

# What is a QUANGO?

Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation. This is a well known name or acronym, dreamed up in the 1960's.

NGO is a term preferred by the government and these organisations are widespread within the EU and world-wide. However, we will concentrate on the UK aspects of these organisations

A QUANGO is an organisation that is funded by taxpayers, but not controlled directly by central government.

There is nothing controversial about the concept of quangos - they have been around for a long time. Some of Britain's best-known organisations are classified as QUANGO's: including national galleries and museums, bodies such as the Forestry Commission and the British Council. They are and were created by successive governments and yet the problem, according to who are always threatening to axe them, is the sheer number and how much they cost to run.

The UK government's definition in 1997 of a non-departmental public body or QUANGO was:

***"A body which has a role in the processes of national government, but is not a government department or part of one, and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from Ministers."***

## So how many quangos are there?

Those "non-departmental public bodies" on the Cabinet Office listed total 742 across the UK. However, Wales and Scotland have devolved responsibility for some of their own which are not on the list. A pressure group, the Taxpayers' Alliance, claims the figure is actually 1,162.

## What do quangos do?

They can deliver public services, give advice or regulate behaviour. QUANGO's can range from tiny committees that meet a few times a year to organisations with multi-million pound budgets and thousands of staff. There are several different types:

Those with executive powers to actually do something. Examples include the Environment Agency, Regional Development Agencies, national galleries and museums, regulators such as Ofcom

Advisory bodies which give independent, expert advice to ministers on a range of matters - such as the Committee on Standards on Public Life, Boundary Commission

Watchdogs that set standards and regulate behaviour, such as bodies which look at prisons, immigration removal centres, etc.

### **How much do they cost?**

According to Robert Watts, Whitehall Correspondent 12:01AM BST 19 Aug 2007 from the Telegraph newspaper:

***"New Labour has presided over the creation of a quango superstate that spends nearly £170 billion a year - more than five times the budget of the Ministry of Defence.***

***The figure has been revealed by an investigation into the accounts of nearly 900 agencies, advisory bodies, monitoring boards and other public bodies that are all termed "quangos".***

***The study also shows massive pay rises over the past decade for those running a slew of agencies, including the Coal Authority, the British Waterways Board and British Nuclear Fuels.***

***Last year, Ken Boston, the head of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority, received £273,000 in annual pay and benefits in kind."***

### **Mail On-line 14/3/11**

***"The Quango chief charged with curbing wasteful public spending is being paid a £4,070-a-year 'travel allowance' – even though his daily commute is a one-minute walk between his office and a four-star hotel.***

***Eugene Sullivan, the £180,000-a-year chief executive of the Audit Commission – motto: 'protecting the public purse' – charges taxpayers £18,000 a year for his stays at the luxury Westminster hotel, plus more than £5,000 a year in train fares, taxis and car mileage.***

***On top of that he receives the 'travel' allowance, even though the hotel is 164 yards from his office"***

***<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1365651/Eugene-Sullivans-4k-travel-expenses-minute-walk-hotel.html>***

### **How many are being axed?**

The government reviewed 901 bodies - 679 quangos and 222 other statutory bodies. Of those 192 will be axed or their functions taken over by other bodies. The future of other bodies is still under consideration but 380 will definitely be kept - while 118 will be merged

There are a handful of well-known organisations, such as British Nuclear Fuels, The UK Film Council, the Audit Commission and local development agencies, but the vast majority are less well-known committees or watchdogs, with names such as the Advisory Panel on Standards for the Planning Inspectorate or the Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee.

The future of some bodies is still under consideration but 380 will definitely be kept, according to government sources..

Among those being abolished entirely are the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and Cycling England. The QUANGO's whose functions are being returned to Whitehall departments include the Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance Advisory Board and the Appointments Commission.

Among those the list confirms will be retained are Acas, the Competition Appeals Tribunal, the Higher Education Funding Council for England, the Low Pay Commission, UK Trade International, the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

The list also confirms that the government intends to merge the Competition Commission with the Office of Fair Trading, Postcom and Ofcom will be merged as will the Gambling Commission and National Lottery Commission.

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11538534> Accessed 25/2/11)

## **FACING THE AXE**

- British Nuclear Fuels
- British Shipbuilders
- Youth Justice Board
- Film Council
- Audit Commission
- General Teaching Council for England
- Regional Development Agencies
- Chief Coroner's office
- Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority

Others, like the Zoos Forum, the Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee and the Air Quality Expert Group, will be replaced by "committees of experts".

