

<b>Title of Meeting</b>	Meeting of the Public Health Agency Governance and Audit Committee
<b>Date</b>	12 December 2018 at 10.00am
<b>Venue</b>	Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast

**Present**

- Mr Leslie Drew - Chair
- Mr John Patrick Clayton - Non-Executive Director
- Ms Deepa Mann-Kler - Non-Executive Director

**In Attendance**

- Miss Rosemary Taylor - Assistant Director, Planning and Operational Services
- Mr Paul Cummings - Director of Finance, HSCB
- Ms Jane Davidson - Head Accountant, HSCB
- Mrs Catherine McKeown - Internal Audit, BSO
- Mr David Charles - Internal Audit, BSO
- Ms Anu Kane - Northern Ireland Audit Office
- Mr Robert Graham - Secretariat

**Apologies**

- Mr Joseph Stewart - Non-Executive Director
- Mr Ed McClean - Interim Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Operations

		<b>Action</b>
<b>55/18</b>	<b>Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies</b>	
55/18.1	Mr Drew welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
55/18.2	Apologies were noted from Mr Joseph Stewart and Mr Edmond McClean.	
<b>56/18</b>	<b>Item 2 - Declaration of Interests</b>	
56/18.1	Mr Drew asked if anyone had interests to declare relevant to any items on the agenda. No interests were declared.	

**57/18 Item 3 – Minutes of previous meeting held on 4 October 2018**

57/18.1 The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 4 October 2018 were approved as an accurate record of that meeting, subject to one amendment, a statement, “Mr Cummings confirmed that this was the case” was inserted in paragraph 50/18.8 in response to a question from Mr Stewart.

**58/18 Item 4 – Matters Arising**

*47/18.1 Internal Audit Review of Shared Services*

58/18.1 Mrs McKeown gave members an update on the most recent audit of Payroll Shared Services. She advised that the level of assurance remains “limited” as the majority of the previous recommendations have not been fully implemented. She explained that 5 of the 26 recommendations have been fully implemented, with the remaining 21 partially implemented, with 5 of those having had their target implementation date changed.

58/18.2 Mrs McKeown said that 1 of the 5 recommendations that had been fully implemented was a Priority One recommendation. She said that there has been some progress and there is a lot of work ongoing.

58/18.3 Ms Mann-Kler asked what the timeline is for the implementation of all of the recommendations. Mrs McKeown said that she did not have this information to hand, but she advised that this area is audited twice a year, and the end-year audit will be commencing in January 2019. Ms Mann-Kler asked if there were any new issues, but Mrs McKeown said that this report was focusing on the implementation of previous recommendations, and that the audit that will commence next month is a full audit.

58/18.4 Mr Drew acknowledged that while the issues highlighted may not impact on PHA as much as on other HSC bodies the PHA GAC are concerned about the delay in addressing the issues raised in previous audits. Mr Cummings agreed with Mr Drew and expressed his concerns around the system’s ability to manage the pay award.

*50/18.3 NIAS PPI Self-Assessment*

58/18.5 Miss Taylor advised that Mrs Hinds had confirmed that the self-assessment is due to be received from the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service by 31 March 2019.

51/18.3 *Update on Fraud Case*

58/18.6 Mr Cummings confirmed that he had sent an update on this to the PHA Chair.

52/18.8 *Transformation Funding*

58/18.7 Mr Clayton asked about campaigns. Miss Taylor explained that two PHA campaigns, regarding stroke and mental health, would be funded from in-year slippage while a third campaign, regarding AMR, would be funded from Transformation funding. Mr Clayton sought clarification regarding the campaign which is being funded from Transformation and it was agreed that there would be an update on this at the PHA Board meeting on 20 December.

Mr  
McClellan

**59/18 Item 5 – Chair’s Business**

59/18.1 The Chair acknowledged receipt of the correspondence from the Northern Ireland Audit Office regarding the contracting out of external audit services. He asked whether the process would be completed within the designated timeframe.

59/18.2 Ms Kane said that the process is on schedule and that a meeting is taking place today regarding this. She added that when the contract is awarded, it will be for a period of five years. Ms Mann-Kler asked what the rationale was for the change. Ms Kane explained that the successful bidder will be working across all HSC bodies, rather than having a number of organisations working in that sector.

59/18.3 Mr Clayton asked if there would be an impact on the planning process. Ms Kane acknowledged that this may be slightly delayed.

