

WIRRAL INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

QUALITY ASSURANCE & IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

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Chief Internal Auditor

Version 1.0

**WIRRAL COUNCIL INTERNAL AUDIT
Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme 2021-22**

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Internal Audit's Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme (QAIP) is designed to provide reasonable assurance to the various stakeholders of the Internal Audit activity that Internal Audit:
- Performs its work in accordance with its Charter, which is consistent with The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards' (PSIAS) definition of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics;
 - Operates in an effective and efficient manner; and
 - Is perceived by stakeholders as adding value and improving Internal Audit's operations.
- 1.2 Internal Audit's QAIP covers all aspects of the Internal Audit activity in accordance with the PSIAS Standard 1300 (Quality Assurance and improvement Programme), including:
- Monitoring the Internal Audit activity to ensure it operates in an effective and efficient manner (1300);
 - Ensuring compliance with the PSIAS' Definition of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics (1300);
 - Helping the Internal Audit activity add value and improve organisational operations (1300);
 - Undertaking both periodic and on-going internal assessments (1311); and
 - Commissioning an external assessment at least once every five years, the results of which are communicated to the Audit & Risk Management Committee in accordance with Standard 1312 and 1320.
- 1.3 The Chief Internal Auditor is ultimately responsible for the QAIP, which covers all types of Internal Audit activities.

2. Internal Assessments

2.1 In accordance with PSIAS Standard 1300, internal assessments are undertaken through both on-going and periodic reviews.

On-going Reviews

2.2 Continual assessments are conducted through:

- Management supervision of all engagements;
- Structured, documented review of working papers and draft reports by Internal Audit management;
- Audit Policies and Procedures used for each engagement to ensure consistency, quality and compliance with appropriate planning, fieldwork and reporting standards;
- Comprehensive Internal Quality Reviews of audit processes including report findings, conclusions and working papers undertaken prior to completion of all audits. Control Checklist completed to ensure consistency of reporting and reduce administrative error (Appendix A);
- Feedback from audit clients obtained through completion of Customer Questionnaires at the closure of each engagement (Appendix B);
- Auditor Skills Appraisal Assessments undertaken following completion of audit assignments designed to evaluate an individual's performance against PSIAS best practice and the CIPFA Guidance document "The Excellent Internal Auditor" to identify areas of good practice and any development/improvement opportunities (Appendix C).
- Monitoring of internal performance targets (Appendix D) and quarterly outturn reporting to Audit & Risk Management Committee;
- Review and approval of all final reports, recommendations and levels of assurance by the Chief internal Auditor or Audit Manager; and
- Regular team briefings attended by all members of the Internal Audit team and chaired by the Chief Internal Auditor;

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Periodic Reviews

- 2.3 Periodic assessments are designed to assess conformance with Internal Audit's Charter, the PSIAS' Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the efficiency and effectiveness of internal audit in meeting the needs of its various stakeholders. Periodic assessments are conducted through:
- Quarterly Internal Audit Update Reports, presented to the Audit & Risk Management Committee;
 - Annual performance evaluation form to all Chief Officers/Heads of Directorates (Appendix E);
 - Annual risk assessments, in accordance with the Internal Audit Strategy, for the purposes of annual audit planning;
 - Annual review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit, undertaken by the Chief Internal Auditor culminating in the identification of actions for development and improvement and reported via the Chief Internal Auditors Annual Report;
 - Annual review of compliance against the requirements of this Quality Assurance & Improvement Programme, the results of which are reported to Senior Leadership Team and the Audit & Risk Management Committee via the Chief Internal Auditors Annual Report;
 - Feedback from the Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Chair of the Audit & Risk Management Committee to inform the annual appraisal of the Chief Internal Auditor, in accordance with Standard 1100;
 - Periodic Skills and Competency assessments conducted for each Internal Auditor based on the principles of the CIPFA Guidance document "The Excellent Internal Auditor" (2010) to inform the appraisal process (Post Audit Assessment).
- 2.4 Improvement/development actions arising from assessments will be reported to the Audit & Risk Management Committee. The Chief Internal Auditor will implement appropriate follow-up to any identified actions to ensure continual improvement of the service.
- 2.5 Any significant areas of non-compliance with the PSIAS that are identified through internal assessment will be reported in the Chief Internal Auditors Annual Report and used to inform the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

3. External Assessments

- 3.1 External assessments will appraise and express an opinion about internal audit's conformance with the PSIAS' Definition of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics and include recommendations for improvement, as appropriate.

Frequency of External Assessment

- 3.2 An external assessment will be conducted at least every five years, in accordance with the PSIAS. Appointment of the External Assessor and scope of the External Assessment will be endorsed by the Audit & Risk Management Committee.

