

Social Care Contracts - Contract Monitoring 2013-14

City of York Council

Internal Audit Report

Business Unit: Commissioning and Contracts

Responsible Officer: Assistant Director, Adult Commissioning, Modernisation and Provision

Service Manager: Commissioning and Contracts Manager

Date Issued: 10/12/2013

Status: Final

Reference: 19080/017

	P3	P2	P1
Findings	2	1	0
Overall Audit Opinion	Substantial Assurance		

Summary and Overall Conclusions

Introduction

The council has a statutory responsibility to provide or procure care packages for those customers who need them. The Commissioning and Contracts team is responsible for the overall procurement of care frameworks, quality assurance and contract management.

There are five main types of care service that are commissioned by the Commissioning and Contracts team and for 2013/14 these are worth nearly £14m. There are 180 separate contracts arrangements for social care which are spread across 60 different providers.

Objectives and Scope of the Audit

The purpose of the audit was to provide assurance to management that procedures and controls relating to the management of Social Care Contracts will ensure that the following key risks are effectively managed:

- Monitoring arrangements are not adequate to confirm whether care providers are performing as per the contract.
- Action plans are not agreed with care providers to make necessary improvements.
- The performance of care providers is not reported to senior managers on a regular basis.
- Procedures are not adequate to deal with customer complaints about care providers.

Key Findings

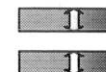
The Commissioning and Contracts team has recently incorporated staff responsible for managing the contracts within the Early Intervention and Prevention service as well as continuing to be responsible for contracts for Adult Social Care providers. Most of the issues identified relate to inconsistent practices between the Early Intervention and Prevention service and the Adult Social Care contracts.

Overall Conclusions

It was found that arrangements for managing risk were good with few weaknesses identified. While an effective control environment is in operation, there is scope for further improvements in the areas identified. Our overall opinion of the controls within the system at the time of the audit was that they provided **Substantial Assurance**.

Area Reviewed: Frequency of review meetings

Severity
Probability



1	Issue/ Control Weakness	Risk
	Meetings between with providers within the Early Intervention & Prevention service are sometimes only held once during the lifespan of the contract.	Issues relating to the quality of service relating to providers within the Early Intervention & Prevention service are not identified or dealt with on a timely basis.

Findings

Whereas meetings with providers within Adults Social Care were seen at least once a year, review meetings with providers within the Early Intervention & Prevention service were sometimes only held once during the period of the contract. This resulted in some providers not having had a meeting with the council since 2010.

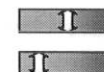
1.1 Agreed Action

All Business and Review meetings now scheduled in utilizing same approach as Adults Social Care contracts, frequency of reviews based on risk and value but all providers will be reviewed at least once per annum.

Priority	2
Responsible Officer	Commissioning and Contracts Manager
Timescale	31/12/2013

Area Reviewed: Early Intervention and Prevention team contracts

Severity
Probability



2 Issue/ Control Weakness

Risk

Contracts between the council and providers within the Early Intervention and Prevention service were not all up to date.

The absence of an up to date contract results in the council being charged amounts that have not been agreed or the quality of service provided is not adequate.

Findings

A review of contract arrangements showed that up to date contracts or agreements to extend existing contracts were not always in place for providers within the Early Intervention & Prevention service. At the time of the audit, in a sample of 20 cases within the Early Intervention & Prevention service, five had contracts or extension agreements that were at least six months out of date.

2.1 Agreed Action

All contracts have been reviewed and appropriate extensions or variations are now in place.

Priority

3

Responsible Officer

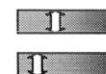
Commissioning Manager -
Early Interventions &
Prevention Manager

Timescale

31/12/2013

Area Reviewed: Standard format for reports on review meeting

Severity
Probability



3 Issue/ Control Weakness

Risk

The reports from review meetings with providers were not in a consistent format.

Key points from review meetings take longer to identify or are not followed up because they are not clear in the report from the previous meeting.

Findings

There was no standard format for reports from review meetings relating to the Adults Social Care providers with each member of staff having their own template for these reports, with different information included in each. For example, some reports included a recommendations section while others did not and some included responsible officers while others did not.

3.1 Agreed Action

A Draft format for reports from review meetings has been developed to ensure that key points from the meetings can easily be identified and followed up, all review meeting documents will be standard from January 2014.

Priority

3

Responsible Officer

Commissioning and
Contracts Manager

Timescale

31/01/2014

Audit Opinions and Priorities for Actions

Audit Opinions

Audit work is based on sampling transactions to test the operation of systems. It cannot guarantee the elimination of fraud or error. Our opinion is based on the risks we identify at the time of the audit.

Our overall audit opinion is based on 5 grades of opinion, as set out below.

Opinion	Assessment of internal control
High Assurance	Overall, very good management of risk. An effective control environment appears to be in operation.
Substantial Assurance	Overall, good management of risk with few weaknesses identified. An effective control environment is in operation but there is scope for further improvement in the areas identified.
Moderate assurance	Overall, satisfactory management of risk with a number of weaknesses identified. An acceptable control environment is in operation but there are a number of improvements that could be made.
Limited Assurance	Overall, poor management of risk with significant control weaknesses in key areas and major improvements required before an effective control environment will be in operation.
No Assurance	Overall, there is a fundamental failure in control and risks are not being effectively managed. A number of key areas require substantial improvement to protect the system from error and abuse.

Priorities for Actions

Priority 1	A fundamental system weakness, which presents unacceptable risk to the system objectives and requires urgent attention by management.
Priority 2	A significant system weakness, whose impact or frequency presents risks to the system objectives, which needs to be addressed by management.
Priority 3	The system objectives are not exposed to significant risk, but the issue merits attention by management.