The Olympic Park Legacy Company will have its functions transferred to London Mayor Boris Johnson.

The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee on the Purchase of Wines will also be abolished, but ministers are considering whether another body should continue its work.

Some will be merged back into Whitehall departments and many of those being abolished are advisory bodies, which will now sit as a committee of experts.

Many of the better-known organisations due to be abolished had already been announced by the government, while others were included in a list leaked to the BBC last month.

These include the UK Film Council, the Audit Commission, the Health Protection Agency, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and eight regional development agencies.

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Depending upon one's point of view, the separation of a quango from government might be either to allow its specified functions to be more commercially exercised, independently of politics and changeable government priorities, and unencumbered by civil service practices and bureaucracy;

or else to allow an elected minister to exercise patronage, and extend their influence beyond their term of office, while evading responsibility for the expenditure of public money and the exercise of legal powers. Quangos have also been criticised by the right wing as inherently undemocratic, expensive and conducive to over-extending government.

Consumers 'could suffer' as quango is axed and Office of Fair Trading merged.

Plans to merge the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and the Competition Commission will see a dramatic shake-up of Britain's competition regime.

The Cabinet Office said it will launch a consultation in the new year over its aims to scrap the long-standing "two tier" system.

It wants to save cash by bringing together the competition functions of the two watchdogs, so that the new body will still have responsibility for investigating company mergers, cartels and issues of unfair market dominance.

But the proposals will see the transfer of the OFT's consumer and enforcement responsibilities - understood to be earmarked for Citizens Advice and the trading standards divisions of local authorities. Given that trading standards are based in local authorities and suffering cuts of up to 28% this decision does not seem equitable or even possible. At present OFT look at breaches of different aspects of the law by large national companies. Such investigations require large resources. For example abuses in the credit industry, unfair contract terms would now appear to be delegated to local authorities with as few as three or four enforcement staff.

To compare a couple of QUANGO's

The number of staff employed by the OFT on 6 October 2010 was **627, or 639** including permanent staff on loan or secondment\*. This includes 75 lawyers. Their spending on legal services, such as judicial review and criminal litigation was on average £1.6 million a year over the past 5 years

\*([http://www.offt.gov.uk/shared\\_offt/freedom\\_of\\_information/FoIA-responses/IAT-FOI-93528.pdf](http://www.offt.gov.uk/shared_offt/freedom_of_information/FoIA-responses/IAT-FOI-93528.pdf))

At the other end of the scale we have

The Foreign Office's Government Hospitality Advisory Committee on the Purchase of Wines (GHACPW), which was perhaps among the easiest of the **quangos** to set fire to. The Cabinet Office said that the committee, responsible for choosing wines on behalf of the Foreign Office for all its official functions, would be abolished but its functions are apparently too crucial to scrap altogether and have been placed "under review".

The highly symbolic move will save the government next to nothing, however. In a response to a freedom of information request last week asking how much members of the committee are paid, Robert Alexander, head of government hospitality in the protocol directorate of the Foreign Office, said: "The members and chairman of the GHACPW are not paid. They offer their advice to government hospitality at no cost, although they are entitled to claim travel expenses to attend meetings of the committee.

The committee meets only four times each year for half a day. The four members of the committee are all masters of wine, and the chairman is a retired diplomat, Sir David Wright. I act as secretary to the committee. The committee was established in 1922, and has existed, in one form or another, since."

"Advisory committees" feature heavily in the list of scrapped bodies. Others include the Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites and the Advisory Committee on National Historic Ships, which will have some functions transferred to English Heritage.

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/oct/14/2010-bad-year-wine-committee>)

Dozens of the scrapped bodies are small advisory committees and panels.

Of those, many are to be closed as an advisory committee, only to be reconstituted as a "committee of experts". A Cabinet Office spokesperson could not immediately explain the difference between the two, or what it meant in funding terms.

Advisory committees on hazardous substances, packaging and pesticides will all be turned into committees of experts. The Zoos Forum will be also reconstituted as a committee of experts.