Scope of External Assessment

- 3.3 The external assessment will consist of broad scope of coverage that includes the following elements of Internal Audit activity:

- Conformance with the *Standards*, Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and internal audit's Charter, plans policies, procedures, practices, and any applicable legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Integration of the Internal Audit activity into Wirral's governance framework, including the audit relationship between and among the key groups involved in the process;
- Tools and techniques used by Internal Audit;
- The mix of knowledge, experiences, and disciplines within the staff, including staff focus on process improvement delivered through this Quality Assurance and Improvement programme;
- A determination whether Internal Audit adds value and improves Wirral Council operations.

- 3.3.1 Results of external assessments will be provided to the Senior Leadership Team and the Audit & Risk Management Committee. The external assessment report will be accompanied by a written action plan in response to significant comments and recommendations identified. Any significant areas of non-compliance will be reported in the Annual Report of the Chief internal Auditor and in the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

4. Review of the QAIP

These documents will be appropriately updated following any changes to the PSIAS or internal audit's operating environment and will be reviewed at least on an annual basis.

APPENDIX A

QUALITY REVIEW RECORD

Audit Assignment:

Gateway	Review Comments	Action Undertaken	Date	Outcome Agreed	Date
Letter of Engagement					
Risk and Control Evaluation Agreed Testing Approach					
Risk and Control Evaluation Findings / Recom.					
Subsections if applicable (as agreed on the Assignment Sheet, e.g. RCE risks, expected controls, findings)					
Draft Report: Any other key areas as agreed on the Assignment Sheet:					

Quality Reviewed by:

Date

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AUDIT REPORT- QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST

Report Title:

Cover	
Report title, Draft issue date and Distribution details including relevant officer's names / job titles have been completed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contents	
Headings and sub-headings match those in the body of the report	<input type="checkbox"/>
Page numbers are correct	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report title has been added to the footer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive Summary	
Appropriate length	<input type="checkbox"/>
No "....." or "XXXXX" remain from the template	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assurance opinion is provided, is relative to the risk and agreed with client	<input type="checkbox"/>
Correct no of recommendations and appropriate priority rating identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highlighted instructions have been removed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Report Headings	
Correctly Identified	<input type="checkbox"/>
All relevant detail included and numbered correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review of Effectiveness	
Appropriately summarised, supported by evidence obtained and numbered correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>
Areas of Good Practice	
Appropriate, balanced and correctly annotated and numbered	<input type="checkbox"/>
Findings & Recommendations	
Numbering within sections is consecutive	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendation(s) edited to correctly reflect number of recommendations made.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Priority levels included and correct	<input type="checkbox"/>
Action Plan	
Recommendations are identical to those in the "Findings & Recommendations" section	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appendix	
Customer Feedback form included	<input type="checkbox"/>
General	
Bullet style used is consistent throughout report and aligned with text: • <i>Example</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bulleted lists formatted:	<input type="checkbox"/>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • item a; • item b; and • item c. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text is justified correctly and tables are aligned to text/page margins	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final Reports	
Ensure the draft watermark has been removed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cover: Final issue date and additional Distribution details including relevant officer's names / job titles have been completed and report authors etc identified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working Papers	
Working papers completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality Review Record included/completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post Audit Assessment scheduled/completed	<input type="checkbox"/>
All Relevant Quality Checks identified completed	<input type="checkbox"/>

Checked by (Auditor):	
Date:	

Final checked by (Manager):	
All issues identified recorded on Item 4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date:	

APPENDIX B

9. Customer Feedback

To help us to improve the service we deliver, it is important that you provide us with regular feedback. Therefore, please complete the following:

How satisfied were you with the overall service received from Internal Audit?								
Please Indicate	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
<i>Please explain your answer</i>								

If you would like to discuss any issues regarding this audit, please contact the Chief Internal Auditor.

Completed by:..... Signed: Date:.....

AUDITOR SKILLS APPRAISAL SYSTEM

POST-AUDIT ASSESSMENT

Guidance for Completion

This assessment should be completed and discussed by the auditor and the manager within one week of the completion of the audit review and sending of the audit report.

The process should take no more than one hour in total.

The audit details should be considered, and details of any variances of hours spent on the audit, and any other relevant comments or contextual information considered.

The assessment should consider the auditor's competence in delivering the audit and considering the categories identified on the Assignment Sheet.

The auditor's development should then be discussed in light of their objectives and planned development opportunities identified during the assessment and any training or development needs agreed and notified to the Chief Internal Auditor or Audit Manager.

Please refer to the "Auditor Skills Framework - Explanatory Note" for further details (link on Assignment Sheet).

