerging technologies and global trade are just some of the issues facing organisations today and feature strongly in this year's report. The scale of the net zero challenge and potential for accreditation (as part of the UK's National Quality Infrastructure) in establishing net zero pathways is discussed with Positive Momentum. On the technology front, NATA examines the potential impact of the proposed Digital Product Conformity Certificate Exchange, which aims to resolve the authenticity and validity issues associated with current paper-based systems. Both the IQNET Association and ECIPE think tank emphasise the integral value of accreditation's mutual recognition agreements, particularly in facilitating trade and building reliable global supply chains.

On the regulatory side, the Office for Product Safety and Standards is interviewed about accreditation's effectiveness in enabling product safety and supporting the delivery of risk-based and proportionate legislation. This complements the Food Standards Agency's article, which illustrates the crucial part that accreditation plays in ensuring the safety and authenticity of food.

I would like to thank all authors for their thought-provoking contributions and hope you find this year's report an interesting overview of the invaluable role accreditation has in all aspects of our daily lives.

Performance at a glance

Financial summary

	2023 £m	2022 £m
Revenue	36.7	33.5
Cost of sales	(22.5)	(17.7)
Gross profit	14.2	15.8
Administrative expenses	(13.1)	(13.1)
Operating profit	1.1	2.7
Profit after taxation	1.4	2.2

Year highlights



assessment days delivered



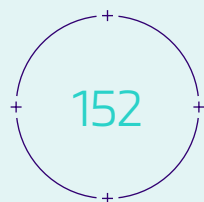
accreditations held



accredited customers



extensions to scope grants



applications for accreditation



delegates trained



followers across LinkedIn and Twitter



accreditation development projects

Policy Advisory Forum and Council Chair's statement



by Caroline Hamilton, Chair of UKAS Policy Advisory Forum and Council

I was delighted to be elected as the new Chair of the UKAS Policy Advisory Forum and Policy Advisory Council in September 2022, taking up the reins from Ron Gainsford following his retirement.

As the government-appointed National Accreditation Body, UKAS has a duty to act in the public interest. The relationship between UKAS and its stakeholders is key to ensuring that its activities benefit society, support government priorities and provide trust and confidence in the products and services we all rely upon.

The Policy Advisory Forum and Council are fundamental to the good governance of UKAS and play a vital role in ensuring the views and concerns of UKAS's stakeholders are properly considered in all UKAS activities and are reflected in the organisation's strategic priorities.

The Policy Advisory Forum is made up of a broad range of UKAS's stakeholders and advises on UKAS's strategic priorities and any general policy issues. Appointed from the Forum, the Policy Advisory Council provides advice to UKAS on more detailed policy issues.

It's been another busy and productive year for the Forum and the Council. Key discussions and considerations have included how UKAS can support digitisation across the conformity assessment sector and challenges and opportunities for accreditation from legislation such as the Retained EU Law and Procurement Bills. The Forum and Council have also been instrumental in the successful development of UKAS's Environmental Social and Governance policy, as well as finalisation of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute of Export and International Trade.

This September we held the first in-person meeting of the Policy Advisory Forum in four years. At this meeting the Forum supported UKAS's annual strategic review by carrying out a horizon scan of risks and opportunities for UKAS, as well as hearing about UKAS's performance and developments in public policy in the Department for Business and Trade.

The PAC meeting was the last for the current Council and I thank all the members for their commitment over three years. I look forward to working with the new, slightly enlarged Council from 2024.

Although I have been a member of the Policy Advisory Forum for several years, my first year as Chair has enabled a much broader sight and understanding of the extent and breadth of UKAS's work. From its established presence in my own areas of engineering testing, inspection and certification, to its more recent work for the use of AI within healthcare, UKAS continues to grow and evolve as the UK's National Accreditation Body.

The next year promises to bring many more exciting opportunities for UKAS and I look forward to ensuring that the Policy Advisory Forum and Council continue to support UKAS, reflecting stakeholder perspectives and raising the profile of accreditation in areas such as trade policy, the government's new smarter regulation framework¹ and the continuing, fast-paced developments in emerging technologies.

¹Smarter Regulation to Grow the Economy
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

Bringing our values to society



by Jeff Ruddle, UKAS Strategic Development Director

UKAS's unique role as the National Accreditation Body requires us to serve the needs of the UK economy and society. The UKAS strategy enshrines how we address these needs through our purpose, vision and mission.

Our interfaces with partners and our operational work enable us to deliver outcomes that benefit all our stakeholders. Our purpose and mission set out our role to deliver the National Accreditation Service: we strive to bring trust and confidence for markets, government and consumers across the breadth of the UK, both within the constituent nations and for the country as a whole. The independence of accreditation and the expertise of our services create a platform to address societal needs. In our vision statement we recognise that we deliver accreditation "for the benefit of society now and in the future".

Under the stewardship of UK government through the Department for Business and Trade's Office for Product Safety and Standards, and underpinning national legislation and policy, UKAS accreditation is a foundational pillar of the UK's national quality infrastructure. UKAS, the British Standards Institution (as the National Standards Body) and the National Physical Laboratory (as the National Measurement Institute), along with government and other partners such as enforcement bodies, help to deliver the required quality, safety, performance and fitness for purpose of products and services within the UK. UKAS's strategy recognises our responsibility to society and places it at the heart of how UKAS operates. This can be observed in many of the sectors UKAS accredits within



today, such as helping to ensure the safety of the UK's drinking water supply, providing assurance on the 24/7 operations of hospital pathology laboratories whose work is essential to the National Health Service and in underpinning confidence in forensic science which is so vital to a modern criminal justice system.

However, what society needs confidence in tomorrow will be different to today, and the need for the assurance provided by accreditation does not stand still. UKAS must therefore be agile and adaptable. Part of UKAS's strategy is to ensure that we consider society's future accreditation needs and this is evidenced through our engagement with rapidly developing areas such as sustainability, AI and net zero.

In many areas where society demands confidence, both today and for the future, accreditation and UKAS are there, providing the assurance needed that conformity assessment bodies are operating competently and with independence and impartiality.

Everyday impact of accreditation



by Lynsey Poyner, UKAS Operations Director

As the newly appointed Operations Director, I am honoured to be part of UKAS and to have the opportunity to propel our operational performance in the pursuit of excellence.



What is evident in my early tenure with the organisation is the clear and committed drive from individual colleagues and their awareness of the collective contribution that this makes to UKAS's vision to be the world's foremost accreditation body, recognised and respected for the development and delivery of accreditation services for the benefit of society now and in the future.

“If accreditation is to remain the foundation that enables seamless supply chains and assures confidence of the products and services we procure – the customer journey in the pursuit of this must also be seamless.”

Everyday impact of accreditation

It is abundantly clear to me that the pathway to achievement of this vision is to ensure that the services we provide are efficient and meet the needs of customers and the wider society that we exist to serve. If accreditation is to remain the foundation that enables seamless supply chains and assures confidence of the products and services we procure, the customer journey in the pursuit of this must also be seamless. Focus must be placed on the customer experience and where we can collaborate with our stakeholders to ensure that we are responsive to their needs.

This is not a one size fits all approach. Last year's report outlined desires to use exemplars of methods from the pandemic to ensure an approach to assessment that satisfied both technical rigour and utilised the technological innovations that we find available to ourselves. UKAS will work to continue this trajectory; refining practices that bring together a global network of experts and peers that make options such as remote and blended assessments available. This is not just in response to a crisis but an efficacious tool that brings together a multitude of benefits for all involved. The necessity for on-site assessments will always prevail; but

understanding the value of disrupting the status quo and a constant evaluation of what is appropriate in each industry is key to remaining agile and adaptive to today's world.

As the value of accreditation is recognised and flourishes, so must UKAS. It is imperative that we endeavour to ensure all colleagues at all levels feel empowered and confident to deliver our services. Last year's report indicated a high level of growth within UKAS in the mission to meet these demands and this evolution continues. Focus will remain on building our skilled resources to meet demand, alongside a careful appraisal of the technical integrity of the induction process. This will ensure continuation of the quality of services all colleagues provide are in line with our strategic objectives – namely “to excel in areas of technical expertise and service”. When reflecting on the benefits of accreditation, I am drawn to the promotion of a learning culture; to never tire of the idea that continuous improvement is exactly that, continuous, and it is with this ethos I lead our operational teams.

With the strive for operational excellence at the heart of our activities here at UKAS, it is worth noting that our strength lies in the engagement between all disciplines within our organisation.

The natural breadth of the work of the Operations Team means that collaboration and understanding the input all the UKAS directors have in each other's missions will be of the upmost importance. It is with this vigour I look forward to working with my fellow directors to achieve our mission: to build a world of trust and confidence in the products and services accreditation underpins.