## **List of quangos currently under review by coalition**

### **Public bodies to be abolished (177 bodies)**

Administrative Justice and Tribunal Council

Advisory Board on the Registration of Homeopathic Products

Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens

Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infections

Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances

Advisory Committee on Carbon Abatement Technologies

Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites

Advisory Committee on National Historic Ships

Advisory Committee on Organic Standards

Advisory Committee on Packaging

Advisory Committee on Pesticides

Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection

Advisory Committee on the safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs

Advisory Council on Libraries

Advisory Group on Hepatitis

Advisory Panel on Local Innovation Awards

Advisory Panel on Standards for the Planning Inspectorate

Agricultural Dwelling House Committees (16 bodies)

Agricultural Wages Board for England and Wales  
Agricultural Wages Committees (15 bodies)  
Air Quality Expert Group  
Alcohol Education and Research Council  
Animal Welfare Advisory Committee  
Appointments Commission  
Audit Commission  
British Educational Communications and Technology Agency  
British Nuclear Fuels  
British Shipbuilders  
British Waterways  
Capacity Builders  
Caribbean Board  
Churches Conservation Trust  
Commission for Integrated Transport  
Commission for Rural Communities  
Commissioner for the Compact  
Committee on Agricultural Valuation  
Committee on Carcinogenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment  
Committee on Medical Aspects of Air Pollutants  
Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment  
Committee on Mutagenicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment  
Committee on the Safety of Devices  
Commons Commissioners  
Consular Stakeholder Panel  
Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence  
Courts Boards (19 bodies)  
Crown Court Rule Committee  
Cycling England  
Darwin Advisory Committee  
Disability Employment Advisory Committee  
Disability Living/Attendance Allowance Advisory Board  
Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee  
Expert Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS  
Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards  
Farm Animal Welfare Council  
Food from Britain  
Foreign Compensation Commission  
Gene Therapy Advisory Committee  
General Social Care Council  
General Teaching Council for England  
Genetics and Insurance Committee  
Government Hospitality Advisory Committee on the Purchase of Wines  
Government Strategic Marketing Advisory Board  
Health Protection Agency  
Hearing Aid Council  
Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee  
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority  
Human Genetics Commission  
Human Tissue Authority  
Independent Advisory Group of Sexual Health and HIV  
Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy  
Independent Living Fund  
Independent Review Panel for the Classification of Borderline Products  
Independent Review Panel on the Advertising of Medicines  
Infrastructure Planning Commission  
Inland Waterways Advisory Council  
Insolvency Practitioners Tribunal  
Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisations  
Legal Deposit Advisory Panel  
Legal Services Commission  
Legal Services Ombudsman  
London Thames Gateway Development Corporation\*  
Main Honours Advisory Committee  
Magistrates' Court Rule Committee  
Museums, Libraries and Archives Council  
National Housing and Planning Advice Unit  
National Information Governance Board  
National Joint Registry Steering Committee  
National Policing Improvement Agency  
National Standing Committee for Farm Animal Genetic Resources  
National Tenant Voice  
National Endowment for Science, Technology and Arts  
Office for the Civil Society Advisory Bodies  
Olympic Park Legacy Company\*  
Pesticides Residues Committee  
Public Guardian Board  
Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency  
Railway Heritage Committee  
Regional Development Agencies (8 bodies)  
Renewables Advisory Board  
Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution  
School Food Trust  
School Support Staff Negotiating Body  
Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition  
Security Commission  
Security Industry Authority  
SITPRO  
Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee  
Standards Board for England  
Strategic Advisory Board for Intellectual Property  
Sustainable Development Commission  
Teachers TV Board  
The Theatres Trust  
Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation\*  
UK Chemical Weapons Convention National Authority Advisory Committee  
UK Film Council



Union Modernisation Advisory Fund  
Veterinary Residues Committee  
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Advisory Board  
West Northamptonshire Development Corporation\*  
Women's National Commission  
Zoos Forum

\* = Responsibility devolved to relevant Local Authority

Public bodies to be privatised (4 bodies)  
Construction and Skills Training Board  
Engineering Construction Industry  
Film Industry Training Board  
The Tote Board

