



SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE

Internal Audit Progress Report

11 March 2024

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1 Key messages

The Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 was approved by the Audit and Governance Committee at the 13 March 2023 meeting. We will work closely with management to deliver an internal audit programme which remains flexible and agile to ensure it meets your needs in the current circumstances.



Fieldwork for the remaining audits for the 2023/24 internal audit plan has been completed or has commenced, with the reports due to be presented at the next Audit and Governance Committee meeting.



One report has been issued as final since the last meeting: Commercial Premises Inspections (5.23/24), details of which are provided in Section 2 below. A draft report has been issued for the Stocks and Stores Departmental review, this will be presented to the next Audit and Governance Committee meeting.



The Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 is being presented at this meeting as a separate agenda item for approval.

2 Reports

2.1 Summary of final reports being presented to this committee

This section summarises the reports that have been finalised since the last meeting.

Assignment	Actions agreed			
	L	M	H	N/A
Commercial Premises Inspections (5.23/24)	2	4	0	0

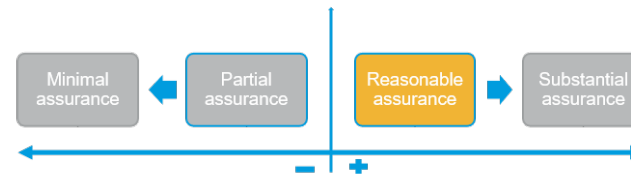
Executive Summary

The Service are responsible for conducting Business Safety Audits also known as commercial inspections on circa 60,000 commercial properties within the three districts of Barnsley and Rotherham, Sheffield and Doncaster. The visits of these properties are to ensure compliance with the requirements of The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and assist with ensuring the business safety and resilience across the county through the targeted provision of advice and support.

We have undertaken a review of the key controls and processes in relation to commercial inspections to provide assurance that the controls are sufficiently designed and are operating in practice. This included a focus on the Risk Based Audit Programme on how the Service determine which properties require prioritising and the processes conducted for any enforcement action where non-compliance is identified. This is a key risk area as there is an increased risk of fires or harm to the businesses and the public if fire safety practices are inadequate across these commercial properties.

Overall assurance rating and management actions:

Our review determined that the Service had controls in place in relation to conducting commercial inspections, however, our review highlighted areas for improvement, specifically on the design of the control framework. The review led to the agreement of four medium and two low priority actions with management.



The medium management actions are documented below:

- The Risk Based Audit Programme has been built to support the Business Fire Safety Team with selecting a sample of non-domestic premises that are required for audit. The premises are categorised into risk categories that are either scored as high or low with high properties being prioritised for an inspection every five years. With the current full time equivalent staff within the Business Fire Safety



Assignment	Actions agreed			
	L	M	H	N/A
<p>Team and the amount of high risk properties within the three districts, there is potential that high risk properties will not be inspected within the five year frequency due to the insufficient capacity.</p> <p>Management action 1: The Service will reassess its existing risk based scoring system and explore the incorporation of a "medium" risk category within its Risk Based Audit Programme. (Medium) – 30 June 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through our sample testing on 20 commercial inspections, we identified that among the 15 high-risk inspections, two had been conducted beyond the required five year frequency. <p>Management action 2: The Business Fire Safety Team will prioritise high risk premises for business safety assessments, focussing on premises nearing their five year frequency deadline. (Medium) – 30 June 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where inspections require correspondence sent to the responsible owner of fire safety at the premises due to actions being identified, the details require management review and approval. It was identified that management do not perform internal reviews on audits that have no issues identified to ensure competency of work. <p>Management action 3: The Business Fire Safety Management Team are to conduct random assessments on completed audits to ensure staff are competently completing Business Safety Audits. (Medium) – 30 June 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through our sample testing on 20 commercial inspections, we identified that in four instances the follow up visit date had either passed or had not been booked in yet. <p>Management action 4: The Business Fire Safety Team will review the follow up and re-visit procedures to ensure consistency across all districts. (Medium) – 30 June 2024</p>				

Appendix A: Progress against the internal audit plan 2023/24

Assignment	Status / Opinion issued	Actions agreed				Target Audit and Governance Committee (as per revised IA plan)	Actual Audit and Governance Committee
		L	M	H	N/A		
Wellbeing, Occupational Health and Absence Management	Final Report Issued / Reasonable Assurance	4	6	0	0	September 2023	September 2023
Follow Up	Final Report Issued / Reasonable Progress	17	4	0	0	January 2024	January 2024
Contract Management – IT Department	Final Report Issued / Reasonable Assurance	0	1	0	0	January 2024	January 2024
Community Risk Management Plan	Final Report Issued / Substantial Assurance	0	1	0	0	January 2024	January 2024
Commercial Premises Inspections	Final Report Issued / Reasonable Assurance	2	4	0	0	March 2024	March 2024
Sustainability/Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)	Fieldwork Commenced					May 2024	
Core Financial Systems	Fieldwork Commenced					May 2024	
Incident Ground Welfare Provision	Fieldwork Completed					May 2024	



Assignment	Status / Opinion issued	Actions agreed				Target Audit and Governance Committee (as per revised IA plan)	Actual Audit and Governance Committee
		L	M	H	N/A		
Stocks and Stores Departmental Review	Draft Report Issued – Awaiting management responses					May 2024	



Appendix B: Other matters

Changes to the audit plan

Our approach to working with you is to respond to your changing assurance needs. By employing an 'agile' or a 'flexible' approach to our service delivery, we are able to change the focus of audits / audit delivery.

There have been no changes to the internal audit plan since the last Audit and Governance meeting.

Quality assurance and continual improvement

To ensure that RSM remains compliant with the IIA standards and the financial services recommendations for Internal Audit we have a dedicated internal Quality Assurance Team who undertake a programme of reviews to ensure the quality of our audit assignments. This is applicable to all Heads of Internal Audit, where a sample of their clients will be reviewed. Any findings from these reviews being used to inform the training needs of our audit teams.

The Quality Assurance Team is made up of; the Head of the Quality Assurance Department (FCA qualified) and an Associate Director (FCCA qualified), with support from other team members across the department.

This is in addition to any feedback we receive from our post assignment surveys, client feedback, appraisal processes and training needs assessments.

Post assignment surveys

We are committed to delivering an excellent client experience every time we work with you. Your feedback helps us to improve the quality of the service we deliver to you. Currently, following the completion of each product we deliver we attach a brief survey for the client lead to complete. The results of these surveys will be shared at each Audit and Governance meeting.



Updates and briefings

We have provided the following information and briefings to management since the last meeting:



Emerging Risk Radar January 2024

We have issued our most recent Emerging Risk Radar which is based on 194 survey responses from board members and professional advisors from across all industries (over the last 6 months).

Global Internal Audit Standards Update Briefing

Following the launch of the new Global Internal Audit Standards, a briefing for clients has been produced giving an overview of the Standards and some of the changes that will be worked through during this year of transition.

Appendix C: Key performance indicators 2023/24 (KPIs)

Delivery			Quality		
	Target	Actual		Target	Actual
Audits commenced in line with agreed timescales	Yes	Yes	Conformance with PSIAS and IIA Standards	Yes	Yes
Draft reports issued within 10 days of debrief meeting	10 days	7 working days	Liaison with external audit to allow, where appropriate and required, the external auditor to place reliance on the work of internal audit	Yes	-
Management responses received within 10 days of draft report	10 days	21 working days	Response time for all general enquiries for assistance	2 working days	2 working days (average)
Final report issued within 3 days of management response	3 days	1 working day	Response for emergencies and potential fraud	1 working day	n/a



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The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Actions for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

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