

Internal Audit Services



Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme

2023/24

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Internal Assessments	3
3. External Assessments	4
4. Service Developments	5
5. Review of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme	5
6. Appendices	
A. Internal Audit Quality Control Checklist	6
B. Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire	14
C. Internal Performance Targets	15

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Internal Audit's Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme 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 Mission for Internal Audit, 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 Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme covers all aspects of the Internal Audit activity in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, Standard 1300 (Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme), including:-
- Monitoring the Internal Audit activity to ensure it operates in an effective and efficient manner;
 - Ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, Mission for Internal Audit, Definition of Internal Auditing and Code of Ethics;
 - Helping the Internal Audit activity add value and improve organisational operations;
 - Undertaking both periodic and on-going internal assessments; and
 - Commissioning an external assessment at least once every five years, the results of which are communicated to the Audit Panel and the Greater Manchester Pension Fund Local Board in accordance with Standard 1312.
- 1.3 The Head of Risk Management and Audit Services is ultimately responsible for the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, which covers all types of Internal Audit activities, including consulting.

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;
 - Internal Quality Control Checklist to ensure consistency of reporting and reduce administrative error (**Appendix A**);
 - Feedback from audit clients obtained through Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires at the closure of each engagement (**Appendix B**);
 - Monitoring of internal performance targets (**Appendix C**) and annual outturn reporting to the Audit Panel;
 - Review and approval of all final reports, recommendations and levels of assurance by the Head of Risk Management and Audit Services and Principal Auditors; and
 - Regular team briefings.

Periodic Reviews

- 2.3 Periodic assessments are designed to assess conformance with Internal Audit's Strategy, Charter, the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Mission and Definition of Internal Auditing, the Core Principles for the Professional Practice 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 Update Reports, presented to the Audit Panel and the Greater Manchester Pension Fund Local Board;
- Annual risk assessments, in accordance with the Audit Charter 2023/24 and the Audit Manual, for the preparation of the annual audit plan;
- Annual review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit, undertaken by the Head Risk Management and Audit, using the PSIAS standards as the basis for the self-assessment;
- Annual review of compliance against the requirements of this Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, the results of which are reported to the Audit Panel;
- Feedback from the Director of Finance, the Assistant Director of Finance and Audit Panel to inform the annual appraisal of the Head of Internal Audit, in accordance with Standard 1100;
- Annual Development Reviews conducted for each Internal Auditor based on the principles of the CIPFA Guidance document “The Excellent Internal Auditor” (2010) to inform the appraisal process and identify individual training and development needs.

2.4 Results of internal assessments will be reported to the Audit Panel and the Greater Manchester Pension Fund Local Board annually. The Head of Risk Management and Audit 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 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards that are identified through internal assessment will be reported in the Review of Internal Audit Report and Head of Risk Management and Audit’s Annual Report, which are both used to inform the Annual Governance Statement.

3. EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

3.1 External assessments will appraise and express an opinion about Internal Audit’s conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Mission of Internal Audit, 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 Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. A system of Peer Reviews will be undertaken across the North West Chief Audit Executive Group. The Council’s Internal Audit Service was assessed in March 2018 and was judged to conform to the standards, some minor recommendations were made during the Peer Review and these are detailed in Section 4 below.

Scope of External Assessment

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

- Conformance with the *Standards*, Mission of Internal Audit, Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and Internal Audit’s Charter, Strategy, plans, policies, procedures, practices, and any applicable legislative and regulatory requirements;
- Integration of the Internal Audit activity into Tameside’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 Tameside's operations.

3.4 Results of external assessments will be provided to the Director of Finance and the Assistant Director of Finance and the Audit Panel/Greater Manchester Pension Fund Local Board. 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 Head of Risk Management and Audit and in the Annual Governance Statement.

3.5 The next scheduled assessment will be conducted in Summer 2023.

4. SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 One recommendation remains outstanding from the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards External Peer Review conducted in March 2018, which related to the role of the SIRO.

