



ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Recruitment and Retention

FINAL

Internal audit report: 2.17/18

10 November 2017

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Draft report issued	12 September 2017		
Responses received	9 November 2017		
Final report issued	10 November 2017	Client sponsor	Colette Black - Assistant Director of HR
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

An audit of Recruitment and Retention was undertaken as part of the approved internal audit plan for 2017/18. We performed this review to provide assurance over the contract and support mechanisms in place to ensure high quality staff are recruited and retained and evidence is retained to support the recruitment process.

Human Resources at Essex Fire Authority (EFA) follow a Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice which includes seven appended guidance documents. The Code of Practice provides the overarching principles that should be adhered to when undertaking a recruitment and selection process with the guidance documents providing more detailed procedures for individual cases. Included within the Code of Practice is relevant legislation including The Equality Act to promote the Authority's commitment to promoting diversity within the workplace.

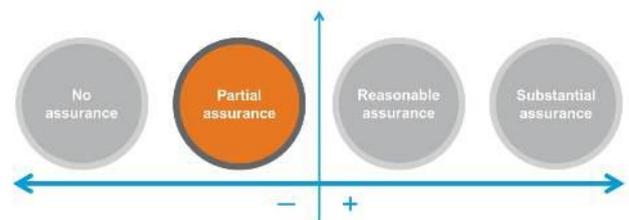
An annual Workforce Report is created by the HR Casework Manager for reporting on the Authority's workforce to the EFA. Included within the Workforce Report is data collated on the employee turnover within the Authority. The overall staff turnover figure for 2016 was 13.53 per cent. This is lower than the average total turnover rate for public sector services as per XperHR: 14.7 per cent.

1.2 Conclusion

We identified multiple areas of improvement namely with regards to the current system in place for the retention of HR recruitment documentation. We found through sample testing, that on multiple instances, documentation to evidence steps within the recruitment process could not be located. This was due to a robust filing mechanism not being in place leading to documentation being missed and/or lost within the recruitment records.

Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Authority can take partial assurance that the controls to manage this risk are suitably designed and consistently applied. Action is needed to strengthen the control framework to manage the identified risk(s).



1.3 Key findings

The key findings from this review are as follows:

- The budget for Firefighters had been approved appropriately at the beginning of the year, appropriate monitoring of the staffing levels against budget is in place, and budgets are considered prior to initiating the recruitment process for Firefighters.
- Through sample testing of five support staff and five firefighters, we confirmed that an appropriate panel was in place and the outcome of interviews were documented for nine of the candidates. For the remaining one candidate, an interview was not required due to a decision being made after shortlisting (please see action below).
- Through sample testing, we found that the successful candidates of the recruitment process had signed an employment contract as required and copies of these were retained within HR.

- The Annual Workforce report contained sufficient reporting on retention related workforce data. These were reported and discussed at the EFA with actions made and followed up as required.
- Actions as a result of recruitment and retention risks identified are recorded and escalated as appropriate, and we confirmed that agreed actions are given deadline dates, and action owners.
- We confirmed that an action plan was created as a result of the Section 11 audit carried out at the Service which had included recruitment standards.

We have however identified the following weaknesses resulting in six '**medium**' and two 'low' priority management actions being agreed.

Code of Practice

We obtained the Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and found that it was dated May 2015. This Code of Practice was due to be reviewed in May 2016 and was therefore out of date.

Without up to date policies and procedures in place at the Authority, there is a risk that methods being complied with are not in line with current practices. The timely review and approval of the key policy document was raised as an issue within the Section 11 Safer Recruitment Pathway action plan. **(Low)**

HR Recruitment Documentation

Through sample testing of five support staff posts and five Firefighter posts, we identified;

- Two instances where HR could not locate a completed Authority to Recruit Form and three instances where a Shortlisting Form for the corresponding vacancy could not be located. **(Medium)**
- One instance for the Assistant Director of HR where we could not evidence approval of advertisement spend. **(Medium)**
- One instance for a Firefighter role where only one reference was retained on file and the second required reference could not be located. **(Low)**

Through the sample testing of five Firefighters; we found that although assessment days were completed, one assessment day was identified where the ladder climb assessment was not completed. We were informed that this was deferred to a different day due to weather conditions, however evidence of this deferred assessment being completed could not be located. **(Low)**

Without required HR documentation retained and available to view, there is a risk that recruitment related queries to support the appointment process may not be supported with relevant documentation to be resolved. These findings are in line with the outcomes from the internal recruitment process audits undertaken by the Authority which found that the completeness of staff HR files varied greatly between January and July 2017.

