



Cumbria Shared Internal Audit Service

**Internal Audit report for Cumbria Constabulary /
Cumbria OPCC**

Audit of Establishment Processes - Recruitment

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Audit Resources

Title	Name	Email	Telephone
Audit Manager	Emma Toyne	emma.toyne@cumbria.gov.uk	07810532759
Lead Auditor	Gemma Benson	gemma.benson@cumbria.gov.uk	07775111856

Audit Report Distribution

For Action:	Dave Stalker, Detective Superintendent – Head of People. Charlotte Nutter, Temporary Chief Inspector – Head of People.
For Information:	Stephen Kirkpatrick, Director of Corporate Support.
Audit Committee:	The Joint Audit Committee which is due to be held on 22 nd June 2022 will receive the report.

Note: Audit reports should not be circulated wider than the above distribution without the consent of the Audit Manager.

Executive Summary

Background

This report summarises the findings from the audit of **Establishment Processes - Recruitment**. This was a planned audit assignment which was undertaken in accordance with the 2021/22 Audit Plan.

Recruitment is very important to the organisation because it is the process used to determine who will join the Constabulary workforce.

A new recruitment module was implemented in August 2021, turning recruitment from a paper-based process into a primarily digital one. This implementation was part of the wider Business Transformation Programme aimed at improving processes and achieving process efficiencies. Applications are now made online and recruitment stages, their outcome, correspondence and documentation are recorded in the module.

Audit Approach

Audit Objectives and Methodology

Compliance with the mandatory Public Sector Internal Audit Standards requires that internal audit activity evaluates the exposures to risks relating to the organisation's governance, operations and information systems. A risk based audit approach has been applied which aligns to the five key audit control objectives. Detailed findings and recommendations are set out within the Management Action Plan.

Audit Scope and Limitations

The Audit Scope was agreed with management prior to the commencement of this audit review. The Client Sponsor for this review was Stephen Kirkpatrick, Director of Corporate Support. The agreed scope of the audit was to provide assurance over management's arrangements for governance, risk management and internal control in the following areas:

- The project plan for, and governance of, the implementation of the recruitment module
- Controls within the system and timescales to complete different parts of the recruitment process
- Sample testing of police officer and staff recruitment (both internal and external) through the newly established recruitment module process.

There were no instances whereby the audit work undertaken was impaired by the availability of information.

Assurance Opinion

Each audit review is given an assurance opinion, and this provides Joint Audit Committee and Officers with an independent assessment of the overall level of control and potential impact of any identified system weaknesses. There are 4 levels of assurance opinion which may be applied. The definition for each level is explained in **Appendix A**.

From the areas examined and tested as part of this audit review, we consider the current controls operating within recruitment provide **Reasonable Assurance**.

Note: as audit work is restricted by the areas identified in the Audit Scope and is primarily sample based, full coverage of the system and complete assurance cannot be given to an audit area.

Summary of Audit Findings and Recommendations

Controls were operating effectively in the following areas:

Project plan for, and governance of, the implementation of the recruitment module

- A project board was in place for the recruitment module implementation project which met monthly and had minutes of its meetings documented.
- The project had a terms of reference setting out key aspects of the project including deliverables, scope and exclusions, principal stakeholders and governance structure.
- A project plan was in place for the project which included project stages broken down into specific tasks, start and end dates and any named resources.
- A governance, roles and responsibilities document was prepared for the project which included a RACI chart (responsible / accountable / consulted / informed) setting out Project Board and Project Team responsibilities.
- Staff from HR, Central Services and ICT were on the Project Board and Project Team to provide an appropriate mix of skills and knowledge.
- Project risks were captured in a RAID (risks / assumptions / issues / decisions) log which was reviewed monthly at Project Board Meetings.

- Training sessions were held on the new module, with user guides and videos also prepared which are available to staff on a sharepoint page.
- User Acceptance Testing was undertaken and signed off by the Project Board, as were the decision to go live with the recruitment module and to close the project and handover to Business as Usual.
- The End Project Report was reported to the Digital Transformation Board as well as the Project Board.

The recommendations arising from this review can be summarised as follows:

High	Medium	Advisory	Total
0	2	0	2

The three levels of audit recommendation are defined in **Appendix A**.

