

Appendix 2 – Summary of audits completed in September/October 2024-25

This appendix provides a summary of the high and medium risk issues emanating from audits completed during September and October. Work completed earlier in 2024-25 was reported to the Committee in September 2024.

A. Public Health Contract Management			
<i>Scope: To ensure that management has assessed all relevant risks and implemented adequate and effective controls within Public Health Contract Management.</i>			
Ref	Risks/Issues Identified	Priority	Responsible Officer /Target Date
1.	<p>Governance The current governance and oversight arrangements do not match those set out in the Sexual Health and Reproductive Service Agreement.</p>	MEDIUM	Sexual Health Commissioning Manager 31 March 2025
2.	<p>Service Agreement Performance Monitoring and Reporting The Sexual Health and Reproductive Service Agreement does not contain a clause that defines the consequences for the providers if the service delivery is poor or does not meet agreed expectations. Also, key performance indicator definitions are not clear and measurable.</p>	MEDIUM	Sexual Health Commissioning Manager 31 March 2025
3.	<p>Meeting Actions Actions from performance and contract monitoring meetings are either imprecise or absent and there is no evidence that actions are being brought to subsequent meetings for review.</p>	MEDIUM	Sexual Health Commissioning Manager 31 December 2024

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B. Direct Payments (Adults)			
<i>Scope: To provide assurance on the effectiveness and robustness of the control framework and Council's arrangements for the administration and payment of direct payments using PFS pre-paid cards.</i>			
Ref	Risks/Issues Identified	Priority	Responsible Officer /Target Date
1.	Review and Monitoring Personal budgets and care plans are not always being reviewed as prescribed to ensure that they meet care requirements and to promptly identify instances of under or surplus payments.	HIGH	DP Team Leader 30 November 2024
2.	System Access The PFS system does not notify managers of any changes made to client accounts and there are no defined responsibilities for ensuring removal of user access for employees that no longer require it.	HIGH	DP Team Leader Head of Finance 30 November 2024
3.	Recovery of Funds Insufficient processes are in place to promptly identify and recover unused funds.	HIGH	DP Team Leader 30 November 2024
4.	Policies and Procedures There are no policies and procedures in place to ensure consistent and accurate practices.	MEDIUM	DP Team Leader Team Manager 28 February 2025
5.	Budgeting Expenditure for the service is not accurately managed and reported and the responsibility for oversight is not clearly defined.	MEDIUM	Head of Commissioning Contracting and Market Management 31 January 2025

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C. Temporary Accommodation <i>Scope: To provide assurance on the effectiveness and robustness of the Council's arrangements to provide temporary accommodation including procurement and governance.</i>			
Ref	Risks/Issues Identified	Priority	Responsible Officer /Target Date
1.	Home Visits Home visits are essential for verifying homelessness status and preventing fraud, but they were not conducted in 62% of cases where they were required.	HIGH	Service Manager – Housing Options Homelessness Service Manager November 2024
2.	Case Reviews Effective case reviews are crucial for accuracy and consistency in handling homelessness applications. However, we identified that inconsistent practices; a lack of standardised review templates; and delays, have led to missed opportunities to prevent temporary accommodation obligations, client complaints and costly compensations for the Council.	HIGH	Service Manager – Housing Options Homelessness Service Manager March 2025
3.	Status Monitoring The Council's interim duty to house households under a "reason to believe" status lacks systematic monitoring and oversight, leading to the possibility of prolonged temporary accommodation without timely verification of eligibility.	HIGH	Service Manager – Housing Options Homelessness Service Manager March 2025
4.	Eligibility Eligibility for homelessness assistance depends on immigration and residence status, with the Council relying on a combination of documents and Home Office checks, use of the Home Office share code service for EEA nationals would streamline verification, reduce errors, and prevent fraud.	HIGH	Service Manager – Housing Options September 2024
5.	Templates and Procedure Notes The service currently operates with a variety of forms, templates, and procedure notes, which are not used consistently.	MEDIUM	Service Manager – Housing Options Homelessness Service Manager March 2025
6.	Bank Statement Analysis The current mode of bank statement analysis is time consuming for officers and may not provide the tailored financial insights needed to assist review.	MEDIUM	Director of Housing Needs and Support December 2024

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7.	Pathways We found that clear guidelines were lacking for handling applications based on fear of violence, to ensure they are differentiated from those related to domestic abuse.	MEDIUM	Service Manager – Housing Options December 2024
8.	My Account Homeless assistance applications are submitted via the Council website using the "My Account" feature. Currently, "My Account" does not request critical data at the outset.	MEDIUM	Completed – no action required.
9.	Self-Service Once homelessness has been established, there are opportunities to prevent households from being placed in temporary accommodation. There was often insufficient documentation of prevention efforts or support activities aimed at securing affordable housing.	MEDIUM	Service Manager – Housing Options October 2024
10.	Intentionality Where it was normally very clear that eligibility, homelessness, and priority need had been established, the conclusion of intentionality and local connection tests was not always clearly defined.	MEDIUM	Service Manager – Housing Options Homelessness Service Manager September 2024
11.	Liaison with Property Licensing Team All private rented accommodation in Brent, except those in the Wembley Park ward, is subject to property licensing. Homelessness claims have been made due to poor property conditions, including mould and pest infestations. In all cases, officers liaised with landlords or agents to effect repairs. We found no evidence of the Private Rental Sector (PRS) licensing team being alerted.	MEDIUM	Service Manager – Housing Options September 2024
12.	Validation Checks The absence of a work summary document that details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the initial approach. • reviews and verifications conducted. • queries and gaps in the provided documents and 	MEDIUM	Service Manager – Housing Options Homelessness Service Manager October 2024

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rationale for decisions, including queries with dates and cross-references to evidence. 		
13.	<p>Access to Senior Support</p> <p>Singles homelessness Housing Officers have access to rapid senior support. The singles service operates a face-to-face model at The Turning Point, where staff can quickly review cases with Team Leaders and receive immediate action. In contrast, at the Civic Centre, the service is spread across three floors. This requires communication through phone, email, or staff moving between floors, which can delay support and action.</p>	MEDIUM	Service Manager – Housing Options March 2025

D. Section 106			
Scope: To provide assurance over the adequacy and operating effectiveness of the controls and arrangements over S106 monies.			
Ref	Risks/Issues Identified	Priority	Responsible Officer /Target Date
1.	<p>Reconciliation of S106 agreements</p> <p>There is no monthly reconciliation between the S106 agreements captured on Acolaid by the Development Management Team, and the S106 agreements captured in the S106 Financial database excel spreadsheet by the Infrastructure Planning Team to ensure that all S106 agreements are recorded for actioning, tracking and monitoring.</p>	MEDIUM	Infrastructure Planning Team Leader 1 November 2024
2.	<p>Review of S106 claims</p> <p>Sign off from finance over S106 claim forms is editable within an excel spreadsheet and is therefore not sufficient to ensure reliability.</p>	MEDIUM	Infrastructure Planning Team Leader 1 April 2025