Recommendation	Progress as at February 2023
<p>PSIAS Standard 1130 Consider allocating the formal SIRO designation to a chief officer, even if the internal audit team continues to support the SIRO function</p>	<p>This is still ongoing.</p>

4.2 Other improvements to processes and procedures are identified below.

Improvement	Responsible Officer/Proposed Deadline
<p>To review the audit process and the Quality Control Checklist to ensure they work effectively.</p>	<p>The Quality Control Checklist has been reviewed and updated. Interim Head of Risk Management and Audit Principal Auditor Actioned</p>
<p>To review all fraud related documentation, policies and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Principal Auditor/Fraud Investigators December 2023</p>

5. REVIEW OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

5.1 This document will be appropriately updated following any changes to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards or Internal Audit's operating environment and will be reviewed at least on an annual basis.

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST – NON SCHOOL AUDITS			
AUDIT:		REF NO:	
No.	Task	AUDITOR INITIALS/DATE	SUPERVISOR INITIALS/DATE
1	ASSIGNMENT PLANNING		
1.1	<p>Before an audit is allocated, the Principal Auditor needs to speak to the relevant AD and ask if the audit is still relevant and whether there are any issues in the area preventing us from doing the work.</p> <p>Need to ascertain from the AD if there are any:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman complaints • Significant CRM complaints • Court Proceedings against the Council • HR Issues <p>Principal Auditor to also check with Insurance to ensure there are no insurance issues/claims.</p>		
1.2	If any issues are highlighted, discuss further with HR/Legal to determine whether the audit should go ahead or be postponed.		
1.3	Assignment allocated to auditor(s) from Audit Plan and Galileo updated.		
1.4	Speak to key Auditee to agree the timing of the audit.		
1.5	<p>Familiarisation with audit area by reading/ reviewing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plan/other background papers/information (Intranet) • Review previous working paper file, report and PAR. Note any outstanding issues, which may impact upon the terms of reference. • CIPFA Matrices/TIS Online/Better Governance Forum 		
1.6	<p>Meet with key auditee(s) to discuss and agree the Terms of Reference and the expected dates for the Draft Report and Closure Meeting.</p> <p>Request access to the relevant systems as required. Also request any data downloads/reports that could be obtained to carry out analysis and testing.</p>		

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST – NON SCHOOL AUDITS

1.7	Draft Terms of Reference for review by Principal/Senior Auditor		
1.8	Email approved Terms of Reference to: Auditee AD/D Chief Executive (SP) Monitoring Officer (SS) Section 151 Officer (PW) Executive Member Head of Legal Services AD People and Workforce Development Head of Resource Management External Audit (GM) BCC to Head of Risk Management and Audit		
1.9	Update Galileo with audit start date and the date the Terms of Reference was issued.		
2	FIELDWORK		
2.1	For each area of risk being reviewed, identify expected controls that need to be in place to manage those risks. Each risk and its expected controls need to be entered onto Galileo on the Internal Control Evaluation/Action Plan (ICEAP).		
2.2	To ascertain the actual controls in place send a copy of the ICEAP to the auditee and make an appointment to visit them to agree the actual controls.		
2.3	Record the actual controls in place as per management on the ICEAP at the meeting using your laptop where possible to reduce re-working.		
2.4	Compare the actual controls against the expected controls.		
2.5	Where there is no control or the control is unsatisfactory, record this as a finding and make an appropriate recommendation.		
2.6	Where the control appears to be satisfactory identify your testing and complete the testing section within Galileo.		
2.7	Agree test programme and prioritisation of the tests with Principal/Senior Auditor.		
2.8	Conduct tests and record results in Galileo in the Testing sections, attaching working papers where appropriate.		

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST – NON SCHOOL AUDITS

	Use IDEA where possible to select samples and also to carry out tests.		
2.9	Monitor time closely to ensure planned days are not exceeded. Ensure you leave yourself with some contingency days to undertake follow up work needed after the Draft Report and working papers have been reviewed by Principal/Senior.		
2.10	If you think you will exceed your planned days, you need to discuss progress with your Principal/Senior to review the scope and testing plan for the audit.		
2.11	Update the ICEAP with test results in terms of concise findings and recommendations.		
2.12	Discuss findings and recommendations with key auditee(s). Do not indicate what level of assurance may be allocated at this stage, in case it is altered when it is reviewed.		
3	REPORTING		
3.1	Produce the Draft Report comprising of Executive Summary, ICEAP and appropriate audit opinion.		
3.2	Ensure all required documents in respect of the audit are scanned into Galileo and stored in the working papers section.		
3.3	Pass the completed work and Draft report to Principal/Senior Auditor for review.		
3.4	Review notes compiled by Principal/Senior Auditor and followed up by Auditor concerned.		
3.5	If any HR or legal issues have been identified as part of the audit please arrange to speak to the Head of Legal Services or AD People and Workforce Development for clarification. The objective here is to ensure that Legal agree with the auditee and that HR can give consideration to issues highlighted as there may be wider implications.		
3.6	Auditor to start completion of the Job Appraisal Sheet.		
3.7	Send Draft Report to each Auditee via e-mail, stating that they will be contacted to arrange a closure meeting to discuss the report and obtain management responses.		