Areas for development: Improvements in the following areas are necessary in order to strengthen existing control arrangements:

High Priority Issues: none identified

Medium Priority Issues:

- Further work is required to ensure all required information can be obtained from the recruitment module and to determine whether all identified benefits of implementing the module have been realised.
- Since the implementation of the recruitment module, recruitment process and system changes / developments have taken place, and further changes are likely. Sample testing identified that not all required documentation had been retained or was readily available.

Advisory issues: none identified

Director of Corporate Support Comments

I am very pleased to note that the recent internal audit of Establishment Processes, specifically relating to Recruitment, has provided a Reasonable Assurance which I believe recognises the good many practices together with effective and collaborative working in place across a number of Corporate teams.

The review has identified a number of strengths regarding the controls and measures in place, making specific mention of the successful project to implement new recruitment functionality within our Human Resources system. This implementation was achieved alongside the review and development of new processes to streamline and improve recruitment from both the organisation and applicants' perspective.

The review has identified a small number of medium areas for development resulting in two recommendations which are both accepted by the Constabulary and will be addressed within the timescales agreed within the report.

The implementation of the new recruitment module and processes demonstrates a further step with the Constabulary's drive to continually improve services across all areas.

I would like to note my thanks to all involved in the project and the ongoing service provision.

Stephen Kirkpatrick

Director of Corporate Support

Management Action Plan

Medium Priority

Audit finding	Management response
<p>Moving Forward</p> <p><u>Reporting facilities</u></p> <p>Developing / writing reports to obtain information from the recruitment module was in progress at the time of drafting this report. The purpose of the reports is to provide management information and help to make the recruitment process more efficient. We were informed that there are no set or agreed timescales for the overall recruitment process, or the different stages of the recruitment process, and that the recruitment module does not hold information that would show reasons for any delays in the process. One of the reports being developed will help to identify any pinch points in the process and these will be assessed to determine if any action is required to make recruitment more efficient.</p> <p><u>Benefits</u></p> <p>Expected benefits from implementing the recruitment module were reviewed and assessed when the project was closed. However, the timing was probably too soon after implementation to determine if all benefits had been achieved and we were informed that they would be reviewed again in the second half of 2022 after the system was fully embedded and more data was available.</p>	<p>Agreed management action:</p> <p>The reporting from Recruitment has been developed and numerous reports have been produced and scheduled to run to assist the Recruitment Teams with their processes.</p> <p>The system records all the stages the applicant is at in the process and is time stamped when they move stages. This means that a report can show how long it takes an applicant to get through a process, and show what time is spent at each stage. However, we do not record on the system the reason for delays.</p> <p>Processes are being continually reviewed and improvements made where identified. This is a fortnightly meeting between CSD and HR to review any issues that arise and ensure the efficiency of the process.</p>
<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>Ensure that required recruitment reports are developed and that the review of benefits realised is undertaken.</p>	

	<p>The benefits are currently being reviewed by Business Leads to ensure all available are realised. Benefits identified to date have been realised</p>
<p>Risk exposure if not addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment information not easily accessible / available; • Recruitment and management of recruitment is inefficient; • Lack of clarity on whether the investment in the recruitment module achieved its expected benefits. 	<p>Responsible manager for implementing: Reporting facilities – Alison Hunter Business Benefits – Di Johnson & Ann Dobinson</p> <p>Date to be implemented: 31 August 2022</p>

Medium Priority

Audit finding	Management response
<p>Sample Testing <u>On-going development of the process</u> We were informed that the recruitment process has been further developed since the system was initially implemented, as in practice, many of the ‘stages’ originally built into the system are not required, or don’t add to the process, so are not used. For example, rather than an applicant being moved to the ‘successful after checks’ stage (where no action is required and no workflow is initiated from) they can be moved straight to the ‘offer’ stage as they would only be moved to this stage if checks had been successful.</p> <p>Sample testing confirmed that recruitment processes have been changed / refined since the implementation of the module. Discussions indicated that further changes may be made. The Payroll and Transactional Services Manager and a Senior HR Advisor are</p>	<p>Agreed management action:</p> <p>Medical Forms To clarify the procedure followed in the initial Recruitment process was that CSD were to delete forms for data protection purposes, as forms to be actioned were sent to OHU for recording. As stated, this process has since been updated and OHU are retaining forms and recording on Recruitment module</p> <p>Vetting forms/recording</p>

currently meeting fortnightly to discuss any issues and processes and to look for improvements that can be made, with issues fed in from the recruitment teams.

