

Audit Committee, 24 June 2014

Internal audit – Review of recommendations

Executive summary and recommendations

At its meeting on 29 September 2011, the Committee agreed that it should receive a paper at each meeting, setting out progress on recommendations from internal audit reports.

Most of the information in the appendix is taken from the wording of the internal audit reports. The exception is the 'update' paragraph in the right-hand column, which provides details of progress.

Recommendations which have been implemented have been removed from this report. The original numbering of recommendations has been retained.

Decision

The Committee is requested to discuss the paper.

Background information

Please refer to individual internal audit reports for the background to recommendations.

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

None

Appendices

None

Date of paper

16 June 2014

Recommendations from internal audit reports

Core Financial Systems – Payroll (report dated September 2011 – considered at Audit Committee 29 September 2011)

Assurance on effectiveness of internal controls: Substantial Assurance

Recommendations summary

Priority Number of recommendations

Fundamental None Significant None Housekeeping 3

Risk 3: Financial losses arising from fraud or error, inefficient processing or inappropriate activity (such as ghost employees, payment of staff who no longer work at the Council, authorised payments, etc)

	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
2	Observation: Finance receive an HR Pack on a monthly basis which includes the HR Summary spreadsheet and	As part of the planned review of the HR system,	Housekeeping	Project proposal to review HR & partners information systems, including link to	Director of Finance/ HR Director.
	relevant supporting documentation detailing starters; leavers; contractual variations; acting-up allowances; changes to address etc.	consideration should be given to a more effective interface between the HR and		payroll to be submitted to Executive team in November 2011. If agreed will form part of 2012/13 project plan.	Update 24/06/2014 – Still pending the HR & Partners project. Bids from suppliers
	Whilst our review confirmed that this information was received by Finance, in a timely manner and before the deadline of the 15th of the month, as there is currently no direct interface between the HR Systems and Sage, the	Payroll systems to avoid duplication in entry of data.			have been received and are being assessed but no contract yet awarded so the project has not yet entered the build

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Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
information has to be entered again on to Sage.				phase.
It is noted that a review of the HR system is planned to be undertaken.				Previous updates: 20/03/2014 - HR & Partners Systems Review phase is due
Risk: Holding two databases with staff details and duplication of data entry are unlikely to be an efficient use of resources.				to end on 31 March 2014. The project will then enter the build stage.
Errors are more likely to arise where data is re-keyed.				

Income Collection & Debtors (report dated September 2012 – considered at Audit Committee 28 November 2012)

Assurance on effectiveness of internal controls: Substantial Assurance

Recommendations summary

Priority Number of recommendations

Fundamental None Significant None Housekeeping 3

Risk 1: Inability to collect from debtors (Finance – Risk No 15.6)

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Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/
				responsibility

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	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
1	Observation: Currently, all payments received by cheque, postal order and cash are initially processed on NetRegulate by Registration Advisors and then all information is transferred to Finance – Transactions team for checking and processing the following day. The same cheque/postal order is reviewed and checked twice (once in Registrations when it is input to NetRegulate, and once in Finance as part of the daily banking). It is not clear that the checking of each cheque/postal order in Finance, which may take a considerable amount of time, adds much value in addition to the original check performed by Registrations. The checking of cheques and postal orders is not the main role of Registration Advisors who primarily deal with processing application forms and advising registrants and applicants on matters relating to their registration. Therefore a 'cashier' role specifically dealing with cheques, postal orders and credit/debit card payments and not dealing with other parts of the Registration process may be more efficient and less likely to produce	Consideration should be given to reviewing the processes for checking and banking of income received by cheque, postal order and credit /debit card to ensure that the most efficient process is in place. For example, the current checking performed by Registrations and Finance and the potential for a 'Cashier' role.	Housekeeping	We agree that the way this process is currently handled is not the most efficient and consideration will be given to ways of eliminating the duplication of tasks.	Director of Finance/Head of Registration Update 24/06/2014 – Still pending while higher priority issues are addressed. Previous updates: 20/03/2014 - Improvements to this system will be considered in HCPC project prioritisation plan for the new financial year 2014/15