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST – NON SCHOOL AUDITS

	Inform auditee(s) that they will be expected to have prepared responses to the recommendations and completed the action plan prior to the closure meeting.		
3.8	If a LOW Level of Assurance is given ensure that the appropriate AD is sent a copy of the Draft Report.		
3.9	Update Galileo accordingly.		
3.10	Arrange Closure Meeting within 2 weeks (of issue date) with all auditees responsible for implementing the recommendations (Principal/Senior Auditor to attend as appropriate).		
3.11	Attend Closure Meeting. At the meeting check again with all present whether there are any: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman complaints • Significant CRM complaints • Court Proceedings against the Council • HR Issues Also check again with Insurance to ensure there are no insurance issues/claims?		
3.12	If there are any issues the audit must be discussed with the Head of Risk Management and Audit Services.		
3.13	Repeat stage 3.5 if any management responses received refer to Legal or HR.		
3.14	Compile Final Report, incorporating management responses within the Action Plan. (Also, action to be taken by whom and by when)		
3.15	Final Report reviewed by Principal/Senior Auditor.		
3.16	Final Report to be signed off by AD/D – Ask AD/D if any: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman complaints • Significant CRM complaints • Court Proceedings against the Council • HR Issues • Insurance Claims 		
3.17	Email Final Report to Head of Risk Management and Audit for review before it is issued.		
3.18	Email Final Report in PDF to: Auditees Director/Assistant Director, Chief Executive (SP) Monitoring Officer (SS)		

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST – NON SCHOOL AUDITS

	Section 151 Officer (PW) Executive Member(s) Head of Resource Management External Audit		
3.19	If the Level of Assurance is LOW email a copy of the report to Councillor Oliver Ryan.		
3.20	Update Galileo accordingly, ensuring that the Level of assurance is entered correctly and that a copy of the Final Report is saved.		
3.21	Email Customer Questionnaire (CQ) and update Galileo accordingly. Add calendar date for follow up in two weeks.		
3.22	If CQ is not returned within two weeks of issue, chase it up and ensure receipt of completed questionnaire. Any problems should be reported to Principal/Senior Auditor.		
3.23	Enter date of receipt and CQ results into Galileo.		
3.24	Job Appraisal Sheet to be completed and discussed with Auditor.		
3.25	Ensure Galileo has been updated, a copy of the Final Report uploaded and the Level of Assurance recorded correctly.		
3.26	Auditor to schedule PAR in calendar for 3 or 6 months' time depending on level of assurance given.		
3.27	Update the PAR Spreadsheet with details		
4	FOLLOW UP		
4.1	<p>Before a Post Audit Review (PAR) is allocated, the Principal Auditor needs to speak to the relevant AD and ask if the PAR is still relevant and whether there are any issues in the area preventing us from doing the work.</p> <p>Need to ascertain from the AD if there are any:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ombudsman complaints • Significant CRM complaints • Court Proceedings against the Council • HR Issues <p>Principal Auditor to also check with Insurance to ensure there are no insurance issues/claims.</p>		
4.2	Principal Auditor to determine the number of days for the PAR and update Galileo accordingly.		