Information recorded in the module varied for some of the sample tested due to ongoing developments in the recruitment process and how information was recorded. In addition, the external police officer recruitment was added to the module at the stage they were at in the recruitment process when the module was introduced.

Examples include:

- Three of the five external police staff sample did not have a medical check result recorded in the module. We were informed that initially CSD staff triaged medical forms when they were returned by applicants, and if no issues were raised on the form, it was not sent to occupational health, and nothing was recorded on the recruitment module. We could not confirm that medical information was provided for these three cases as we were told that the forms were deleted. The process has since been changed so that all medical forms go to occupational health, and they record a pass / fail medical check against applicants in the recruitment module.
- Two of the five external police staff sample had no ID / qualification documents attached against their record in the recruitment module and we could not confirm that they had been provided. We were informed that one was before it had been determined how documents were going to be stored and that after copies had been received, they were deleted as the email address they came to was not solely for recruitment and it was considered inappropriate to retain them in the generic email area. The other was a problem where the applicant was unable to upload them to their application. We were informed that copies had been obtained and were held in the recruitment specific email inbox but at the time of drafting this report evidence of

The workflow has been set up to go to vetting to ask them to carry out the checks, once they have done the checks, they record this on the system and a workflow is sent to the Requisition Administrator to let them know to advance the applicant. The system was working but the staff in Vetting were not completing the recording on the system the results, they are all doing it now.

Since the audit, CSD have produced a report from the Recruitment system to show any recording of vetting that was missing. This report was sent to the Vetting Department, and they have updated the relevant records on the system.

This process is now working correctly, and Departments are aware of their obligations, would suggest that this recommendation is reduced to an advisory and we include the further sample testing in 6 months time.

<p>this had not been provided. Another of the five had a document provided by email deleted after checking, though the documents they uploaded with their application form were retained against their record in the recruitment module.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two of the five external police officer sample did not have qualifications attached against their record in the recruitment module. It was stated that the majority should be attached but that sometimes there was an issue with the size of a document meaning it was saved on a drive on the constabulary network rather than in the system. It was confirmed that copies of qualifications are held for the two that were not in the system. • Vetting check results were not recorded in the recruitment module for ten of the twenty recruitments sampled. We were informed that initially Vetting staff were informing results via email instead of directly entering a pass/fail result in the system as they do now. Confirmation of vetting checks was subsequently provided for four of the ten, one was stated as confirmed verbally and at the time of drafting this report nothing had been provided for the remaining five. 	
<p>Recommendation 2: Ensure that once ongoing recruitment process / system developments are implemented that they are fully embedded and working as intended. Further sample testing, at a later date, would help confirm compliance with the requirements and that relevant supporting evidence and documentation has been retained and is readily available for review.</p>	
<p>Risk exposure if not addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to processes are not understood and complied with; • All required recruitment information is not obtained / retained. 	<p>Responsible manager for implementing: HR Manager Date to be implemented: Oct 2022</p>

Audit Assurance Opinions

There are four levels of assurance used, these are defined as follows:

Assurance Level	Definition
Substantial	Sound frameworks of governance, risk management and internal control are in place and are operating effectively. Recommendations, if any, will typically be no greater than advisory.
Reasonable	Frameworks of governance, risk management and internal control are generally sound with some opportunities to further develop the frameworks or compliance with them. Recommendations will typically be no greater than medium priority.
Partial	Weaknesses in the frameworks of governance, risk management and/or internal control have been identified or there are areas of non-compliance with the established control framework which place the achievement of system / service objectives at risk. Recommendations will typically include high and medium priority issues.
Limited	There are significant gaps in the governance, risk management and/or internal control frameworks or there are major lapses in compliance with the control framework that place the achievement of system / service objectives at significant risk. Recommendations will include high priority issues.

Grading of Audit Recommendations

Audit recommendations are graded in terms of their priority and risk exposure if the issue identified was to remain unaddressed. There are three levels of audit recommendations used; high, medium and advisory, the definitions of which are explained below:

Grading	Definition
High	A recommendation to address a significant gap in governance, risk management or internal control frameworks or to address significant non-compliance with controls in place.
Medium	A recommendation to address a gap in governance, risk management or internal control frameworks or to address aspects of non-compliance with controls in place.
Advisory	A recommendation to further strengthen governance, risk management or internal control frameworks or to improve compliance with existing controls.

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