



Internal Audit Report

Final

**Community Services
Review of Workforce Protection**

January 2010

1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared as a result of the Internal Audit review of Workforce Protection – Community Services as part of the 2010/11 Internal Audit programme.

Workforce protection is an integral part of the Council's operation and has not previously been subject to audit review. The focus of our review is principally to establish what systems the department currently operates in terms of Workforce Protection in terms of ensuring the safety of the staff on visits to clients and staff who work in offices with direct contact with the public.

The Council and Community Services have a duty to provide a safe environment for the staff through having systems and procedures in place to ensure staff safety. This is an area where the department and Council can clearly demonstrate that it is meeting organisational and employee needs. The audit comes within governance and accountability which is one of the characteristics of a Best Value (BV) council

2 AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

The broad objectives of the review were to ensure:

- Review current arrangements in respect of systems and procedures being used and any reported incidents .
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing systems and procedures.
- Determine whether new systems or procedures are required.

3 RISK ASSESSMENT

As part of the audit process and in conjunction with our Systems Based Auditing, ICQ approach, the risk register was reviewed to identify any areas that needed to be included within the audit.

- SR25 – Failure to comply with Health and Safety Legislation

4 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

There are no Corporate Governance issues to be reported as a result of this audit.

5 MAIN FINDINGS

- Community Services train most off its front line staff in Personal Safety. This does not include Education Staff at schools. The personal safety training should be rolled out to all employees throughout the council who have face to face dealings with the public. Health and Safety have also identified this and are in agreement.
- There is an authority wide policy on lone working which should protect Home Helps and other staff who perform their duties outside the normal working hours (9am-5pm). Care Needs Assessment Packages for the Elderly (Care Nap 6) includes a risk assessment pro-forma which incorporates the Health and Safety of both clients and employees.
- It was found that not all public interview rooms have panic alarms and in certain areas a log is not being kept of when the alarms are tested.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

4 recommendations were identified as a result of the audit, all 4 were of high priority. The recommendations are shown in the action plan attached at Appendix 2 and has been compiled with the co-operation and agreement of the Supervisor/Manager.

Internal Audit considers that, in an effort to improve the quality of information, monitoring and control, the recommendations should be implemented in accordance with the agreed action plan. Management have set achievable implementation dates and will be required to provide reasons to the Audit Committee for failure to implement within the agreed timescale. Where management decides not to implement recommendations it must evaluate and accept the risks associated with that decision.

A system of grading audit findings, which have resulted in an action, has been adopted in order that the significance of the findings can be ascertained. Each finding is classified as fundamental, material or minor. The definitions of each classification are set out below:-

High - major observations on high level controls and other important internal controls. Significant matters relating to factors critical to the success of the objectives of the system. The weakness may therefore give rise to loss or error;

Medium - observations on less important internal controls, improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of controls which will assist in meeting the objectives of the system and items which could be significant in the future. The weakness is not necessarily great, but the risk of error would be significantly reduced if it were rectified;

Low - minor recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of controls, one-off items subsequently corrected. The weakness does not appear to affect the ability of the system to meet its objectives in any significant way.

7 AUDIT OPINION

Based on the findings we can conclude that Health and Safety provide a high standard of personal safety awareness training to some Community Services staff, who have attended the course but more controls need to be put in place at an operational level to help protect staff.

Recommendations arising from the audit work should be implemented by the nominated responsible officer within the agreed timescale.

Recommendations not implemented will require explanation to the Audit Committee. This could lead to findings being reported in the Internal Control Statement produced by the Council in support of the Annual Accounts.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the;

- Health and Safety Manager
- Assistant Health and Safety Manager
- Personal Safety Trainer
- Relevant Community Services Area Office Staff

for their co-operation and assistance during the Audit and the preparation of the report and action plan.

Argyll & Bute Council's Internal Audit section has prepared this report. Our work was limited to the objectives in section 2. We cannot be held responsible or liable if information material to our task was withheld or concealed from us, or misrepresented to us.

This report is private and confidential for the Council's information only and is solely for the use in the provision of an internal audit service to the council. In any circumstances where anyone other than the Council accesses this report it is on the strict understanding that the council will accept no liability for any act or omission by any party in consequence of their consideration of this report or any part thereof. The report is not to be copied, quoted or referred to, in whole or in part, without prior written consent.

APPENDIX 2 ACTION PLAN

No.	FINDINGS	PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
1	<p>Argyll and Bute Council Community Services Health and Safety team developed an Initial Personal Safety Awareness Training Course and a Refresher Course based on the Suzy Lamplugh Trust Personal Safety Course. The course is comprehensive and of a very high standard. Internal Audit noted that front line staff in other departments had not been trained in personal safety eg Contact Centre Staff, Trading Standards Staff, and Building Control Officers etc. Also front line Education Staff had not attended any Personal Safety Course. Health and Safety have also identified this point and will roll out the training as</p>	High	<p>Training on personal safety should be extended across the council to employees in priority posts. Prioritisation of posts for training should be based on assessment of risk as identified through the risk assessment procedure and in line with the council's lone working policy. Heads of Service should be made aware of this course and requests for training should be made through the PDR process.</p>	Head Of Improvement and HR	October 2011

No.	FINDINGS	PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
	part of a planned approach that is prioritised on assessment of risk in discussion with departments.				
2	The Auditor found that there is a documented policy for lone working and risk assessments are being carried out and updated on a regular basis. The Auditor found that different areas are adopting alternative strategies for implementing the policy. All Home Help Staff have completed the personal Safety Awareness Training and have been given “Defender All Purpose Alarms”.	High	<p>A) An instruction should be sent to all home help organisers saying that Home Helps should be given the opportunity to phone or text a named colleague before they pay a visit to clients and on their return.</p> <p>B) Corporate Health and Safety should be carrying out Health and Safety audits of practices on lone working.</p>	<p>Head Of Adult Services</p> <p>Head Of Improvement and HR</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>March 2011</p>

No.	FINDINGS	PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
3	<p>In certain areas throughout the authority it was found that public interview rooms were not equipped with panic buttons. In one area staff members carry belt alarms and in other area personal safety alarms are carried by staff. Risk assessments may deem that rooms be sufficiently safe without alarms. Individual design need to be considered before determining the actual needs. The control of interview rooms is integral to the Personal Safety Training Course.</p>	High	<p>All public interview rooms should be assessed for personal safety and any recommendation identified should be passed to the Head Of Facility Services for implementation. If panic alarms are required then they should be tested on a regular basis and a log kept.</p>	Head Of Improvement and HR	June 2011