Metrics dashboard for operations

Number of accredited conformity assessment bodies by standard

Standard	2023	2022
ISO/IEC 17025 (testing laboratories)	1,170	1,188
ISO/IEC 17025 (calibration laboratories)	361	367
ISO/IEC 17020 (inspection bodies)	372	364
ISO 15189 (medical laboratories)	601	741
ISO/IEC 17021 (management system certification bodies)	113	110
ISO/IEC 17065 (product certification bodies)	153	136
ISO/IEC 17024 (personnel certification bodies)	37	28
ISO/IEC 17043 (proficiency testing providers)	34	35
ISO 17034 (reference material producers)	13	13
ISO 14065 (green house gas verifiers)	11	11
QSI (medical imaging services)	45	46
IQIPS (physiological services)	70	80
BS 70000 (medical physics and clinical engineering)	3	4

Number of new accreditations and extensions to scope granted

Standard	2023	2022
New CAB grants of accreditation	133	308
Extension to scope grants	1,126	1,141

Metrics dashboard for operations

Number of new conformity assessment body applications by standard

Standard	Amount
ISO/IEC 17025 (testing)	53
ISO 15189	28
ISO/IEC 17020	26
ISO/IEC 17025 (calibration)	13
ISO/IEC 17065	13
ISO/IEC 17021-1	7
QSI	4
IQIPS	3
ISO 17034	2
ISO 14065	2
BS 70000	1
Total	152

Number of extensions to scope applications by standard

Standard	Amount
ISO/IEC 17025 (testing)	594
ISO 15189	509
ISO/IEC 17065	100
ISO/IEC 17020	80
ISO/IEC 17021-1	55
ISO/IEC 17025 (calibration)	52
IQIPS	14
QSI	12
ISO 14065	4
ISO/IEC 17043	4
ISO/IEC 17024	3
Total	1,427

Number of assessment days delivered



surveillance
and reassessment



pre-and initial
assessment



extension
to scope



witnessed
assessments

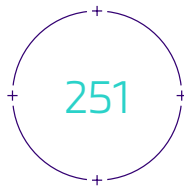
Number of assessors (broken down by role)



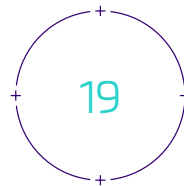
lead assessor



technical assessor



technical expert



lay assessor

Accreditation – is it future-proof?



by Lorraine Turner, Accreditation Director

Accreditation has been providing assurance to UK society for over 55 years. From its origins in metrology and calibration generating trust in the accuracy and traceability of measurements, accreditation now underpins trust in almost every aspect of everyday life.



It is probably one of the best kept secrets that sits behind the scenes, quietly delivering confidence in the food we eat, the products we buy and the services we use. Since starting with a single standard, UKAS is now recognised by government as the sole National Accreditation Body for over fifteen different standards (including testing, certification, inspection, medical diagnostics and validation and verification) and accredits over 3,000 organisations.

“Accreditation demonstrates competence across almost every industry sector and its application continues to grow.”

Accreditation – is it future-proof?

The requirements of the standards for accreditation define the attributes of a system that ensures competence, impartiality and reliable outcomes. The rigour of the process may sometimes be perceived to be a burden for organisations that are required to gain and maintain accreditation. Undoubtedly there is effort involved in ensuring that staff are trained and aware of their responsibilities, that processes are effectively managed and monitored, that suitable resources are available, that suitable records are maintained, that clients' expectations are understood and met... the list goes on. But each of these activities play a vital part in ensuring risks are identified and mitigated and that outcomes can be trusted and that the process stands up to scrutiny.

With its increasing reach, it is not surprising that accreditation comes under the spotlight more frequently, especially if there has been an incident or quality failure. It is right to scrutinise the assurance process in this way and to understand what can and needs to be improved.

Accreditation demonstrates competence across almost every industry sector and its application continues to grow within established sectors such as food and farming, product assurance, construction, forensics and healthcare. But is there a limit to its relevance? With the advent of automation, AI and other technology is there a risk that accreditation could become obsolete, either because other assurance mechanisms might be used and/or because the standards might not seem applicable?

The evidence suggests otherwise as we have seen accreditation adapt to changing customer and end user expectations, and standards change from process-based to outcome-focused with a greater emphasis on risk-based principles.

One thing that has not changed is the use of technical experts drawn from the relevant industry to assess organisations by interpreting and applying the criteria for the sector and ensuring assessments are independent and impartial; this is our greatest strength.

UKAS continues to work hard to maintain and extend its pool of experts used to provide advice and conduct assessments. A refresh of our technical advisory committees across key sectors is ensuring that we have access to broader industry practices and trends, enabling understanding of how technology is impacting on existing activities as well as emerging fields. UKAS has continued to expand its operations into new areas such as biobanking, identity assurance and genomics which demonstrate that accreditation as an assurance tool is as strong as ever.

Looking to the future, UKAS is now embedded in activities to develop assurance to underpin the net zero transition and to ensure trust can be developed in the use of AI. Here we are working not only in the UK but also with international partners and stakeholders to support the development of frameworks that will provide mutually recognised and interoperable solutions. Fifty years ago, it would have been hard to imagine that accreditation would have evolved to the extent it has now. The tried and tested concepts remain unchanged, the fundamental pillars of standards and accreditation delivering competence and governance have much to offer to facilitate certainty in uncertain times.

Development update

2022/23 has been another very busy year for the Development Team, receiving over 200 enquiries from a diverse range of sources, with nearly 50 currently undergoing further development.

The Development Team has been devastated by the sudden death of Dr David Compton, Head of Development, in April 2023. His loss is profoundly felt by the team and throughout the whole of UKAS.

The sustainability and net zero sector continues to be a significant growth area. We have reviewed documents and draft schemes for sector initiatives and regularly engaged with government departments, private scheme owners, organisations for carbon markets and environmental/sustainability claims and the IAF's sustainability working group.

Several healthcare activities requiring accreditation have emerged, including local imaging, diagnostic and testing services provided by central Hospital Trusts in over 170 Community Diagnostic Centres across England. The accreditation of Medical Physics and Clinical Engineering (MPACE) under BS 70000 is now being extended to other services including nuclear medicine. UKAS is also supporting the NHS's "Getting it Right First Time" (GIRFT) initiative.

The forensic sector remains extremely busy with the accreditation of 55 Sexual Assault Referral Centres to ISO 15189 required by October 2025. Other projects are underway for the accreditation of fire scene investigation, collision investigation and cell site analysis.

The assurance of scheme integrity has become a key priority for the Development Team, with the creation of internal eLearning modules outlining scheme requirements and the scheme review process.

● Sustainability & net zero	37
● Data assurance	29
● Health and social care	12
● Forensics	11
● Food and farming	10
● Transport	8
● Built environment	7
● Environment	7
● Management systems	6
● Health and safety	5
● Human resources	2
● Various small voluntary schemes	72



Technical, Quality and Risk update

An increase in UKAS's overall size saw the Technical Quality & Risk Group similarly expand. The appointment of a second Technical Manager concentrating on internal policy and procedure allowed the existing Technical Manager to focus more on international activities and the regulated product safety area.

Administrative support also increased to provide greater resource in both dealing with customer feedback and seeking input on technical issues from our stakeholder groups.

Our Customer Satisfaction and Post-Assessment surveys continue to provide a valuable measure of overall performance. Although we found the Net Promotor Scores (NPS) extremely useful, the focus on customer brand loyalty over true satisfaction does not always present a full picture. By introducing a parallel CSAT (Customer Satisfaction) scoring system we are now able to more accurately understand overall satisfaction, allowing us to focus improvements more effectively.

Despite the challenges faced by certain sectors during the year, our overall satisfaction NPS score of 47 is considered 'very good', whilst indicating there are further improvements to be made. Customer satisfaction with the performance of our assessment teams in conducting their assessments is reflected in our post-assessment survey score of 82, considered 'excellent'.

+ 395

CSS responses received

+ 47

Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) Net Promoter Score (NPS)

+ 82

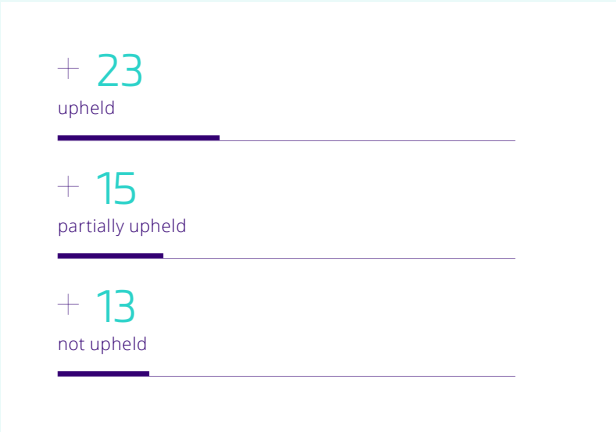
NPS score post-assessment surveys

+ 53

Number of unsolicited positive feedback received

Technical, Quality and Risk update

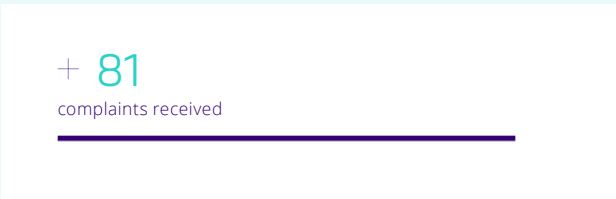
Number of complaints reviewed against UKAS



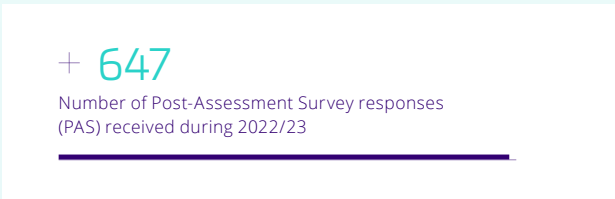
Breakdown of complaints raised against UKAS