Shortlisting

Through sample testing of 10 members of staff, we identified one instance for the role of Fitness Advisor where an interview was not required. We were informed that the decision was made to offer the best candidate the position without an interview being held. Through review of the Selection Process Outcome Form for this position, we found that shortlisting was not evidenced and the rationale for the decision made was not sufficient.

Without sufficient evidence of shortlisting and detailed rationale for the decision made, there is a risk that recruitment disputes cannot be supported with clear selection scoring and reasons. **(Medium)**

Recruitment and Retention Reporting

Through review of the Workforce Report for 2016, we found that recruitment data has been included as a very minor addition within the report. There is no information with regards to the performance of internal and external recruitment. Through discussions with the HR Advisor, we were informed that KPIs to track the performance of recruitment and retention data are not currently in place.

Without KPIs and reporting on recruitment data, there is a risk that ineffective recruitment and retention processes are not identified to be improved upon. **(Medium)**

Pay Policy Statement

Through review of the Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17, we found that although pay related changes are reported in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, the figures in the report were not updated to the latest nationally agreed pay scales.

Without latest information updated on documentation provided to the EFA meetings, there is a risk that incorrect or out of date information is discussed and reviewed leading to incorrect oversight and decision making. **(Medium)**

1.4 Additional information to support our conclusion

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made. The detailed findings section lists the specific actions agreed with management to implement.

Risk	Control design not effective*	Non-Compliance with controls*	Agreed actions		
			Low	Medium	High
Failure to recruit and retain right staff mix and have appropriate evidence to support this.	0 (11)	8 (11)	3	5	0
Total			3	5	0

* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

2 DETAILED FINDINGS

Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible regulatory scrutiny/reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, regulatory scrutiny, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

This report has been prepared by exception. Therefore, we have included in this section, only those risks of weakness in control or examples of lapses in control identified from our testing and not the outcome of all internal audit testing undertaken.

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
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Risk: Failure to recruit and retain right staff mix.

1	A Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice is in place within the Authority. This document provides a framework of good practice for individuals involved in recruitment and selection. This helps to ensure high standards are maintained and the best people are recruited through a process that is free from bias and discrimination. The document details relevant legislation including:	Yes	No	We obtained the Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice. We confirmed that the Code of Practice was available to view by all staff through the staff intranet. We could not obtain the minutes of the meeting where the Code of Practice was reviewed and approved due to the length of time elapsed since the approval meeting. Without approval of Policy documentation, there is a risk that required content inclusions and oversight of policies is not in place to ensure suitable processes are followed.	Low	The Service will review, update, and appropriately approve the Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and upload this latest version to the staff intranet.	31 December 2017	Hannah Phipps with Lorraine Yelland
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Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Equality Act (2010); The Data Protection Act (2001); Rehabilitation of Offenders act (1974); and; Asylum and Immigration Act (1996). <p>Roles and responsibilities are also detailed within the document to highlight the expectations of staff such as Heads of Departments, Recruiting Managers, Interview Panel Members, and the HR Department.</p> <p>'How to' guides are also in place to provide procedures for the recruitment and selection process These are appended to the Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and are referred to where appropriate.</p>			<p>We confirmed that appended guides for recruiting for the different levels of staff, safer recruitment, and positive DBS checks were also available on the staff intranet with procedure details as required. These appended guides are referenced where applicable throughout the Code of Practice.</p> <p>We found that the Code of Practice document was dated May 2015 and due to be reviewed in May 2016, therefore is potentially now out of date. The timely review and approval of the key policy document was raised as an issue within the Section 11 Safer Recruitment Pathway action plan.</p> <p>Without up to date policies and procedures in place at the Service, there is a risk that incorrect methods and requirements are being complied with that are not in line with current practices.</p>				
2	<p>All posts, whether internally or externally funded need to follow a certain process to be advertised. This process differs for Firefighter posts, and Support Staff posts.</p> <p>For Support Staff posts, an Approval to Recruit Form is in place within the Authority, this must be completed by the</p>	Yes	No	<p>Through sample testing of five support staff posts, we confirmed the following:</p> <p>An Authority to Recruit Form was completed appropriately and approved by required persons for three instances. These forms were accompanied with the corresponding role profile and person specification as required.</p>	Medium	The Service will develop a robust system to ensure required HR recruitment documentation, including Authority to Recruit Forms, shortlisting and authorisation are stored appropriately to	1 December 2017	Angela Mayer