QUALITY CONTROL CHECKLIST – NON SCHOOL AUDITS

4.3	When allocated with a PAR issue the Post Audit Review documentation to the responsible Officers.		
4.4	Update the PAR spreadsheet.		
4.5	Arrange a meeting to discuss the PAR and obtain confirmation of what action has been taken.		
4.6	Conduct PAR, based upon information received. Ensure that adequate testing is undertaken and evidence is obtained and uploaded on to Galileo to support implementation of the recommendation(s).		
4.7	Compile PAR, incorporating management responses and Internal Audit Findings.		
4.8	PAR reviewed by Principal/Senior Auditor.		
4.9	Obtain sign-off from AD/D - Ask AD/D if any complaints, ombudsman complaints or HR issues are ongoing which may be affected if the PAR were to be issued.		
4.10	Email a copy of PAR to the Head of Risk Management and Audit for comments. Indicate whether it contains any outstanding significant recommendations that need to be reported to the Audit Panel or Ethics and Audit Working Group.		
4.11	Once review points have been cleared the Head of Risk Management and Audit will obtain clearance from Legal and HR before the PAR can be issued.		
4.12	Issue PAR to all recipients of the Final Report.		
4.13	Update Galileo accordingly		
4.14	Update the PAR Spreadsheet accordingly.		
4.15	Save a copy of the finalised PAR in Galileo.		
4.16	If a follow up PAR is needed, schedule in calendar, update Galileo and the PAR Spreadsheet accordingly.		
4.17	When the follow up PAR is due, follow steps 4.1 – 4.13		

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Internal Audit Services

Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire – (Title of Audit) Auditor –

Internal Audit is continuously looking at ways of improving the quality of service that we provide. Please could you complete this questionnaire to help us ensure that the service we provide is of the highest possible standard.

Please put a score against each statement using the criteria below:-

Ratings

5 = Excellent 4 = Good 3 = Fair 2 = Weak 1 = Unsatisfactory

Audit Planning

Consultation of audit coverage, process and timing.	
---	--

Audit Process

Were interruptions to your operations kept to a minimum?	
--	--

How well did we achieve the scope and objectives?	
---	--

Did the audit cover the relevant business risks?	
--	--

Quality of Audit Report

Clarity of report.	
--------------------	--

How well did we communicate the findings of the audit prior to issuing the draft report?	
--	--

Accuracy of audit findings.	
-----------------------------	--

Value/practicality of audit recommendations.	
--	--

Timing

Duration of the audit.	
------------------------	--

Timeliness of the draft audit report.	
---------------------------------------	--

Auditor

Communication with yourself and the auditees.	
---	--

At the conclusion of the audit how well did the auditor understand the subject?	
---	--

Was the auditor responsive to what he/she was told?	
---	--

Equality

During the process have you been treated fairly with regards to ethnicity, gender, disability, ages, religion/belief and sexual orientation?	
--	--

If you have marked any of the questions overleaf as **Weak** or **Unsatisfactory**, please could you take a moment to detail why in the box below.

Was there anything about the audit that you especially liked/disliked?

Do you have any comments about the format of the audit report?

Was the audit useful?

Was the audit relevant?

Have you any suggestions as to how we can improve?

In order to continuously improve the service we provide, all feedback received is recorded and analysed. Please be aware that you may be contacted for further details regarding your comments or suggestions.

Form completed by:

Name:_____ **Date:**_____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it to christine.weston@tameside.gov.uk

INTERNAL AUDIT – PERFORMANCE TARGETS

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE	HOW IT'S MEASURED	TARGET	REPORTED TO
Compliance	Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Compliance	Level of compliance with requirements of Public Sector Internal Audit Standards / Local Government Application Note	Annual Self-Assessment / External Assessment (5 yearly)	100%	Audit Panel
Outputs	Audit Coverage	% of Plan Complete	Audit time recording / workflow management system	90%	Audit Panel
Outputs	Audit Impact	% Recommendations Implemented	Audit time recording / workflow management system	90%	Audit Panel
Quality	Customer Satisfaction	90% of customers "satisfied ≥ 65%"	Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire	100%	Audit Panel
Outputs	Fraud Cases	No. of Irregularities Reported/Investigated	Audit time recording / workflow management system	Downward Trend	Audit Panel

INTERNAL AUDIT – PERFORMANCE DATA

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE	HOW IT'S MEASURED	TARGET	REPORTED TO
OUTPUTS	Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Compliance	Final Reports Issued Number/Type of Recommendations Made Percentage of High Recommendations Made	Extracted from Audit Management Software.	Downward Trend	SLT - Corporate Health/ Performance Monitoring Scorecard