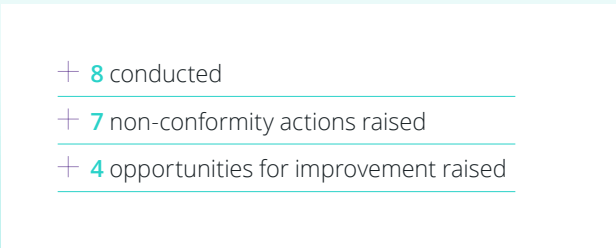
Number of complaints received about UKAS accredited conformity assessment bodies



Post Assessment Survey



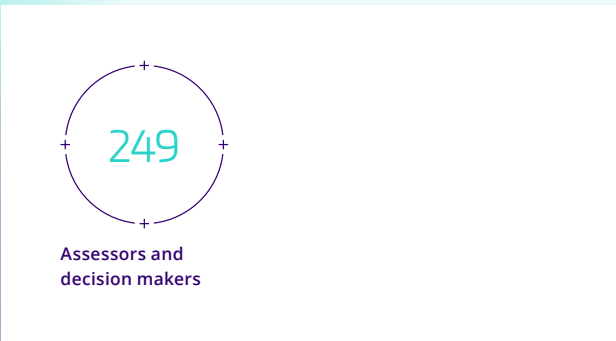
Number of internal audits



Customer satisfaction (CSAT scores)



Staff monitoring events completed

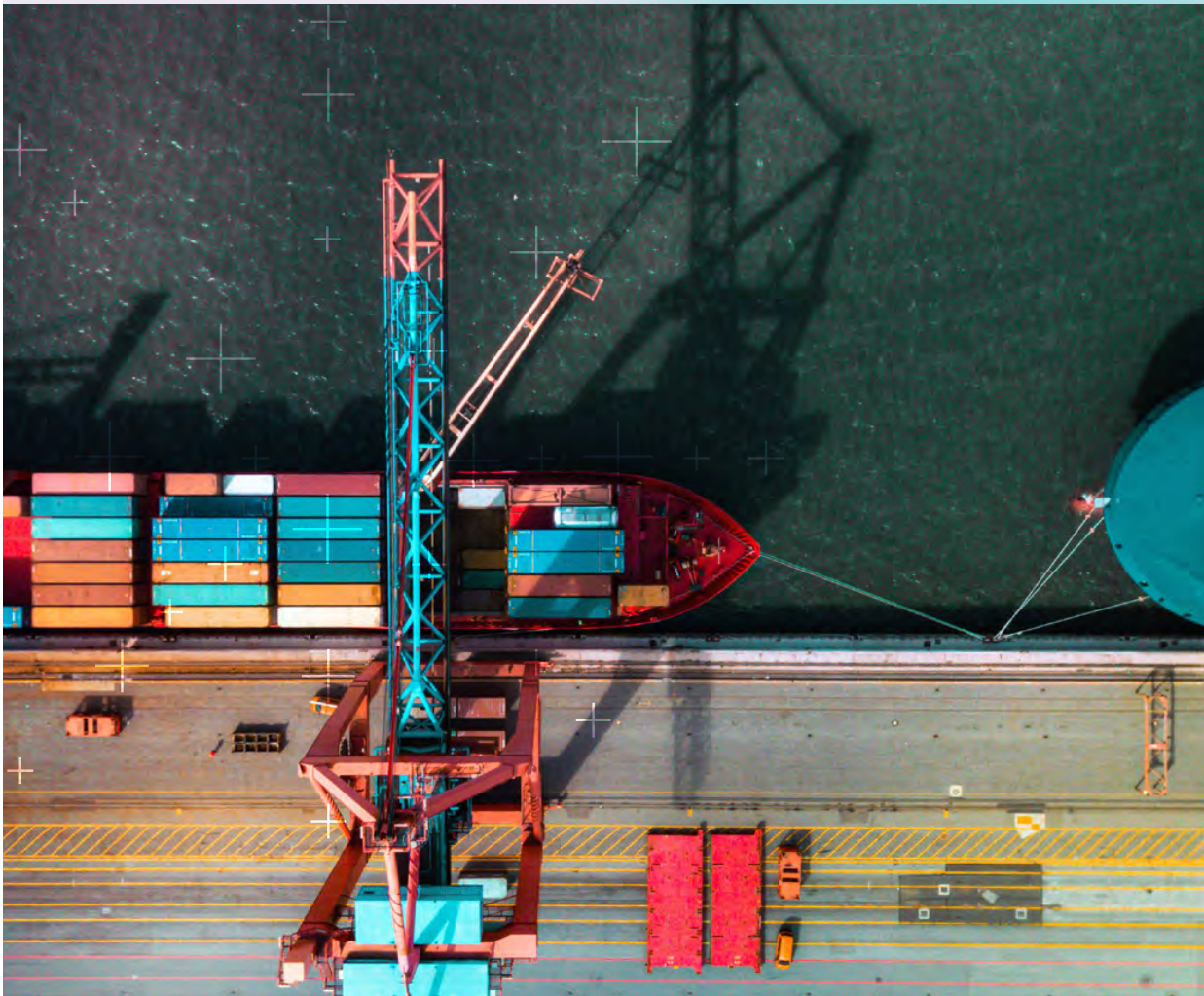


The importance of global mutual recognition of conformity assessment



by Pedro Castro Alves, Managing Director of IQNET Association

The late 20th century witnessed the consolidation of modern globalisation. Technological advancements, international trade liberalisation, supply chain integration and market-oriented reforms have been key contributors to the acceleration of globalisation and its impact on economies, cultures, politics and societies around the world.



The importance of global mutual recognition of conformity assessment

Understanding that fostering a culture of mutual recognition in conformity assessment would be essential to realise the benefits of a global marketplace, several leading certification bodies created the IQNET Association some thirty-five years ago. IQNET is based on agreements to recognise conformity assessment results between its members.

More extensive market recognition for conformity assessment results could only be achieved through cooperation frameworks with other relevant international players. The development of National Accreditation Bodies and the advent of international cooperation and harmonisation platforms, such as the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), played a pivotal role in the pursuit of effective and cohesive mutual recognition mechanisms.

As a global association of accreditation bodies, certification body associations (such as IQNET) and other organisations involved in conformity assessment activities, IAF aims to provide assurance that equivalent accredited certification bodies in other countries operate to the same standard as their own.

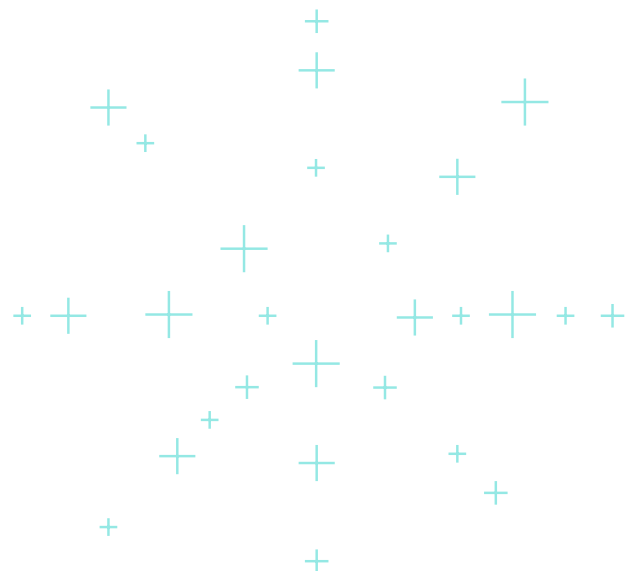
Supported by its membership and regulations, IAF ensures that different stakeholders' voices and positions are considered and valued. Through the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA), trust and confidence are built among accreditation bodies, due to their ability to determine the competence of certification bodies, facilitating the acceptance of certificates between economies.

Upholding the integrity of the IAF MLA is paramount in enabling open and global markets. In this increasingly connected world, global mutual recognition helps to reduce unnecessary non-tariff barriers to trade and regulatory burdens. This boosts consumer confidence and encourages innovation, efficiency and cost savings.

While mutual recognition offers these benefits, it's not without challenges and complexities. These include disparities in regulatory systems, differences in technical standards, regional contexts and the need to ensure ongoing compliance (e.g. through peer assessment).

The negotiation of mutual recognition agreements between states, which can unlock the benefits of the IAF MLA, requires careful consideration of these challenges and a commitment to resolving them through effective support, communication, transparency and cooperation between all industry stakeholders.

Mutual recognition in conformity assessment is a cornerstone of the modern global economy and its importance cannot be overstated. By embracing mutual recognition, different stakeholders can pave the way for building value and trust for people and businesses and promoting a sustainable future.



Underpinning impartiality: stakeholder outreach in UKAS



by Richard Collin, External Affairs Director

This report highlights elsewhere important benefits of UKAS accreditation to the UK economy and society, such as supporting the smooth functioning of markets, the delivery of public policy and an effective national consumer protection regime. These stem in a large part from the robustness and impartiality of UKAS's accreditation processes.



UKAS ensures impartiality in several ways, in line with the international standard for accreditation bodies, ISO/IEC 17011. One of these ways is through our stakeholder engagement and outreach.

A company limited by guarantee, UKAS has twenty-two stakeholder members. These can be categorised in four broad “constituencies”, with representation balanced between them: customer representatives; government and regulatory bodies; business and industry, and professional, consumer, end user and other bodies. The members are shown in the graphic on the next page. UKAS's members play an important role in our corporate governance, with voting rights in the UKAS AGM.