**Public bodies to be merged or consolidated (Maximum of 129 bodies reduced to Minimum of 57)**

Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace, (101 bodies – to be reduced to 49)  
Central Arbitration Committee, Single Arbitration Panel  
Certification Office, (as above)  
Competition Appeals Tribunal, Single Tribunals Service  
Competition Service, (as above)  
Copyright Tribunal, (as above)  
Police Advisory Board, (as above)  
Police Negotiating Board, (as above)  
Police Arbitration Tribunal, (as above)  
Rent Assessment Panels, (as above)  
Residential Property Tribunal Service, (as above)  
Valuation Tribunal for England, (as above)  
Valuation Tribunal Service, (as above)  
Crown Prosecution Service, Single Prosecution Service  
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office, (as above)  
English Heritage, Single Heritage Body  
National Heritage Memorial Fund, (as above)  
National Heritage Lottery Fund, (as above)  
Football Licensing Authority, Single Sport Body  
Sport England, (as above)  
UK Sport, (as above)  
Gambling Commission, Single Gambling Regulator  
National Lottery Commission, (as above)  
Ofcom, Single Communications Regulator  
Postcomm, (as above)  
Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, Single Immigration Body  
Pensions Ombudsman, Single Pensions Regulator  
Pensions Protection Fund Ombudsman, (as above)  
Serious Organised Crime Agency, Merged into National Crime Agency  
Public bodies still under review (94 bodies)  
Advisory Committee on Conscientious Objectors  
Advisory Council on Public Records  
Advisory Council on National Records and Archives  
Advisory Council on Historical Manuscripts

Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information  
Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board  
Animal Procedures Committee  
BBC World Service  
British Council  
British Hallmarking Council  
Building Regulations Advisory Committee  
Carbon Trust  
Chief Coroner of England and Wales  
Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission  
Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service  
Children's Workforce Development Council  
Civil Justice Council  
Coal Authority  
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment  
Community Development Foundation  
Competition Commission  
Consumer Council for Water  
Consumer Focus  
Covent Garden Market Authority  
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority  
Design Council  
Diplomatic Service Appeals Board  
Exports Credit Guarantee Department  
Energy Savings Trust  
Environment Agency  
Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Family Justice Council  
Firebuy  
Forestry Commission  
Fuel Poverty Advisory Group  
Historic Royal Palaces  
Homes and Community Agency  
Horserace Betting Levy Board  
Independent Safeguarding Authority  
Industrial Development Advisory Board  
Investigatory Powers Tribunal  
Joint Nature Conservation Committee  
Law Commission of England and Wales  
Leasehold Advisory Service  
Local Better Regulation Office  
National Museums and Galleries (18 bodies\*)  
National Army Museum  
National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services  
National Employer Advisory Board  
National Forest Company  
National Museum of the Royal Navy  
Natural England  
Office for Fair Access  
Office for Fair Trading

OFWAT  
 Partnership for Schools  
 Public Lending Right Committee  
 Public Trustee Youth Justice Board  
 Rail Passengers' Committee  
 Remploy, Ltd.  
 Renewable Fuels Agency  
 Royal Air Force Museum  
 Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew  
 Royal Mint Advisory Committee on the Design of Coins, Medals, Seals and Decorations  
 Sea Fish Industry Authority  
 Student Loans Company  
 Tenant Services Authority  
 The National Archives  
 The Office of the Children's Commissioner  
 The Pensions Advisory Service  
 Training and Development Agency for Schools  
 UK Atomic Energy Agency  
 UK India Round Table  
 UK Supreme Court  
 Visit Britain  
 Visit England  
 Young People's Learning Agency

\* Refers to those National Museums and Galleries in England which are publicly-funded by DCMS and receive rebates of VAT incurred in the course of their activities, in order them to enable free admission to the public. These are: The British Museum; The Imperial War Museum; The National Gallery; The National Maritime Museum; The National Museums & Galleries of Merseyside; The Natural History Museum; The Royal Armouries; The Science Museum; The National Museum of Photography, Film and Television; The National Railway Museum; The National Coal Mining Museum for England; The Tate Galleries; The Wallace Collection; The Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry; Sir John Soane's Museum; The Museum of London; The Geffrye Museum; and The Horniman Museum. Other publicly-funded museums (The British Library, The National Army Museum, etc.) are separately referred to in this list, and museums in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are a devolved matter (although they also receive rebates of VAT).