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Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
errors. Such a role would reduce or remove the need for additional checks in Finance – Transactions and would also speed up the processing, such that transactions processed on NetRegulate by Registrations would not have to wait until the following day to be checked and processed in Finance – Transactions, but could be banked the same day – thereby reducing problems around cut-off at the end of each month. Risk: Duplication of effort resulting in inefficient use of resources.				
Issue: Timing difference at month end date – On the last working day of the month, transactions are posted by the Registration team on NetRegulate which are not processed by the Finance team until the following day. Recommendation: Finance team to work with Registration team to ensure that items posted on last working day of month in NetRegulate are also processed on the same day	Currently, this has been resolved by members of the Finance – Transactions team staying late at month-end to ensure transactions are processed the same day.	Housekeeping	NetRegulate process changes are being developed by DSL to enable us to produce a monthly report to show exactly what is being processed at month end.	Head of Financial Accounting Update 24/06/2014 — Cleared. A new report from NetRegulate has been written which enables detailed reconciliation, and this is now being used in the monthly close.

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Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
				Previous updates: 20/03/2014 - Improvements to this system will be considered in HCPC project prioritisation plan for the new financial year 2014/15
Issue: Correction Adjustments - where a registrant's record is updated using a correction adjustment, the treatment of the way the record is accounted for differs depending on the reason. A main cause of difference has been identified as re-admission reverse charges which are not shown on the transfer report. Recommendation: As a temporary work around going forward, Finance team to obtain a DBA Visualizer (based on an SQL query) report from NetRegulate at month end and manually adjust any mis-postings in Sage. A NetRegulate change request will be created to amend NetRegulate to automatically take account of these transactions as a permanent solution. This will form part of the NetRegulate	As planned, a solution involving updating the NetRegulate system to automatically take account of these transactions should be implemented.		As part of the automated Readmission project, reversal readmission charges will no longer be posted. This change will remove this issue.	Project team Update 24/06/2014 – Still pending while higher priority issues are addressed. Previous updates: 20/03/2014 - Improvements to this system will be considered in HCPC project prioritisation plan for the new financial year 2014/15

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Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ responsibility
change request process.				-
Reports are currently obtained from NetRegulate at month-end and manual adjustments are made to correct readmission charges on individual registrants' records which have been incorrectly applied and a reversing journal is posted.				
A project is currently underway to address the issue of NetRegulate incorrectly applying the readmission fee within the four week window where the readmission fee is not chargeable.				

Bribery Act (report dated March 2013 – considered at Audit Committee 25 June 2013)

Assurance on effectiveness of internal controls: Substantial Assurance

Recommendations summary

Priority Number of recommendations

Fundamental None Significant 2 Housekeeping 5

	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ Responsibility
5.5	Supplier Due Diligence: High risk	Based on expenditure	3	All our suppliers are based	Procurement

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suppliers that would warrant enhanced due diligence have not yet been identified.

There is a risk that HCPC are engaging with suppliers who have been, or who are currently, engaged in bribery, thereby leading to reputational damage and potential breach of the Bribery Act by the organisation.

(both in terms of value and number of transactions), the sector/services they are involved in, and the country in which they are based, an assessment should be made on the current and future supplier list to identify any that could be considered higher risk.

For any such suppliers due diligence should be extended as appropriate, for example conducting a search of directors with disqualifications, news searches for court cases involving bribery etc.

in the UK. We undertake due diligence on new suppliers and tendering via the OJEU imposes controls through prescribed requirements and involvement of different people in the process.

A review of our suppliers' database will be one of the tasks assigned to our procurement manager when recruited.