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<p>Department Head and will include the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type of resource required; Reason for recruiting; Implications of not recruiting for the role; and Budget impact. <p>Attached to the form will be the Role Profile and Person Specification. This is reviewed as part of the form for formal approval by required persons.</p> <p>The form must be signed by the Department Head as the requester, the HR Business Partner as the checker, and both the Finance Manager and Assistant Director of HR as approvers. A Member of HR Support Team will then finally check the form and sign off as evidence of this.</p>			<p>We identified two instances where HR could not locate the completed Authority to Recruit form, potentially due to these not being saved on the Authority's SharePoint system. We therefore could not provide assurance that these roles were appropriately authorised to recruit.</p> <p>Through discussions and testing with the HR Advisor, we found that the documents uploaded to SharePoint are not separated into the relevant individual documents leading to large files with many pages. This increases the likelihood of required documents being missed and/or lost within the multitude of differing documentation.</p> <p>Without required HR documentation retained and available to view, there is a risk that recruitment related queries may not be supported with relevant documentation to be resolved.</p>		allow individual documents to be located with ease.		
3	Recruitment advertisements for support staff posts are placed by the HR department only for approved vacancies. All vacancies, including temporary posts, shall normally be advertised with a minimum of two week closing date, and will	Yes	No	<p>Through sample testing of five support staff posts, we confirmed the following:</p> <p>In one instance for the Assistant Director of HR, we could not evidence approval of agency advertisement spend. Through discussions with the HR Advisor, we were informed that approval was obtained via</p>	Medium	The Service will ensure advertisement spend is appropriately approved and evidence of this will be retained.	1 December 2017	Angela Mayer

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	include interview/assessment dates. Where additional advertising other than the Authority website is required, the HR Department will usually pay for either one online, or one print advert. The spend of the additional advertising must be agreed by the Workforce Planning Group who will oversee spending of the recruitment budget.			<p>email however this could not be provided at the time of the audit. The Authority to Recruit Form was also not available to view for the Assistant Director of HR to detail advertisement spend and approval. We also could not evidence advertisement posting dates for compliance against the two-week minimum requirement due to evidence of this not being found.</p> <p>We could not gain assurance that advertisement spend was appropriately approved prior to spend and advertising was in line with the two-week requirement. Without approval for advertisement spend obtained and retained for future reference, there is a risk that advertisement spend cannot be traced back to approval if queried.</p> <p>We sampled two vacancies advertised on the Authority's Internet / Intranet and Indeed. These are free advertising methods and therefore advertisement spend approval was not applicable. Through review of the Indeed job posting webpage, we confirmed there was a two-week gap between the advertisement posting date per Indeed and the closing date per the job advert for these two vacancies.</p> <p>One vacancy for the Fitness Advisor role was only advertised on the Authority's Internet / Intranet. We could not evidence the period the vacancy was advertised for as this information is not recorded within the</p>				