### **Public bodies which will be retained (350 bodies)**

ACAS  
 Administration of Radioactive Substances Advisory Committee  
 Advisory Committee on Business Appointments  
 Advisory Committee on Civil Costs  
 Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards  
 Advisory Committee on Hazardous Substances  
 Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment  
 Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs  
 Advisory Group on Military Medicine  
 Agricultural Land Tribunal

Architects Registration Board  
Armed Forces Pay Review Body  
Arts Council England  
BBC  
Big Lottery Fund  
British Railway Board (Residuary) Ltd  
British Library  
British Pharmacopoeia Commission  
British Transport Police  
British Wool Marketing Board  
Broads Authority  
Capital for Enterprise  
Care Quality Commission  
Central Advisory Committee on Pensions and Compensation  
Central Office of Information  
Channel 4  
Charity Commission for England and Wales  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Civil Nuclear Police Authority and Constabulary  
Civil Procedure Rule Committee  
Civil Service Appeals Board  
Commission on Human Medicines  
Committee on Climate Change  
Committee on Radioactive Waste Management  
Committee on Standards in Public Life  
Commonwealth Development Corporation  
Commonwealth Scholarship Commission  
Courts Fund Office  
Criminal Cases Review Commission  
Criminal Procedure Rule Committee  
Defence Nuclear Safety Committee  
Defence Scientific Advisory Council  
Equality 2025  
Family Procedure Rule Committee  
Fire Service College  
Food Standards Agency  
Forensic Science Service  
Gangmasters Licensing Authority  
Great North Eastern Railways Ltd  
Higher Education Funding Council for England  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
HM Land Registry  
Horserace Betting Levy Appeal Tribunal  
House of Lords Appointment Commission  
Independent Advisory Panels on Deaths in Custody  
Independent Agricultural Appeals Panel  
Independent Housing Ombudsman  
Independent Monitoring Board for the Military Corrective Training Centre  
Independent Police Complaints Commission

Independent Prison Monitoring Boards (147 bodies)  
Independent Reconfiguration Panel  
Industrial Injuries Advisory Council  
Information Commissioner's Office  
Insolvency Rules Committee  
Judicial Appointments Commission  
Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman  
Land Registration Rule Committee  
Legal Services Board  
Local Government Ombudsman  
London and Continental Railways Ltd  
Low Pay Commission  
Marine Management Organisation  
Marshall Aid Foundation  
Medical Education England  
Migration Advisory Committee  
Monitor  
National DNA Database Ethics Group  
National Employment Savings Trust  
National Parks Authorities (9 bodies)  
National Savings and Investments  
National School of Government  
Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes  
NHS Pay Review Body  
Northern Lighthouse Board  
Nuclear Decommissioning Authority  
Nuclear Liabilities Board  
Nuclear Liability Financing Assurance Board  
Nuclear Research Advisory Council  
Office of Judicial Complaints  
Office for Legal Complaints  
Office of Manpower Economics  
Office of Rail Regulation  
Office of Surveillance Commissioners  
Office of the Public Guardian  
Official Solicitor  
Ofgem  
Ofqual  
Ofsted  
Oil and Pipelines Agency  
Olympic Delivery Authority  
Olympic Lottery Distributor  
Ordnance Survey  
Parole Board  
Partnerships UK  
Pension Protection Fund  
Pensions Regulator  
Planning Inspectorate  
Plant Varieties and Seeds Tribunal  
Police Discipline Appeals Tribunal

Prison Services Pay Review Body  
Prisons and Probation Ombudsman  
Probation Trusts (35 bodies)  
Research Councils (7 bodies)  
Restraint Accreditation Board  
Review Board for Government Contracts  
Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration  
Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art  
Royal Mail Holdings Plc  
S4C  
School Teachers' Review Body  
Science Advisory Council  
Scientific Advisory Committee on the Medical Implications of Less-Lethal Weapons  
Security Vetting Appeals Panel  
Senior Salaries Review Body  
Sentencing Council for England and Wales  
Social Security Advisory Committee  
Technical Advisory Board  
Technical Assessor for Compensation of Miscarriages of Justice  
Technology Strategy Board  
The Royal Mint  
The Westminster Foundation for Democracy  
Traffic Commissioners and Deputies  
Treasure Valuation Committee  
Tribunals Procedure Rule Committee  
Tribunals Service  
Trinity House Lighthouse Service  
UK Anti Doping  
UK Commission for Employment and Skills  
UK Trade and Investment  
Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees (13 bodies)  
Veterinary Products Committee  
Victims Commissioner  
Victim's Advisory Panel

A massive list but the Government were defeated on the Bill to scrap a number of them and they simply changed their minds and policy decisions on others. So whilst some were and are being scrapped, others are having duties transferred to other bodies.