UKAS engages with stakeholders on policy issues through its Policy Advisory Forum, with some sixty-five members, and the smaller Policy Advisory Council, with its members selected from the Forum. In both groups, representation is balanced across the same four constituencies.

Underpinning impartiality: stakeholder outreach in UKAS

Government and regulators



Customer associations



Business and industry



Professional, consumer, end user and other bodies



UKAS seeks advice on technical operational matters through its Technical Advisory Committee structure, which has been updated in the last year. UKAS has thirteen TACs which cover a breadth of issues relevant for UKAS including asbestos, biobanks, medical laboratories and management systems certification.

UKAS's stakeholder outreach is delivered through a variety of initiatives. In the last year these have included participation in events, such as conferences of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, Electrical Safety First, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders and the Scottish Council for Development and Industry, as well as Civil Service Live in Cardiff, Glasgow and London.

We have given introductory talks on UKAS and accreditation to government departments, regulators and the Scottish government. We have submitted around thirty responses to government and regulators' consultations and engaged with opposition parties as well as with government, also with All Party Parliamentary Groups and Parliamentary committees.

Make UK has joined as UKAS's twenty-second member and we have three new members of the Policy Advisory Forum.

UKAS will continue to grow its outreach through our External Affairs and other teams. This will enable us to continue to hear and respond to the views of all our stakeholders from across the whole of the UK and thus to maintain our independence, impartiality and relevance as the National Accreditation Body.

The value of a UK-EU Mutual Recognition Agreement



by David Henig, Director of the UK Trade Policy Project at the think-tank ECIPE

Global trade turbulence amid great power politics is creating deep concerns in countries such as the UK that favour open trade. Such a context comes on top of the upheaval as we redefine post-Brexit international relations. Given the simultaneous transition to the net zero economy, it would be easy to feel overwhelmed by complexity.



The value of a UK-EU Mutual Recognition Agreement

Identifying appropriate responses is unsurprisingly challenging. As governments are increasingly discovering, there is no simple pathway to trading success under such circumstances and with the 21st century business environment. With regional and global supply chains having long replaced the traditional mode by which goods were traded, in which tariffs were the big issue, regulatory differences, taxes, cross-border logistics, and domestic legislative frameworks must all be considered.

While no single action will transform the trade picture, governments must seek incremental improvements, particularly to provide confidence for business activity and inward investment. There are many tools available, of which Free Trade Agreements have been the UK focus since Brexit. With this agenda maturing, there is now a strong argument for greater focus on Mutual Recognition Agreements starting in our own region with the EU.

Demonstrating that countries have confidence in each other's products, through conformity assessment, provides a powerful signal. Thinking about the flow of goods and services combined into final products, those supply chains or networks, mutual recognition of accredited conformity assessment results is a clear support for firm participation. For the new products and methods that will support the net zero economy, ensuring wide recognition will be a critical part of dissemination. Non-exclusivity in such agreements allows the UK to look beyond our neighbours, while the continuing importance of distance in trade and the economic importance of our own region is recognised.

“Demonstrating that countries have confidence in each other's products, through conformity assessment, provides a powerful signal.”

Businesses of course want to trade rather than have to read agreement text, and a core part should be that their own accredited testing or certification facility supports international sales. Many may be puzzled as to why what happened until the end of 2020, a “tested once, accepted regionally” practice, ceased to be the case. Rather than raking over the past we'd be better noting that the UK and EU have both shown some openness to such arrangements, and encourage politicians to find a suitable path. The demand for the UK to be part of European supply chains is still there.

Despite much talk about UK divergence as a result of Brexit, core building-blocks of international trade remain common to all developed countries. Standards, regulations, and conformity assessment are areas where regional and international cooperation is entirely normal whatever domestic arrangements are in place. These support other facilitators of trade like zero tariffs and regional rules of origin. Cumulatively these create a level of confidence in trade among producers and consumers alike.

Realism is important: we will not quickly return to an arrangement covering all sectors, and negotiations could be tough. This however should not be a bar to having a clear idea as to what is important, and pursuing this accordingly. A UK-EU Mutual Recognition Agreement on conformity assessment is an obvious choice.

Accreditation supporting confidence in food safety, today and tomorrow



by Rick Mumford, Head of Science, Evidence and Research, Food Standards Agency

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) works to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in relation to food in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, alongside Food Standards Scotland (FSS).

As outlined in the [FSA's 2022-27 strategy](#), our fundamental mission is "food you can trust". The collective work of FSA and FSS protects people's health, reduces the economic burden of foodborne disease and supports the UK economy and trade, ensuring that our food has a strong reputation for safety and authenticity in the UK and abroad.

Accreditation plays a vital role supporting the FSA's objectives, by ensuring the safety and authenticity of food, through providing independent assurance to consumers, businesses, trade partners and government, that products or services meet specified requirements. One critical area it supports is laboratory food and feed testing, which helps assure the food supply chain and underpin the work of the FSA, local authorities and businesses. Results from testing perform an essential function, providing intelligence and evidence on the safety and authenticity of food and feed on the UK market, enabling trade, supporting enforcement action to protect consumers, and allowing the FSA to meet its statutory obligations as a regulator.

Accreditation underpins testing by providing confidence that laboratory results are accurate and reliable, enabling users to make informed decisions. As the UK's National Accreditation Body, UKAS provides a vital service in delivering this accreditation and we welcome working in partnership with them, especially to provide assurance of the UK's Official and National Reference Laboratory system.



Accreditation and standards harmonise the requirements for food safety and quality on a global scale. Mutual recognition facilitates smoother trade relationships, reduces trade barriers, and promotes fair competition among food producers and exporters. It allows us to access the testing of other countries and ensure that it meets the UK's standards and requirements.

Looking to the future, the pace of technology and business change in the food system continues to accelerate. People are buying food in new ways, for example via online marketplaces and through social media. These changes are affecting the way people purchase food and the way food businesses operate. Alongside this, we are seeing the emergence of new laboratory testing methods, which are non-targeted and reliant on privately held databases. It is vital that approaches to deliver accreditation for these new technologies are developed to help provide assurance of their results and enabling them to be used in confidence by both businesses and government. UKAS plays an essential role in delivering this and we welcome continuing to work closely with them to tackle these new challenges.

International update



International Accreditation Forum



International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation



European co-operation for Accreditation

16

Other international stakeholder organisations

2

Joint ILAC/IAF

9

IAF

16

EA

7

ILAC



Other international data

+ 3

Number of Peer Evaluation participated in

+ 7

Number of authorised Peer Evaluators

Product safety and accreditation in the UK



Q & A with Graham Russell, CEO, Office for Product Safety & Standards
Department for Business and Trade

1. How can product safety regulation best serve the needs of the UK economy and society?

Well-designed and well-implemented regulations protect the rights and safety of people and places and enable businesses to thrive in national and global markets. This in turn provides the confidence necessary to underpin markets and support sustainable economic growth.

Here at OPSS we are reviewing the existing product safety framework to ensure it is fit for the digital age and meets the needs of UK consumers and businesses. Product regulation needs to keep pace and align with changing technology and markets to protect consumers. Regulations should provide confidence to consumers on product safety regardless of where or how they purchase products whilst ensuring business obligations are proportionate to the hazard presented by their products.

2. What role does the national quality infrastructure (NQI) of standards, measurement and accredited conformity assessment play in this?

It's all about trust and confidence: for government/regulators and most importantly for consumers. The UK's NQI provides standards, accreditation, measurement and conformity assessment and accreditation that is based on science and evidence and can demonstrate ongoing competence, independence and impartiality.

In this way NQI enables consistent rigour in standards, agreements and codes, providing a high level of confidence and support in the delivery of risk-based and proportionate regulation, allowing business to innovate and support global trade. The UK benefits from a globally recognised NQI that supports trade and underpins the World Trade Organization rules on eliminating technical and non-tariff barriers by the acceptance of international standards and the mutual recognition of conformity assessment results.

3. How does accreditation specifically add value to the delivery of policy?

Accreditation supports public policy through both statutory regulation and alternative delivery mechanisms. In any context it, can provide assurance that conformity assessment is being performed



Product safety and accreditation in the UK

with the necessary competence, independence and impartiality, in line with international standards. This can include the requirements of regulatory bodies as part of that assurance, such as assessment of specific performance of activities and sharing data on the performance of the conformity assessment bodies with regulators.

4. How important is it that UKAS as the National Accreditation Body (NAB) reflects the needs of the market and society? How is this best achieved?

Accreditation is not only a mechanism for demonstrating compliance and conformity, it provides market differentiation and objective proof that an organisation complies with best practice. The role of the NAB is to measure quality in a particular field including quality improvement. UKAS must keep up with developments in technology and enable innovation to thrive to be an effective NAB.

OPSS works closely with UKAS to ensure it hears the views of its stakeholders – customers, government, business, and regulators – in order to effectively reflect market, policy and consumer needs in its accreditation activities.

We value the governance arrangements UKAS has in place, such as its Policy Advisory Forum and Council and its Technical Advisory Committees which enable UKAS to stay connected with a broad range of voices, including with government across several departments. Through a Memorandum of Understanding between OPSS for the government and the Board of UKAS, we are clear about the role and responsibilities of UKAS and seek to ensure it can look forward in its understanding the needs of the market and society.