Manager

Update

24/06/2014 – We are developing procedures for the review of the financial health and the integrity of our suppliers to address this risk and risk 15.21 on the risk register, using credit reference agencies. Our view is that suppliers in our sector are relatively low risk in relation to bribery.

Previous updates: 20/03/2014 - The review will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2014-15

Core Financial Systems – Asset Management, General Ledger and Payroll (report dated September 2013 – considered at Audit Committee 26 September 2013)

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Recommendations summary

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Priority Number of recommendations
Fundamental None

Fundamental None Significant 1 Housekeeping 2

	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/
					Responsibility
6.2	Observation: User access rights to the Sage finance system have not been reviewed since the system was set up. Job roles and responsibilities have changed and there may be staff with access to areas of the system to which they should not be able to view or make amendments. Risk: System access is available to staff where it is not required, or incorrect/ unauthorised access rights may have been granted.	Sage user access rights and the rights associated with job roles should be reviewed. We are aware of a possible Sage upgrade in the coming months; management may consider this the best time to undertake such a review.	2	Sage 200 was introduced in 2009 and a number of roles have changed since then. HCPC will engage its Sage suppliers to review the roles and user access and ensure that the correct staff members have the correct access. The possible upgrade is not scheduled until early part of next year so this review will be done before the upgrade.	Head of Financial Accounting and Director of Finance. Update 24/06/2014 - Cleared. The Sage supplier has reviewed access rights and changes have been made as appropriate to ensure only necessary access is available and segregation of duties is maintained. Previous updates: 20/03/2014 - This is currently being undertaken. TSG (SAGE 200 consultants) have run a report showing all the access rights and

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Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/
				Responsibility
				this has been reviewed by the finance department. Some changes are required to ensure good segregation of
				duties and will be made by TSG on their next visit in April.

Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity Planning (report dated October 2013 – considered at Audit Committee 28 November 2013)

Assurance on effectiveness of internal controls: Substantial Assurance

Recommendations summary

Priority Number of recommendations

Fundamental None Significant None Housekeeping 1

	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ Responsibility
6.2	Observation: The Business Continuity	HCPC should consider	3	The Executive consider	Head of Business
	Plan is centrally controlled and	alternative methods of		technology based solutions	Process Improvement
	managed by the Head of Business	version control and		for the update and	
	Process Improvement but is distributed	distribution for the BCP,		distribution of the BCP	Update
	as a paper document to 52 different	i.e. via secure		every year as part of the	24/06/2014 – BPI
	people or locations.	internet/intranet, cloud		project prioritisation	plan to investigate if

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	service or secure USB	process and budget	an in house system
This makes it possible for uncontrolled	key	discussions. To date other	could be used instead
documentation that may be outdated to		statutory requirements	of an external
still be held. Anecdotal evidence		have reached a higher	procurement.
suggests that this has been the case on		priority than this project.	·
a number of occasions.			Previous updates:
		This item remains on the	20/03/2014 –
There would be benefits with using an		long list of important	This project has been
alternative method for managing how		projects until actioned. This	provided for within the
the plan is accessed such as improved		project will be considered	2014-15 BPI budget.
version control and distribution.		again in the project	
		prioritisation process and	The ability to produce
Potential alternatives include managing		budget discussions taking	paper versions will
access via a central storage point i.e.		place in December and	remain as a
secure internet or intranet location,		February for the	contingency
cloud-based service or distributed by		forthcoming (2014/15)	
secure USB device.		budget year.	
Risk: Plans may lack effective version			
control which may cause people to refer			
to old or out-dated version of the			
Business Continuity Plan causing			
delays in recovery.			

