



Audit and Performance Systems Committee

Report Title	Internal Audit – Adult Social Work Transport
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Report Author (Job Title, Organisation)	David Hughes, Chief Internal Auditor
Report Number	HSCP.17.121
Date of Report	7 February 2018
Date of Meeting	2 March 2018

1: Purpose of the Report

A protocol was agreed by the Audit and Performance Systems Committee and Aberdeen City Council's Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee regarding sharing the outcomes from Internal Audit work undertaken in the respective organisations following consideration of the outcomes by the "lead" Committee.

The purpose of this report is to present the outcome from the planned audit of Adult Social Work Transport that was included in the 2017/18 Internal Audit Plan for Aberdeen City Council. The Internal Audit report was considered by the Aberdeen City Council Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee in November 2017.

2: Summary of Key Information

The Social Work Transport team, part of the Council's Public Transport Unit (PTU), arranges transport for Social Work service users where it is assessed as being required by Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership. In 2016/17 the Service spent £246,563 on contracted transport.

The objective of this audit was to consider whether appropriate arrangements are in place to secure transportation in a cost effective and well managed way. In general this is the case, however recommendations have been made, and agreed with management, to help improve governance arrangements.

In order to ensure clarity and make improvements regarding consistency in record keeping, a Service Level Agreement will be introduced and the Service will review the current protocols and practice for arrangement of travel.

The Data Protection Act requires consent from individuals to process their personal sensitive information, including transferring it to others for provision of



Audit and Performance Systems Committee

services. Such data is regularly provided to the PTU and then to transport operators but consent is not specifically recorded on paperwork. Whilst operators are contractually required to comply with Data Protection requirements and the Council's Data Protection Policy, ensure that drivers are appropriately registered with the PVG Scheme and have approval from the PTU to be utilised, there is still a risk of a breach of Data Protection regulations. The Service has agreed to review and, if required, amend practice

Records relating to service provision are maintained in a number of areas with CareFirst, the Social Work case management system, being used inconsistently whilst anomalies were identified in other data held and supplied by the PTU. Whilst this did not impact on actual arrangements or amounts paid, improvements would allow the Health and Social Care Partnership to determine whether arrangements that are in place are as required. The Services have agreed with recommendations made in this respect.

Contracts are called-off at agreed rates or through seeking competitive quotations from providers on a tendered framework agreement. The original framework was tendered through the Public Contracts Scotland website which has a Quick Quotes section that can be used for obtaining competitive quotes during the course of the contract. A manual system based on email returns from providers is being used instead which presents additional risks to accuracy and transparency of the decision making process. The PTU has agreed to start using the PCS functionality at the commencement of the next framework agreement in April 2019.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has given written approval to the Team Leader of the PTU and 2 named Technical Officers to sign the call off contracts, bookings and order forms, up to a total contract value of £60,000. Contracts above this level must be signed by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services or Legal Manager. In 6 of 16 cases reviewed, the PTU had, at the date of the audit, not passed the order form to Legal for signing where the contract was over £60,000. It was identified that in 7 of the 16 cases (including 1 of the 6 above) an Acting Technical Officer was signing the order forms for standard services and call off terms and conditions. However, this officer did not have recorded delegated authority to do so. There were 7 Framework Agreements (covering 15 of the 16 cases reviewed) signed by Legal & Democratic Services on the day they were produced to Internal Audit, one year after the Service had commenced. Such delays could make it difficult to enforce all contract terms in the event of dispute and the relevant Services have agreed to address the issues arising.



Audit and Performance Systems Committee

3: Equalities, Financial, Workforce and Other Implications

Equalities – An equality impact assessment is not required because the reason for this report is for Committee to discuss, review and comment on the Internal Audit Plan for 2017/18 and there will be no differential impact, as a result of this report, on people with protected characteristics.

Financial – There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Workforce – There are no workforce implications arising directly from this report.

Other – There are no other implications arising directly from this report.

4: Management of Risk

Identified risk(s): The Internal Audit process considers risks involved in the areas subject to review. Any risk implications identified through the Internal Audit process are as detailed in the resultant report.

How might the content of this report impact or mitigate the known risks: Where risks have been identified during the Internal Audit process, recommendations have been made to management in order to mitigate these risks.

5: Recommendations

It is recommended that the Audit and Performance Systems Committee review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within this report.