5. How does OPSS see its role in supporting accreditation in the UK?

Government recognises the value of a strong and active NAB; robust in its assessments and actions and holding CABs to account in line with international good practice. OPSS is the lead government organisation guiding and supporting the role of UKAS as the UK's National Accreditation Body, whilst endorsing its independence and its global credibility. This involves working with Ministers who set annual government priorities for UKAS and providing financial support for areas of specific interest, such as representation of the UK in international fora.

OPSS brings together government policy and regulator colleagues with an interest in accreditation in a cross-government group. This enables us to hear a good view of the breadth and role of accreditation in public policy, ensuring a consistent approach on the application of accreditation policy across government.



Developing net zero pathways through the National Quality Infrastructure



by Simon Brown, Positive Momentum

Simon Brown leads the environmental practice at Positive Momentum and has helped organisations develop and deliver environmental, social and governance (ESG) programmes for over 20 years. In this interview, Simon outlines the net zero transition landscape along with the potential benefits of using the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) to deliver effective and practical net zero pathways.



What is the scale of the net zero transition challenge?

The scope of change and investment required to decarbonise entire economies is enormous and unprecedented, estimated to be 7.5% of global GDP 2021/50. The challenges facing countries, industries, companies and individuals in developing net zero pathways vary tremendously, with energy intensive and high emissions industries facing the most daunting, complex and costly tasks. It is also apparent that the effects of climate change are being disproportionately felt by those that have contributed the least to causing it and are least able to finance any transition programs. Therefore building fairness, transparency and accessibility into net zero pathways has to be a priority if any policies, regulations or schemes are to succeed.

Developing net zero pathways through the National Quality Infrastructure

How is the National Quality Infrastructure suited to developing net zero pathways?

The most effective way to accelerate the creation of credible and reliable net zero pathways is through creating global good practice for business (standards), the means of demonstrating that good practice is being met (conformity assessment) and the globally recognised assurance that performance evaluation is being carried out competently (accreditation). Standards, conformity assessment and accreditation are three core pillars on which all NQIs are built.

The UK's NQI is already embedded in the environmental arena, with thousands of UK organisations regularly benefitting from accredited conformity assessment against a number of recognised environmental standards; covering everything from products, processes and services to management systems and emissions verification. Just as the current fossil-fuelled economy is heavily reliant on robust standards and accredited conformity assessment, a successful transition to a net zero future can only be achieved through the deployment of NQI capabilities and international cooperation. Using the NQI to establish these pathways ensures that net zero best practice is widely accessible to all businesses and, as with quality and safety, becomes an integral part of how most organisations operate.

What are the main challenges in utilising the National Quality Infrastructure for net zero pathways?

The biggest individual challenge is balancing the conflicting timeframes involved. It can take three years to articulate best practice in an international standard, then more time to develop conformity assessment processes, followed by a period of real-world evaluation and refinement. However, with the IPCC warning that the window of opportunity for achieving the Paris 1.5°C goals is rapidly

closing, it is clear any new system of standards, conformity assessment and accreditation will need to be implemented at a faster than usual pace.

The timeframe issue is complicated by the problem that whilst the net zero imperative is clear, there is currently no consensus amongst the numerous stakeholders on how best to achieve it. The differing approaches and levels of understanding, "culpability" and activity across industries, combined with varying geographical, environmental, political and financial conditions internationally reflects both the complexity and scale of the task at hand. By setting out the frameworks, guidance, technical standards, measurements and assurance mechanisms for organisations to follow, the NQI can unify stakeholders, coordinate activities, resolve confusion and enhance the credibility of net zero pathways and related claims.

How can the National Quality Infrastructure support government policy and regulation in this area?

The best regulatory policies are those that are informed by best practices that are established by the consensus of industry and other stakeholders. There's no point in regulations setting levels which are either too high that they can't realistically be achieved, or too low that their impact is insufficient. Finding the appropriate level is an evidence-based process, and the NQI provides demonstrable evidence of both the level and effectiveness of best practices. In turn, this underpins confidence in policies that better support both the participants and overall objectives. By rewarding the successful and encouraging others to improve, the NQI can join the dots between government policy and best practice, helping deliver the most effective outcomes.

Accessing a brave new digital world



by Brett Hyland, Stakeholder Engagement Manager, NATA

Brett Hyland is Stakeholder Engagement Manager at Australia's National Accreditation Body, NATA. Brett has been leading Australia's contribution to a white paper on Digital Product Conformity Certificate Exchange (DPCCE) for the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). Accredited conformity assessment plays a key role in quality infrastructures worldwide, facilitating trade and providing confidence in the quality of goods and services that we use every day.



Accessing a brave new digital world

Conformity assessment attestations rely on data exchange systems to deliver the requisite confidence and transparency. Traditionally these systems have been based on physical paper certificates, with PDF representing the first steps into the digital world. However, with business becoming increasingly global and digital, the inherent flaws with paper/PDF based systems are becoming more evident.

The aim of the DPCCE white paper is to explore the many opportunities that “access” technology offers to address existing problems with paper/PDF based “exchange” systems. Resolving these issues will provide assurance that conformity data has been issued by independent third parties and is currently valid, building trust into supply chains and lowering barriers to trade.

Digital benefits

Authenticity and validity are two fundamental issues facing a person holding a paper/PDF product conformity certificate. It may be difficult to determine the authority of the issuing body, whether the physical product is the same as the subject of the certificate and if the certificate has subsequently been revised or withdrawn. While many certificate issuers are now building authentication safeguards into their certificates, it still doesn't help in situations of mis-attribution of certificates to irrelevant products. Digital systems allow key data points from different sources to be securely and easily linked together whilst enabling access to original data sources in real time.

The DPCCE provides a mechanism for accessing, at its source, conformity data that has been digitally linked to both physical product supply and to the issuing body's credentials. In addition to ensuring that data is current, valid and traceable, the DPCCE increases the accessibility and speed of verification whilst simultaneously reducing the potential for human error and fraud.

Ultimately it is the consumer that benefits from reliably authenticated product claims because their choices can be made with greater confidence. When sub-standard products no longer have anywhere to hide, all honest producers and suppliers benefit as well.

Challenges on the path to digitisation

Instead of describing a specific implementation plan, the UN/CEFACT white paper represents a broad conceptual framework and is a call for stakeholder dialogue. The concepts in the DPCCE are not seeking to replace any of the existing governance structures, but rather examine how these might be adapted to a digital future.

Conformity assessment providers need to meet the expectations of their customers and regulators, particularly regarding the security and validity of information. The UN/CEFACT work provides a new lens through which to consider these challenges. Some stakeholders will be demanding digitally connected capabilities in the near future. Whilst conformity assessment bodies will undoubtedly step forward to meet this demand, 100% uptake need not be achieved overnight provided there is enough capacity to expand proportionately.

The key to global data exchange is not trying to force everyone to use the same systems but to ensure that different systems are compatible. I am confident that there is sufficient interest and incentive within both governments and the private sector to generate such an outcome. The UN/CEFACT framework places conformity assessment bodies at the centre of trade data exchange, giving greater visibility to their role as global anchors of trust in trade.

Assessing the impact of UKAS CertCheck in its first year



by Jeff Ruddle, UKAS Strategic Development Director

It has been over a year since the launch of CertCheck, the free-to-use UKAS online database of management system certifications. The database now contains over 400,000 certifications from over 100 Certification Bodies.

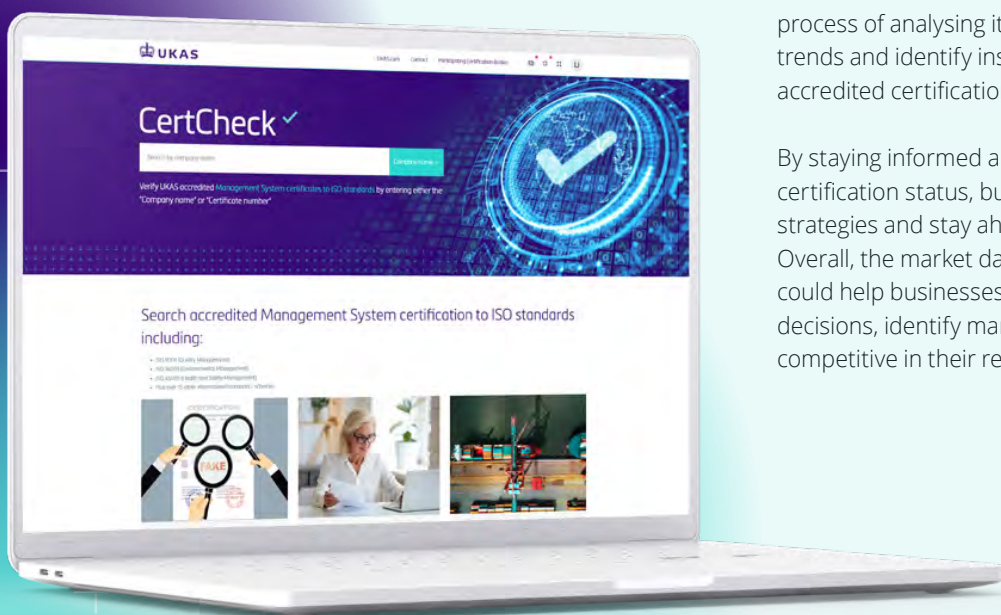
CertCheck✓

Widely used ISO standards, such as ISO 9001 (Quality Management), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management), ISO 45001 (Health and Safety Management) and over 15 other international standards and schemes can be searched for within the system, helping users verify the accredited status of management system certifications quickly and easily in their supply chains.