Partners Expenses (Report dated March 2014 – considered at Audit Committee 20 March 2014)

Assurance on effectiveness of internal controls: Substantial Assurance

Recommendations summary

Priority Number of recommendations
Fundamental None

Significant

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Housekeeping

	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/
					Responsibility
6.1	Observation: The Expenses Policy for	(i) HCPC should remind	2	Agreed. Partners will be	December 2014 -
	Partners states "Travel and	partners of its preference		reminded of the current	Head of Financial
	accommodation should be booked	for them to book travel		policy. Through the travel	Accounting.
	through the HCPC's preferred travel	requirements through the		tender, we intend to	
	agent Co-operative Travel	appointed travel service		address partners' concerns	Update 24/06/2014 –
	Management". However, this is not	in preference to the		about the current system	Partners were
	mandatory and there are no specific	direct bookings which		(including usability & price)	reminded of the policy
	consequences for not doing so other	are currently made in the		and review their comments	in December and
	than if abused.	significant number of		as to why they are not	January, and the
		cases noted.		using the travel company.	policy is explained at
	Up to period 9 of the current financial				new partners'
	year, 42% (by value - £390k of £930k)			We will also explain to	induction training.
	of partners' expenses authorised and			partners the benefits to	The process to
	paid by HCPC have been claimed by			HCPC of routing all	retender the travel
	direct reimbursement rather than using			bookings through the travel	management contract
	the services of Co-operative Travel			provider (simplified	has started.
	Management.			transactions, duty of care,	
				better value for money,	
	In addition to the value for money			better management	
	implications, limited usage of the travel			information).	
	bureau means that management				
	information on expenditure is restricted.			As part of the new travel	
	LIOPO!			management contract, the	
	HCPC is currently planning to market			Executive proposes that it	
	test its travel management			should become mandatory	
	arrangements and forms redesigned to			to book all travel and	
	obtain additional detail regarding the			related services such as	
	reasons for direct bookings.			hotel accommodation	

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	Observation/Risk Risk: Failure to achieve value for	Recommendation	Priority	Management response through the service provider except in	Timescale/ Responsibility
	money.			exceptional circumstances. The policy would apply to Council members, Partners and Executive.	
6.1	As above	(ii) Further to (i) above, consideration should be given to developing further management information regarding partners' expenses for analysis and to inform future policy.	3	The partner expense codes in the nominal ledger are currently being reviewed. More codes will be introduced to help with the analysis of the expenses. A full requirement of the management information will be included within the travel tender documents, which will allow for greater analysis.	April 2014 - Head of Financial Accounting Update 24/06/2014 - To be addressed in parallel with the travel tender. December 2014 - Head of Financial Accounting Update 24/06/2014 - Pending the travel

Stakeholder Communications (Report dated January 2014 – considered at Audit Committee 20 March 2014)

Assurance on effectiveness of internal controls: Substantial Assurance

Recommendations summary

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Priority Number of recommendations

Fundamental None Significant 1 Housekeeping 1

	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/ Responsibility
6.2	Observation: As is typical across the communications functions of many organisations, there is difficulty in establishing definite measurement and quantification of the effectiveness and impact of communication with stakeholders. Responses to traditional questionnaires generally tend to achieve a low response rate. There may be an opportunity to develop the processes for measurement of effectiveness following completion of	Following on from the work currently underway regarding stakeholder analysis, the outcome should be used to confirm the most effective methods of measuring success of the various methods of engagement with stakeholders.	2	We will be commissioning our regular stakeholder analysis and polling in 2014-15 and this will be used to measure methods of engagement. We will also use the stakeholder analysis and mapping to inform this.	By end 2014 / Director of Communications Update 24/06/2014 – This activity is included in the Communications budget and workplan for 2014-15
	the stakeholder analysis work noted earlier in this report. Risk: Weaknesses in knowledge of which communication methods are most effective can lead to the allocation of resource not achieving maximum efficiency.	can be used to inform future resource planning based on any information held regarding the priorities and methods of engagement.			