**60/18 Item 6 – Corporate Governance**

*Corporate Risk Register (as at 30 September 2018)*  
[GAC/45/12/18]

60/18.1 Miss Taylor presented the updated Corporate Risk Register for the period up to 30 September 2018, and advised that two new risks had been added, one relating to EU Exit, and the other relating to the difficulties in filling vacant public health consultant posts. She added that no risks had been deleted, and that none of the risk ratings had been amended.

60/18.2 Ms Mann-Kler asked about the recent malware issue. Miss Taylor explained that the issue was confined to one GP practice, and was contained.

- 60/18.3 Ms Mann-Kler asked about the impact of the number of vacant consultant posts on PHA break-even position, and what the issues are in terms of attracting candidates. Miss Taylor said that Dr Mairs would be best placed to respond, but advised that there would be no newly graduated public health trainees until December 2019. She added that Dr Mairs is speaking to the Department of Health regarding this situation. Ms Mann-Kler asked if this will be brought to the PHA Board for discussion as it is a major concern. Miss Taylor said that a piece of work is currently being undertaken looking at all vacancies across the organisation.
- 60/18.4 Ms Mann-Kler asked at what stage there will be a line drawn regarding what could be spent as part of Transformation funding this year. Mr Cummings advised that the 7 January is the cut-off point.
- 60/18.5 Ms Mann-Kler asked about the Procurement Board and the involvement of a Non-Executive Director on that group. Miss Taylor explained that the Procurement Board is an internal group. Mr Drew said that there was some confusion as the second group had been set up to look at how the backlog of procurements could be cleared, and that he would speak to the Board Chair about this. Miss Taylor said that this is a short-term task and finish group set up with the purpose of looking at the current procurement plan, where the delays are, how these could be managed and if any processes could be improved. She added that the Group has input from PHA, HSCB and PALS, and she hoped that it would finish its work by the end of January.
- 60/18.6 Mr Clayton asked about EU Exit, and particularly issues about the status of non-UK citizens working in Northern Ireland. Miss Taylor said that there is not a huge impact for PHA, but that she sits on a regional EU Exit group facilitated by the Department of Health, and there is HR representation on that group. She added that PALS has undertaken work in relation to contracts, but although contingency planning is being done on the basis of a “no deal”, there are many unknowns. Mr Clayton asked if PHA would be refunding the £65 EU Settlement Scheme fee, and Miss Taylor confirmed that this was the case.
- 60/18.7 The Chair asked about the gap analysis that is to be undertaken as part of the mitigation of the cyber security risk. Miss Taylor said that the regional HSC Cybersecurity Programme Board had commissioned an external review and report, and that a number of working groups have been set up to take forward recommendations, including training and awareness for staff. She added that a Project Manager has

been employed by BSO specifically for this work.

60/18.8 Members noted the Corporate Risk Register.

**61/18 Item 7 – Finance – Fraud Liaison Officer Update Report**

61/18.1 Mr Cummings provided members with an update on the current alleged fraud case. He said that a meeting had taken place on Monday as PHA are concerned with a lack of progress, and that a letter will be issued to the organisation shortly. He added that PHA has increased its monitoring and is assured that it is getting the required outputs, however the concerns relate to how the organisation is run.

61/18.2 The Chair asked if PHA has a contingency plan. Mr Cummings said that options are under consideration.

61/18.3 Members noted the update from the Fraud Liaison Officer.

**62/18 Item 8 – Internal Audit**

*Progress Report [GAC/46/12/18]*

62/18.1 Mrs McKeown presented the latest Internal Audit Progress report. She advised that there is one audit to report on, which relates to management of contracts within the community and voluntary sector. She said that a satisfactory level of assurance was being given to the management of contracts, but a limited assurance in terms of the procurement.

62/18.2 Mrs McKeown advised that 190 contracts, with a value of £8.7m, are being rolled forward. In terms of other findings, she noted that while performance information is being received, it is not being verified, and in terms of the Lifeline contract, she said that a SLA is not yet in place with the Belfast Trust. She stated that management have accepted all of the recommendations.

62/18.3 Mr Clayton asked whether the issue relates to the fact that the contracts are rolling forward. Mrs McKeown said that the concern is that the contracts are not going through a procurement exercise. Ms Mann-Kler asked if the PHA is adequately resourced in this area. Miss Taylor said that the short life working group is looking at this. She added that not every contract needs to go through procurement, some may be dealt with through grants and others through IPTs with Trusts. She added that a key issue is the need for earlier pre-procurement planning, as well as the actual procurement.