Users can register for a free account with CertCheck, allowing them to set up alerts that notify them of any changes in the status of accredited certifications in their supply chain. UKAS CertCheck has proven to be an effective tool in speeding up the supply chain management examination process.

Over the past year, as the system has been used to house data and for users to conduct searches, UKAS has been monitoring this valuable market data and has begun the process of analysing it to discover and track trends and identify insights into the UKAS accredited certification sector.

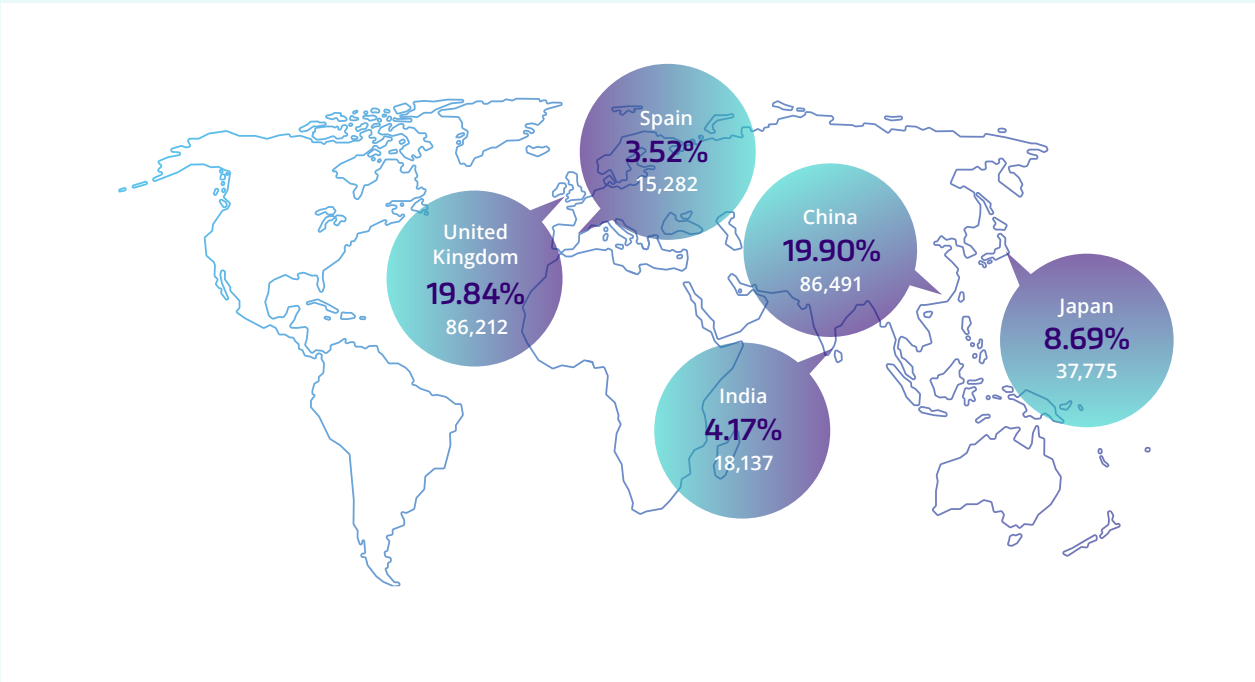
By staying informed about changes in certification status, businesses can adapt their strategies and stay ahead of the competition. Overall, the market data stored in CertCheck could help businesses to make informed decisions, identify market trends, and stay competitive in their respective industries.



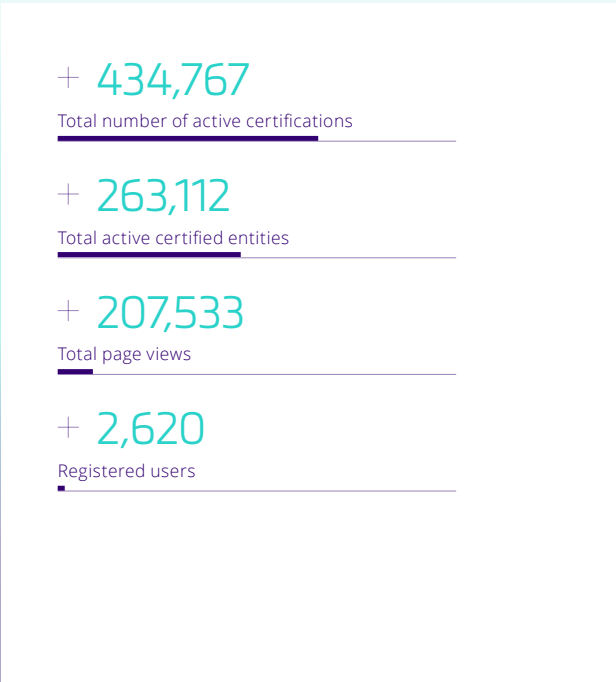
Assessing the impact of UKAS CertCheck in its first year

In the first year of using CertCheck, the system has amassed data based on uploaded data and conducted searches. UKAS has been monitoring this valuable market data and has begun the process of analysing it to discover and track trends. In the coming months UKAS intends to use the data contained within the database through market analysis, performance evaluation, industry benchmarking and policy development. In this way we will ensure that as well as performing a valuable service to users, CertCheck can continue to enhance the certification industry more broadly.

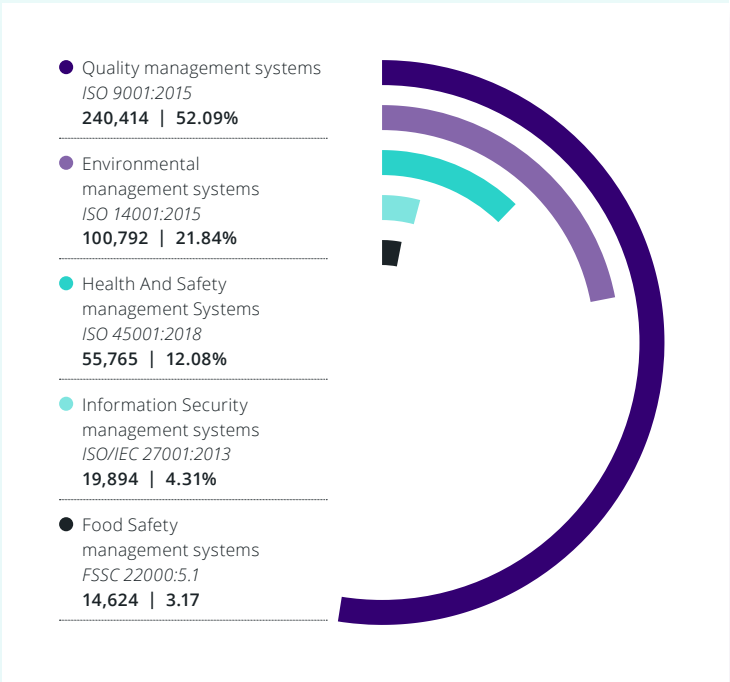
Top 5 locations for UKAS accredited certification



Statistics



Top 5 standards



Group strategic report

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

The principal activity of the Group in the year under review was that of being the sole National Accreditation Body recognised by government to assess, against internationally agreed standards, organisations that provide certification, testing, inspection and calibration services.

The Group is a non-profit-distributing private company, limited by guarantee. The Group is independent of government but is appointed as the National Accreditation Body by Accreditation Regulations 2009 (SI No3155/2009). UKAS is licensed by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to use and confer the national accreditation symbols (formerly national accreditation marks) which symbolise government recognition of the accreditation process.

Business review

The results for the Group are set out on page 56. These financial statements reflect the trading activities and results of both United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and UKAS Limited, formerly known as Clinical Pathology Accreditation (UK) Limited (CPA).

The Group expects to continue to grow in most areas of the business, with work in the healthcare, forensic science, construction, environment, food/agriculture and information security spearheading this growth. The Board continues to focus on creating the capability to respond to the ever-increasing demand for accreditation schemes by a wide range of sectors and to that end, continues to invest in the development of the UKAS infrastructure and people. During the year ending 31 March 2023, we completed the pilot of our assessment and customer portals and in

Group strategic report

May 2023, launched the portal to many of our customers, reinforcing the launch with free training and support. Going forward, the Group will continue to expand the use and the functionality of the portals, to support service delivery and improved customer interactions.

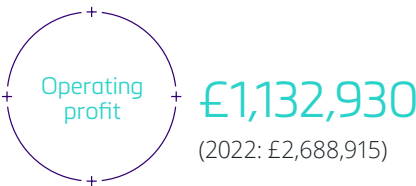
The aftershocks from the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect UKAS and its customers, especially in relation to resourcing. Despite the tightening of the labour market, the Group invested heavily in talent retention and acquisition and managed to gradually return to normal levels of assessment, emerging from the crisis stronger with new approaches to working. In response to the crisis as well as feedback from our customers and our people, UKAS adopted hybrid working and a blended approach to delivering its assessing and commercial training services, adding a range of elearning courses and free webinars that are designed to demystify the journey to, and promote the value of, accreditation.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The directors have applied judgements, based on expert advice, in relation to assessing the position of the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. There are no other matters concerning financial risk which are material for the assessment of the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company.

Financial Key Performance Indicators

The integrated Group has achieved an operating profit of:



The financial performance this year was positive and the Group continues to be profitable. The drop in profitability levels reflects a strategic decision to introduce sector specialists to support strong technical management and to recruit ahead of the curve in areas where the Board is anticipating regulatory changes and opportunities for growth. The Group's balance sheet continues to show a healthy current ratio of current assets to short term creditors of 2.9 times (2022: 4.2 times). The reduction compared to last years is as a result of investing a proportion of cash balances into marketable assets providing UKAS's reserves with some inflationary protection.

