# UK quangos continue to expand despite government promises to reduce them



The Daily Mail has published a detailed examination of the proliferation of quangos—quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations—in the UK, highlighting the discrepancy between repeated government promises to reduce bureaucracy and the ongoing creation and operation of these bodies. Despite long-standing political commitments across multiple administrations to curb the number of quangos, the reality has been an expansion in their numbers, with an increasing number of individuals holding multiple paid positions on various boards.

Keir Starmer's Labour Government, since taking office, has already established 27 new quangos in eight months, including the Fair Work Agency and the Independent Football Regulator, bodies which some argue were previously unnecessary for their respective sectors. This follows a similar pattern seen under Conservative governments. For example, while David Cameron's coalition government was credited with a "bonfire of the quangos," cutting 285 public bodies, it simultaneously created 184 new quangos, many structured as government-owned companies. Subsequent Conservative administrations from 2018 to 2023 also saw the foundation of 17 additional quangos such as the Regulatory Horizons Council and Active Travel England.

The term "quango" originates from a 1982 publication titled "The Quangos in Britain" by Anthony Barker, describing organisations operating at arm’s length from direct government control but to which governments increasingly delegate power. Official figures from two months ago noted the existence of 2,171 such bodies, though an earlier analysis by Democratic Audit suggested over 5,500 entities could be classified as quangos as far back as 1994.

An analysis by the Taxpayers' Alliance reviewing 398 quangos’ annual reports for 2022/23 revealed that 285 individuals served on multiple boards. Notably, one individual occupied nine different quango board roles, collectively earning £145,000 annually.

The article profiles several prominent examples of quango figures, showcasing the range of remuneration and responsibilities, as well as irregular attendance at meetings in some cases.

Peter Hendy, 72, who transitioned to a government ministerial position as rail minister through his life peerage, was previously Chairman of Network Rail. This government-owned company, operating without shareholder oversight, paid Hendy £316,000 a year. The article highlights concerns connecting his tenure with frequent railway disruptions, strikes, and service issues affecting passengers.

Richard Lloyd, Senior Independent Director and Deputy Chairman of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), has been criticised for the regulator's failure to combat investment fraud, which led consumers to lose an estimated £1.17 billion in 2023, according to UK Finance. Despite these criticisms, Lloyd earned £136,000 as interim chairman of the FCA alongside £60,000 from his role as Chairman of the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority.

Catharine Seddon, formerly a BBC documentary-maker, held four quango roles during 2022/23: non-executive director of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (£22,500), senior independent director of the Gambling Commission (£12,500), lay member of the Legal Service Bill (£12,500), and board member of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (£7,500). She has since expanded her portfolio to include a position on the disciplinary committee of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, after concluding his role as Chief of the Royal Air Force (2016–2019), occupies multiple quango positions, including chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority (£130,000) and non-executive director of the UK Atomic Energy Authority (£17,500). He also chairs the RAF Museum, though his remuneration there is undisclosed.

Martin Spencer epitomises the quango landscape with nine appointments in 2022/23, receiving approximately £145,000 in total. His roles included commissioner at the Civil Service Commission (£70,000) and various non-executive positions at the Submarine Delivery Authority, Companies House, Education and Skills Funding Agency, Legal Ombudsman, and NHS Counter-Fraud Authority among others. Attendance records indicate he missed a significant number of scheduled meetings across these bodies.

Emir Feisal, a chartered accountant, managed six quango roles in 2022/23, earning fees from the British Transport Police Authority, Driver and Vehicle Standards Authority, Judicial Appointments Commission, Companies House, Pensions Ombudsman, and Serious Fraud Office. He attended 23 of 32 meetings he was eligible for at four organisations. Feisal has since relinquished some positions while acquiring new roles at the Disclosure and Barring Service and Planning Inspectorate.

Deep Sagar held four posts in 2022/23, including non-executive director roles at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (£7,500) and Legal Aid Agency (£8,000), as well as advisory membership of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (£6,000) and a former position on the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority board (£7,500).

Caroline Corby, a mother of three with a City background in private equity and subsequent career as a writer, also holds multiple quango roles. These include chair of the Parole Board (£37,500), chair of the Professional Standards Authority for Health and Social Care (£35,000), and non-executive director of the Security Industry Authority (£2,500).

Mark Bayley, tied to the rail sector, collected £66,000 as a non-executive director of Network Rail during 2022/23. Additionally, he held non-executive directorships at the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) and the UK Atomic Energy Authority, roles he has since discontinued.

This comprehensive coverage by the Daily Mail presents an intricate view of the expanding role of quangos in the UK’s public sector governance structure, spotlighting the multiple remunerated roles held by certain individuals and the ongoing establishment of these bodies across successive governments.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nhs-england-abolished-quango-labour-next-b2715089.html> - This article discusses the existing quangos in the UK, including prominent bodies like NHS England and Network Rail. It highlights the large number of quangos and their funding, as well as Labour's establishment of new quangos.
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/04/10/britains-quango-state-laid-bare-labour/> - This piece explores the ongoing presence and roles of quangos in the UK, noting Labour's intention to scrutinize these bodies. It mentions the significant public funding received by quangos and their diverse responsibilities.
3. <https://capx.co/quelling-our-quangos-could-save-billions> - This article discusses potential savings from reducing quangos, highlighting their financial implications and the broader financial context of the UK budget.
4. <https://www.icaew.com/insights/viewpoints-on-the-news/2025/mar-2025/chart-of-the-week-quangos> - It details the growth in the number of quangos, or arms-length public bodies, over recent years, providing context on their expansion and roles within the UK's public sector.
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7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14653647/ROSS-CLARK-Labour-27-new-quangos-eight-months-quangocracy-cash.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data