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INTERNAL AUDIT ASSIGNMENT SHEET			
Audit: <i>(Review and follow-up)</i>			
Auditors assigned to the task :	Audit Hours		Reasons for Variance
	Budget	Actual	
Review			
1.			
2.			
Follow-Up			
1.			
2.			
Audit Objectives :			
<p>Guidance note (to be deleted): <i>The wording for the Audit Objective should be consistent between the Assignment Sheet, Letter of Engagement and Draft Report</i> Section 2210 of the PSIAS concerning Engagement Objectives includes the following requirements: <i>Internal auditors must conduct a preliminary assessment of the risks relevant to the activity under review. Engagement objectives must reflect the results of this assessment. Internal auditors must consider the probability of significant errors, fraud, non-compliance and other exposures when developing the engagement objectives.</i></p>			
Audit Scope :			
<p>Guidance note (to be deleted): <i>The wording for the Audit Scope should be consistent between the Assignment Sheet, Letter of Engagement and Draft Report. If the scope is changed during the audit this should be reflected in the Audit report. The Audit Scope should include extent of coverage/special areas and Reason for covering areas: System</i></p>			

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<p><i>Review, Tests, Probity, Investigation, other (specify).</i> <i>Mention should also be made regarding: obtaining evidence to support the Review of Effectiveness; and, if applicable, suggestions made by SLT members.</i></p>
<p>Key Gateway Reviews:</p>
<p>Guidance note (to be deleted): <i>This should include a clear reference to the specific stages of the audit when the Lead Auditor and Programme Lead / Audit Manager will agree and sign-off the audit approach (these will be referred to as 'Gateway Reviews'). The gateway reviews will always include LoE, Risk & Control Evaluation (previously Item 8/9) and Draft Report. (The review stages may include additional stages depending on the complexity and risk of the review and relevant experience of the LA / PL).</i> <i>Section 2240 of the PSIAS concerning Engagement Work Programme includes the following requirements : Internal auditors must develop and document work programmes that achieve the engagement objectives. Work programmes must include the procedures for identifying, analysing, evaluating and documenting information during the engagement. The work programme must be approved prior to its implementation and any adjustments approved promptly.</i></p>
<p>Prepared by:</p>
<p>Date:</p>
<p>Agreed by:</p>
<p>Date:</p>
<p>Post Audit Assessment – see page 2</p>

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Post Audit Assessment
<p>Guidance note (to be deleted): <i>For all audits completed there should be a review discussion between the auditor and reviewer. The discussion should include questions such as : What aspects of the audit went well ? Are there any areas where the delivery, efficiency or effectiveness of the audit could have been improved ? Are there any key points emanating from the review that need to be considered when planning the next audit ? Please record here any agreed issues to be noted for future planning purposes. Or confirm review held and no matters requiring to be noted for future planning purposes.</i></p> <p><i>The job review discussion may on occasion highlight learning or development opportunities for the auditor, and in a similar vein potentially upward feedback for the reviewer. If significant issues arise, e.g. performance issues in relation to the behavioural, technical and management skills expected as outlined within the Auditor Skills Framework - link, they should be reported in an email to the respective line manager and not recorded on this form.</i></p>
Signed :
Signed :
Date :

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INTERNAL AUDIT – PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Appendix D

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE	HOW IT'S MEASURED	TARGET
COMPLIANCE	PSIAS Compliance	Level of compliance with requirements of PSIAS / LGAN ¹	PSIAS Annual Self-Assessment External Assessment (5 yearly)	100%
PRODUCTIVITY	Audit days utilised/audit turnaround	Number of audit assignments delivered within ten days of completion of fieldwork	APACE audit time recording / Performance Spreadsheet management system	>95%
OUTPUTS	Planned Audits completed	%age of planned audit reviews completed	Time recording / Performance Spreadsheet management system	>90%
QUALITY	Client Satisfaction	%age of Post Audit Customer Feedback Questionnaires in which management are "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with quality of audit	Post Audit Questionnaire Annual Performance Evaluation Form (Heads of Service)	100%
ADDED VALUE	Management Perception	%age of positive responses in respect of perceived benefits and value of Internal Audit work	Customer Post Audit Feedback Questionnaire	95%
ADDED VALUE	Corporate Management Satisfaction	%age of High priority recommendations agreed with clients	Returned Audit Action Plans	100%

¹ Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) / CIPFA Local Government Application Note (LGAN)

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APPENDIX E

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM

Directorate

A number of performance indicators have been adopted by Internal Audit and one of the most important of these is your view of the service you receive.

Please spare the time to complete and return this survey.

Your responses will help Internal Audit to develop and maintain high levels of service.

Are you satisfied that:

Internal Audit is proactive in ensuring its role and objectives are understood	Click to respond
Internal Audit exhibits a good understanding of the Council's objectives	Click to respond
There are clear and effective lines of communication between Internal Audit and yourself	Click to respond
Internal Audit Reports are a valuable management tool	Click to respond
Internal Audit can be relied upon to provide objective and independent advice	Click to respond
Internal Audit staff respect confidentiality	Click to respond

Please add any additional comments and/or suggestions

Name	
Position	
Date	

Thank you for your time in completing this survey.

Please return to: Mark Niblock, Chief Internal Auditor