62/18.4 The Chair passed on Mr Stewart's concern about the follow

up of the declarations that the financial controls and policies are in place. Miss Taylor said that reminders have been sent to staff to have this followed up. The Chair noted that the target date for implementation of this recommendation is not until March 2019. Miss Taylor said that verification is an issue across the whole of the HSC and a paper is being developed to take forward a proportionate approach, but highlighted issues around accessing personal data.

62/18.5 Members noted the update from Internal Audit.

**63/18 Item 9 – Information Governance Strategy [GAC/47/12/18]**

63/18.1 Miss Taylor presented the updated PHA Information Governance Strategy and said that this sets out PHA's commitment to good information governance and compliance with legislation. She said that there are no major changes to the policy, the key ones being that references to DHSSPS are now DoH, and references to GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

63/18.2 Mr Clayton asked about equality monitoring data and if this is impacted by the new GDPR regulations. Miss Taylor said that equality data is given by consent.

63/18.3 Mr Drew noted the concerns expressed at the last meeting regarding attendance at the Information Governance Steering Group meetings. Miss Taylor advised that the Group has not met since, but that its next meeting is due to take place in January.

63/18.4 Members **APPROVED** the Information Governance Strategy which will be brought to the PHA Board meeting on 20 December.

**64/18 Item 10 – Direct Award Contracts – Report for 1 April to 30 September 2018 [GAC/48/12/18]**

64/18.1 Miss Taylor explained that an update on Direct Award Contracts (DACs) is brought to the Committee twice a year. She said that for the period from April to September 2018 a total of 13 applications for DACs, 11 of which relate to procurement of goods and services, and 2 relating to social care procurement.

64/18.2 Miss Taylor advised that the 13 DACs had been RAG rated by PALS and 1 has been rated "amber" and the remaining 12 rated as "green". She explained that there are two entries relating to "safeTALK" because previously this had been classed as goods and services, but following a review by

- PALS, it is now classed as social care procurement which has a higher threshold.
- 64/18.3 Ms Mann-Kler asked about the two campaigns that are listed. Mr Cummings explained that they are targeted campaigns with a limited catchment.
- 64/18.4 Members noted the update on Direct Award Contracts.
- 65/18 Item 11 – Joint PHA/HSCB/BSO Annual Report on Emergency Preparedness [GAC/49/10/18]**
- 65/18.1 The Chair welcomed Ms Mary Carey to the meeting to present the Annual Report on Emergency Preparedness.
- 65/18.2 Ms Carey said this Report relates to the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. She added that the Report followed an agreed template. She advised that the Report gave an overview of the incident responses during that period and also gave details on training that has been undertaken with senior staff during the last year.
- 65/18.3 Mr Clayton said that this was an interesting report and he wished to raise two issues, the first of which related to cross border arrangements, given the uncertainty over Brexit. Ms Carey said that there is work ongoing and that the group she is a member of will continue to meet and carry on its work within its existing MOUs and SLAs. She added that international health regulations will continue to apply. Mr Clayton asked whether the communications issues which had been highlighted following Storm Ophelia had been resolved. Ms Carey said that a lot of work had been done, and there is now clarity in terms of where the responsibility for communications lies.
- 65/18.4 Mr Drew raised concerns about the role of the Civil Contingencies Group, and he said that he did not feel reassured on reading the report that if another emergency planning issue were to arise that the Group would be well placed to deal with it. Ms Carey said that the debrief exercise following Storm Ophelia had highlighted areas where improvements needed to be made, including clarity on the role of the Civil Contingencies Group, and that there has been significant progress made. Mr Drew asked if all of the actions emanating from the debrief exercise had been completed, and Ms Carey confirmed that they had been.
- 65/18.5 Mr Drew asked when the report for the period up to 31 March 2019 would be available. Ms Carey said that this report should be available to come to the Governance and Audit

Committee in September as Trusts had a deadline of June to send in their individual reports. She explained that there had been issues in the preparation of the previous report, but that timescales should be shorter this year.

65/18.6 Members noted the report on Emergency Planning.

**66/18 Item 12 – Any Other Business**

66/18.1 Ms Kane tabled the Northern Ireland Audit Office's Public Reporting Programme which outlines the areas of work of the NIAO during the next year.

**67/18 Item 13 – Date and Time of Next Meeting**

*Thursday 28 February 2019 at 10am*

*Fifth Floor Meeting Room, 12/22 Linenhall Street, Belfast.*

Signed by Chair:

**Leslie Drew**

Date: 28 February 2019