Health and Safety (Report dated March 2014 – considered at Audit Committee 20 March 2014)

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Recommendations summary

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Fundamental None Significant 2 Housekeeping 3

	Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/
					Responsibility
6.1	Observation: Section 9 of the Safety	(i) The Safety Policy	3	The Safety Policy has	Director of Operations
	Policy outlines the health and safety	should be updated with		been updated and a	- March 2014
	and fire safety communication structure	the agreed reporting and		reporting and review	
	which indicates a 'Safety Committee'.	review process.		process has been	Update 24/06/2014 -
	The HCPC does not operate such a			determined. This will be	This paper was
	committee.	(ii) An Annual Report on	2	approved at the Executive	considered by EMT
		Health and Safety		Management Team	on 25 March 2014
	During our review we also noted that	matters should be		meeting on 25 March	
	there has been no reporting on health	produced and reviewed		2014.	
	and safety matters to either the Audit	by Members. Typically			
	Committee or Council outside of	such reports provide		Historically, health and	
	presentation of the Risk Register which	detail of existing policy		safety matters have been	Director of Operations
	includes a risk related to this area.	frameworks including		reported to members in the	- May 2014
	Given the on-going nature of this risk	review/update, operation		Facilities section of the	
	and legislative environment, we would	of the safety		Operations report. This will	Update 24/06/2014 -
	typically expect to see some form of	management system,		continue. Also, an annual	This paper was
	reporting of this nature.	summary of incidents,		report on health & safety	presented to the
		etc.		matters will be produced	Council on 14 May
	Risk: Lack of assurance/awareness of			every 12 months. The first	2014.
	health and safety arrangements.			such report will be	
				presented to Council in	

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				May. This will be included in the Operations report.	
6.2	Observation: A criminal record checking provider, TMG is used to carry out such checks for staff in FTP. The TMG online criminal record check application allows electronic submission of such applications and tracks progress of applications from the application management dashboard. Prior to this a spread sheet was in use to record the issue dates of the DBS checks received. The spread sheet record is still held. Our sample testing of new starters as part of our internal audit of HR – Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning (report reference 05.13/14) did not identify any exceptions in relation to DBS checking of new starters during 2013/14. HCPC currently employs 78 staff within FtP. From a list of such staff, we selected a sample of 15 to verify whether the required DBS check was conducted. Nine of our sample predated the use of the TMG CRB system and were checked against the previous process. We confirmed that for six of	Consideration should be given to renewing DBS checks after an agreed time period such as three years.	3	The policy will be reviewed over the next 12 months.	Director of Human Resources - February 2015 Update 24/06/2014 - This review will initiate towards the end of 2014.

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	these, the DBS check was carried out at least five years ago.				
	Although there is no official expiry date for a criminal record check issued by DBS, the information revealed will only be accurate at the time the certificate was issued. It is therefore generally considered good practice to renew DBS checks after an agreed time period usually three years. Risk: HCPC may not be aware of any changes to the criminal record of staff in post, which may lead to no appropriate action taken and/ or reputational damage.				
6.3	Observation: For the leased site at 33 Stannary Street, arrangements for testing and inspection of fire alarms and the annual servicing of fire extinguishers are the responsibility of the company maintaining the premises. At the time of our visit HCPC had not received any formal assurances from the company that these are up to date. Risk: Fire alarms and extinguishers may not be serviced in accordance with	HCPC should obtain assurances/copies of certificates for servicing of the fire extinguishers and tests of fire alarms for 33 Stannary Street.	2	HCPC have requested assurances from the managing agents that the fire alarm system is tested in accordance with the statutory regulations. Copies of the relevant certificates in relation to the servicing of fire extinguishers have also been requested. HCPC	April 2014 Update 24/06/2014 - Documents have been requested from the managing agents.

Int. Aud.

RD: None

Public

Status

Final

DD: None

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Observation/Risk	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Timescale/
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agreed intervals and therefore prove			has also requested a copy	
ineffective in the event of an incident			of the current Health &	
occurring.			Safety/Fire Safety Risk	
			Assessment. All	
			information has been	
			requested by 1st April	
			2014	

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