Other Key Performance Indicators

The Group continues to report internally on a series of Key Performance Indicators such as the number of days of assessment delivered, the number of customers visited and the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. In addition to this, the company constantly surveys its customer base to ensure that the quality of service is maintained at the highest levels. In the year to March 2023, the company delivered 32,516 (2022: 31,114) assessment days.

Directors' statement of compliance with duty to promote the success of the Group

In the decisions taken during the year ended 31 March 2023, the directors have acted in the way they consider to be in good faith, most likely to promote the success of the Company and its continuing reputation for high standards of business conduct, and for the benefit of its members as a whole, having regard to the stakeholders and matters set out in Section 172 of the UK Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the Board on 12 September 2023 and signed on its behalf.

Matthew Gantley

Matthew Gantley

Director

Date: 12 September 2023

Directors' report

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023.

Directors' responsibilities statement

The directors are responsible for preparing the Group strategic report, the directors' report and the consolidated financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. Under company law the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a

true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and the Group and of the profit or loss of the Group for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- + Select suitable accounting policies for the Group's financial statements and then apply them consistently;
- + Make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- + State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- + Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Group will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and the Group and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and the Group and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Results and dividends

The profit for the year, after taxation, amounted to £1,376,876 (2021/22 – £2,248,654).

As the company is non-profit distributing, the directors do not propose a dividend (2021/22 – £Nil).



Directors' report

The directors who served during the year were:



+
Lord Jamie Lindsay
Chairman



+
Matthew Gantley
Chief Executive



+
Professor Michael Mainelli
Senior Independent Director



+
Georgia Alsop
Finance & Corporate Services Director



+
Jeffrey Ruddle
Strategic Development Director



+
Lorraine Turner
Accreditation Director



+
Paul Greenwood
Operations Director
(appointed 19 October 2021, retired 31 March 2023)



+
Sarah Veale CBE
Non-Executive Director



+
Dr Jeffrey Llewellyn
Non-Executive Director



+
Professor Adrian Charles Newland CBE
Non-Executive Director



+
Philip Rycroft
Non-Executive Director

Future developments

In February 2023 the Board approved the UKAS Strategic Review and updated Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values as well as the Strategic Priorities which identify, at a high level the key areas of focus for the business. These Strategic Priorities are:

- + To excel in areas of technical expertise and service;
- + To be agile, enabling the organisation to adapt and innovate;
- + To be perceptive and inclusive in developing talent and building knowledge;
- + To deliver financial stability and productivity;
- + To be respected and recognised as the world's foremost accreditation body.

Directors' report

More specifically, UKAS intends to deliver these priorities through the following objectives:

Key strategic objectives related to our priority to excel in areas of technical expertise and service are:

- Deliver "world class" customer service;
- Ensure ongoing MLA/MRA signatory status, through effective peer evaluation;
- Engage with and respond to outcomes and lessons learned from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry to ensure that accreditation is part of the range of solutions;
- Develop and enhance operations and sales resources, introducing sector specialists to support strong technical management and key sector growth.

Key strategic objectives related to our priority to be agile, enabling the organisation to adapt and innovate are:

- Enhance and expand the use of our customer and assessor portals to support self-service, service delivery and improved customer interactions;
- Modernise our assessment offering through development of our risk-based approach to assessment and expand the use of our web/app based reporting tool;
- Promote the use of our CertCheck tool to support verification of UKAS accredited activities, supporting our stakeholders and customers;
- Develop our contacts and resources in areas of disruptive technology (IR4.0) to better understand and prepare for the impact on UKAS and the TIC sector;
- Develop tools to assist new applicants, removing perceived and real barriers to applying for accreditation;
- Improve internal collaboration and communication, through an updated intranet and expanded use of MS Teams and SharePoint, our electronic document handling system.

Key strategic objectives related to our priority to be perceptive in developing talent and building knowledge are:

- Drive improvement in staff engagement, focusing on creating a culture of belonging where everyone feels valued and heard and embedding EDI policies and practices;
- Leverage our learning management system to enhance our learning, mentoring and development programmes;
- Implement our talent and leadership development programme and succession planning;
- Review office working patterns to respond to societal changes;
- Develop our policies and processes to improve our diversity, inclusion, and career progression.

Key strategic objectives related to our priority to deliver financial stability and productivity are:

- Deliver to balanced score card and budgetary targets;
- Enhance customer management and sales policies and processes, to ensure we provide services that meet customer expectations.

Key strategic objectives related to our priority to be respected and recognised as the world's foremost accreditation body are:

- Enhance UKAS's relationship within UK government, building a reputation as an agile organisation that provides solutions to government's challenges;
- Develop and enhance collateral on the value of accreditation, to communicate to customers, stakeholders and regulators the benefits of using being accredited and using accredited services;
- Increase UKAS's commitment to ILAC/IAF and EA, taking on leadership roles in key committees;
- Further enhance UKAS's reputation within the healthcare sector, building upon existing services to expand our offering within the healthcare sector;
- Diversify and improve our stakeholder engagement, bringing in new UKAS members and members to key committees such as PAF and TACs.

Directors' report

Stakeholder engagement

In order for the Company to meet its responsibilities to stakeholders, the Board has to ensure effective engagement with them. As part of its annual strategic review process, the Board considers the identification and prioritisation of stakeholders and whether its relationships with key stakeholders are being managed appropriately. As set out below, stakeholder engagement is achieved in several ways and in particular through a broad annual Policy Advisory Forum and its delegated sub-group, the Policy Advisory Council, which advises the directors on the views of stakeholders. The Board ensures that it has effective engagement mechanisms in place to gain a clear understanding of the views of key stakeholders so that their interests and the matters set out in Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 can be considered in Board discussions and decision making. Taking account of the interests of our stakeholders is at the centre of our 2020–2023 strategic plan and vision and mission to create a world of confidence by promoting trust in the products and services we all rely on. As such, examples of UKAS's engagement with its key stakeholders including members, employees, contractors, pensioners, consumers, suppliers, standards development organisations, other accreditation bodies and regulators, governments around the world, professional bodies and academia, labour and environmental organisations and local communities can be found throughout this Annual Report.

Examples of our key engagement activities in 2022/23 include:

Key stakeholder or stakeholder concern	Key engagements	Further information
Employee engagement and belonging	<p>UKAS values employee engagement and regularly shares information with its employees and their representatives on all matters of concern to them, including highlighting financial and economic factors affecting the Company's performance, as well as encouraging employee involvement in the Company's overall performance. Underpinning this are the UKAS values which promote acting with integrity and respect for one another and our aspiration for a culture of belonging and inclusion where everyone feels welcomed, connected and respected.</p> <p>UKAS communicates and engages with its workforce, including contractor assessors, using a variety of channels blending in-person, virtual and electronic communication. In 2022/23 the executive and non-executive directors were able to communicate regularly with the whole of the workforce, through the use of technology and also in-person during the UKAS Annual Staff Conference providing important updates on policies and initiatives, sharing insights and best practice, celebrating success with staff awards, promoting a culture of belonging and inclusion with cross-functional team building activities, and inviting feedback and questions.</p> <p>The effectiveness of these strategies is tracked through our employee engagement survey. Throughout 2022/23, employee morale remained high, with 78% of employees who responded to our survey giving positive responses to questions around morale.</p>	

Directors' report

Employee health, safety, wellbeing and work life balance

UKAS supports employee wellbeing and work-life balance by ensuring that staff have the relevant tools and information on policy decisions around safety and by introducing a hybrid working pattern for office-based positions.

Managers are provided with training and advice on how to lead remote teams effectively, and on how to manage stress and mental health at work. Our trained Mental Health First Aiders provide a first line to our workforce and together with our line managers are trained to sign-post employees to the employee assistance programmes that are available to them.

Our Events Committee spearheaded a number of social and team building events which helped keep the whole of UKAS connected and our Human Resources Team co-ordinated workshops on menopause, promoting awareness and providing guidance on how to support colleagues affected by menopause and similar challenges.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

The Group believes that equity, diversity and inclusion enable delivery of our purpose. To benefit from a diverse workforce, the Group applies role-related and objective criteria to select and develop talent and focuses on building an inclusive environment that promotes psychological safety and where everyone feels able to participate and achieve their potential, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, background, ethnicity or disability. We endeavour to treat each individual and each other with equity and fairness, including in relation to job applications, pay, training, promotion and talent development.

The Board receives an overview of diversity and inclusion at UKAS and in 2022/23 it continued to share its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan with the UKAS workforce, restating its commitment to building a "culture of belonging" at UKAS where everyone feels valued and heard. The UKAS leadership team has received training in EDI and are committed to inclusive leadership.

During 2022/23, the vast majority of UKAS employees, participated in a series of belonging and inclusion workshops, facilitated by a leading expert in the area of belonging, offering the opportunity for two-way dialogue and their input on how to foster inclusion at UKAS. Many of our staff have expressed an interest in joining our newly created Belonging Employee Resource Group to help champion inclusion at UKAS as we go forward.

Further information on the gender gap report can be found on the UKAS website.

Members of the company's Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

The Board regularly engages with members of UKAS's Defined Benefit Pension Scheme (the 'Scheme') through various direct and indirect channels, including regular communication with trustees and attendance by directors at Trustee meetings.

The Scheme is well funded and remains open to new employees.

Further information can be found on pages 80 – 83

Directors' report

The UK government

UKAS worked closely with DBT and DLUHC to support the response to the government's review into the testing of construction products and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and is committed to learning the lessons from these reviews and developing accreditation as necessary so that it can continue to be part of the solution. In parallel, UKAS continues to work with DBT on the role of accreditation in international trade agreements and in promoting trade across the world. Across its range of accreditation services, UKAS engages with government and regulators to ensure regulation and regulatory policy is effectively applied through conformity assessment.

UKAS Members and other Trade Associations

UKAS maintains an External Affairs programme for ongoing engagement activities with a broad range of stakeholders including UKAS members and trade associations.

The Company's Articles of Association also require the directors to establish a Policy Advisory Forum (PAF), "the purpose of which will be to ensure that the directors are aware of the views of interested parties on policy issues affecting the Company's activities, including the development, interpretation and application of national, European and International Standards, guidelines, procedures, regulations, practices and agreements applicable to accreditation bodies and conformity assessment bodies." The PAF represents over 60 stakeholders and is represented by a smaller Policy Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC advises the UKAS Board on the more detailed aspects of stakeholder feedback on UKAS policy, particularly on questions relating to the safeguarding of impartiality.

Further information in the Policy Advisory Forum and Policy Advisory Council Chair's report.

Sustainability

Enabling businesses to achieve best practice in sustainability is the focus of many of the areas that UKAS accredits which includes environmental/energy management systems, carbon neutrality and the UK Emissions Trading Scheme to name but a few. UKAS continues to invest in the development of new areas of accreditation that support sustainability through direct engagement with a range of key stakeholders, including DBT and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. During 2022/23, UKAS continued to adopt a blended approach to assessing, and promoted greater use of remote internal meetings to mitigate, where possible, the environmental impact of these events. In addition, from 1 August 2022, and in line with UKAS's commitment to become net carbon neutral by 2030, UKAS introduced an attractive allowance for fully electric company cars as a way of incentivising the adoption of electric vehicles by those who are required to drive on UKAS business. Moreover, UKAS is largely paperless as it uses electronic workflows and document handling systems and following the launch of the UKAS portals, UKAS is now able to share data and documents electronically, including customer invoices and assessment reports. In November 2022, UKAS switched the lighting of its office to LED, and continues to operate movement sensor lighting in its office to further reduce its energy consumption.

Further information in the Chairman's statement and Chief Executive's report.

Directors' report

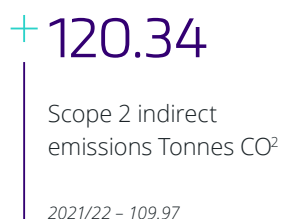
Greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and energy efficiency action

The Group continues to adopt a blended approach to assessing, allowing some remote assessing where this was deemed optimal and did not compromise the technical rigour of assessments. However, 2022/23, saw a significant increase in customer site-based activity, as this was deemed necessary as we emerged from the travel restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Going forward UKAS expects to see a reduction in site-based activities relative to the total number of assessment days. During November 2022, UKAS switched to LED lighting for its office and continues to operate lighting with movement sensors to reduce its energy consumption.

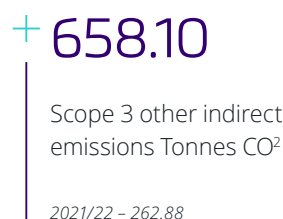
During 2021/22, UKAS introduced a hybrid working pattern that allowed staff who are contracted to work from the office the option of working from home for up to two days per week. As a result of the higher risk associated with overseas travel during the pandemic, there were low levels of overseas travel during 2021/22 and moderate overseas travel in 2022/23.

2022/23

UK energy use



Greenhouse gas emissions relating to business travel



Assessment days delivered















Intensity ratio



UK energy use relates to the UKAS office only.

Directors' report

Greenhouse gas emissions include overseas activities and have been calculated using The International Panel on Climate Change Guidelines 2016 (Tier 3 methodology).

 + Fuel in fleet cars  Included	 + Fuel reimbursed to employees for own cars  Included	 + Fuel in hire cars and in taxis  Not included
 + Fuel in planes and in trains  Included	 + Fuel in vehicles operated by contractors  Not included	 + Hotels  Included

Disclosure of information to auditors

Each of the persons who are directors at the time when this directors' report is approved has confirmed that:

- + So far as the directors are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the Company and the Group's auditors are unaware, and
- + The directors have taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a director in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Company and the Group's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

The auditors, Feltons, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

This report was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf.

Matthew Gantley

Matthew Gantley
Director
Date: 12 September 2023

Post balance sheet events

There have been no significant events affecting the Group since the year end.

Independent auditors' report to the members of United Kingdom Accreditation Service

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of United Kingdom Accreditation Service (the 'parent Company') and its subsidiaries (the 'Group') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Group Statement of comprehensive income, the Group and Company Balance sheets, the Group Statement of cash flows, the Group and Company Statement of changes in equity and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- + Give a true and fair view of the state of the Group's and of the parent Company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the Group's profit for the year then ended;
- + Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- + Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Group's or the parent Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Independent auditors' report to the members of United Kingdom Accreditation Service

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. The directors are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual Report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- + The information given in the Group strategic report and the directors' report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- + The Group strategic report and the directors' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Group and the parent Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Group strategic report or the directors' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- + Adequate accounting records have not been kept by the parent Company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- + The parent Company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- + Certain disclosures of directors' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- + We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of directors

As explained more fully in the directors' responsibilities statement set out on page 43, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Independent auditors' report to the members of United Kingdom Accreditation Service

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Group's and the parent Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Group or the parent Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these Group financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

- + We assessed the risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, including the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and how it might occur, by holding discussions with management and those charged with governance.

- + We obtained an understanding of laws and regulations that could reasonably be expected to have a material effect on the financial statements through discussion with management and those charged with governance, including financial reporting and taxation legislation. We considered that extent of compliance with those laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement items.

- + We inquired of management and those charged with governance as to any known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit.

- + We addressed the risk of fraud through management override by reviewing the appropriateness of a sample of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making key accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business that we come across throughout the audit.

However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the Company. Our examination should not be relied upon to disclose all such material misstatements or frauds, errors or instances of non-compliance as may exist.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we

Independent auditors' report to the members of United Kingdom Accreditation Service

will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Auditors' report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Company's Members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's Members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's Members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Robert Carter

Robert Carter
(Senior statutory auditor)

for and on behalf of
Feltons

1 The Green
Richmond
Surrey
TW9 1PL
Date: 3 October 2023

Financial review



by Georgia Alsop, UKAS Finance and Corporate Services Director

UKAS achieved strong financial performance during 2023, despite reduced profit for this financial year, largely due to greater investment in technical resources and a temporary dip in productivity as we geared up resources in anticipation of greater demand for accreditation.



Group turnover for 2023



Group operating profit for 2023

Group operating profit of £1.1m for 2023 decreased by 59.3% compared to £2.7m in the previous year, impacted by a lower gross profit margin of 38.8% compared to 47.2% in the previous year. In 2022 profitability had been boosted by higher income from commercial training and fees from COVID-19 applicants. The planned year-on-year dip in profitability was designed to allow UKAS to grow resources to meet greater regulatory demand for accreditation in forensics as well as enable a full catch up in healthcare, where surveillances had been disrupted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The decrease in gross profit margin was also expected and reflects the compounding effect of UKAS's decision to keep pricing the same for two years, to support customers during the COVID-19 crisis, whilst absorbing increases in salaries which were necessary to retain and attract the right talent in a tight labour market.

Group turnover for 2023 increased to £36.7m compared to £33.5m in the previous year, largely due to 1,402 more assessment days year on year. Overall, UKAS delivered 32,516 assessment days compared to 31,114 days in the previous year. The increase in assessment days was largely attributable to the planned catch up in healthcare.

UKAS continued to invest in important infrastructure projects such as the launch of its customer portals and the development of its customer certification database. In parallel, costs were contained, through increased efficiencies and the effective use of online collaboration solutions, helped by new

models of working such as hybrid working, remote meetings and remote assessments (without compromising the rigour of assessments). Group administrative expenses of £13.1m were flat compared to the previous year as the Group continued to manage costs sustainably through efficiencies.

Profit and loss reserves of £40.7m were positive and included a £20.1m long term pension asset net of deferred tax, relating to the company's defined benefit pension scheme. At the last actuarial valuation as of 31 March 2021, the UKAS Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was fully funded, even on a prudent basis and the Scheme's funding levels remain in surplus. The Group aims to hold three months' turnover as reserves and as of 31 March 2023 exceeded its target, even after excluding the long-term pension asset net of deferred tax.

The Group's liquidity position as of 31 March 2023 strengthened, though its current asset ratio reduced from 4.2 to 2.9, following the decision to invest £8m of the Group's cash reserves in marketable securities.

Going forward UKAS will continue to invest heavily in its portals which have been well received by customers, creating new ways for collaborating with our customers to improve services, service delivery and drive efficiency. Initial customer and contractor assessor feedback on the portals has been encouraging and, by the end of 2023, we expect all our customers to have joined UKAS on this exciting journey.

Stay up to date with UKAS

Stay up to date with UKAS via the following methods:



[Our LinkedIn page >](#)



[Our YouTube page >](#)



[Our website news >](#)