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				<p>advertising system. We therefore could not provide assurance in this respect.</p> <p>The last vacancy sampled for the Engineer role was advertised on the Colchester Gazette newspaper alongside the Authority's Internet / Intranet. We obtained an email trail between the HR Resourcing Advisor and the Recruitment Account Manager. We confirmed that the Recruitment Account Manager had requested the advertisement on the newspaper and had noted the cost. Although we could not evidence the advertisement posting date, the Recruitment Account Manager had requested the advert to be posted for three weeks with the email dates matching this.</p>				
4	<p>For support staff, applications should be shortlisted as soon as possible after the closing date. This must be done by at least two members of staff who will also be on the interview panel. Shortlisting is undertaken for each applicant based on the criteria on the Person Specification and a Shortlisting Form is used as a checklist against this.</p> <p>The Shortlisting Form includes the Person Specification Criteria and whether each criterion is essential or desirable. The criteria scoring</p>	Yes	No	<p>Through sample testing of five support staff vacancies, we confirmed the following:</p> <p>On two vacancies sampled, we confirmed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Shortlisting Form was completed by two appropriate members of staff; • Scoring was noted for each selection criteria in line with the person specification; and • Shortlisting decisions were made based on the scores. <p>On the remaining three instances, a corresponding Shortlisting Form for the vacancy could not be located. We therefore could not review this documentation to gain</p>	Medium	<p>See action in Control 2</p> <p>The Service will ensure shortlisting documentation is completed for all vacancies to show scoring of all candidates and the rationale for successful candidate decisions sufficiently detailed.</p>	1 December 2017	Angela Mayer

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	<p>for each of the candidates is totalled and each candidate is noted with a decision as to whether they have been shortlisted or not.</p> <p>Scoring is based on a numbered system between zero and two. Zero implies the candidate has not met the criteria, one implies the candidate has partially met the criteria, and two implies the candidate has fully met the criteria sought.</p>			<p>assurance that shortlisting was completed, and decisions were made accordingly.</p> <p>Without shortlisting documentation retained, there is a risk that recruitment selection disputes cannot be supported with clear selection scoring and reasons.</p> <p>We identified one instance for the role of Fitness Advisor where an interview was not held as this role had only required the shortlisting process. We were advised that the decision was made to offer the best candidate the position without an interview being held.</p> <p>We obtained the Selection Process Outcome Form for this position and found that the document was not filled out completely. The form did not evidence the panel members completing the shortlisting, results of shortlisting, and the rationale for the decision was noted as "Only candidate who applied that fully met the needs of the role".</p> <p>This is not sufficient evidence of shortlisting and the decision rationale is not enough to warrant selection reasoning. Without sufficient evidence of shortlisting and completed documentation with scoring and detailed rationale for decision made, there is a risk that recruitment selection disputes cannot be supported with clear selection scoring and reasons.</p>				

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5	<p>For firefighters, the National Firefighter Selection (NFS) process is used. This includes the National Firefighter Physical Test. Candidates are required to undertake physical tests which aim to assess the level of fitness, strength, and manual dexterity as well as level of confidence in simulated exercises.</p> <p>There are six National Firefighter Physical Tests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladder Climb • Casualty Evacuation • Ladder Lift / Lower Stimulation • Enclosed Spaces • Equipment Assembly • Equipment Carry <p>A grid template is in place to record the scores of each candidate against each of the physical tests. A cross is marked in either the pass or fail box to indicate the results of each test and a candidate must pass all stages to be deemed fit for the position.</p> <p>This template is filled out at each assessment day to record the results of each candidate, and this is forwarded to HR who</p>	Yes	No	<p>We sample tested five Firefighters and confirmed that assessment days were held to assess each of these candidates against the physical tests. We confirmed in all instances that the physical test was completed in the corresponding assessment day, and the sampled candidates had passed all stages assessed.</p> <p>Through review of each of the assessment day physical assessments, we confirmed that the activities were in line with the National Firefighter physical tests with the added inclusion of a Bleep Test.</p> <p>We noted within the assessment day on 23 January 2017 that the ladder climb assessment was not completed. Through discussions with the Recruitment Lead, we found that this was not carried out due to there being high winds on the day.</p> <p>We were informed that the candidates had therefore completed the ladder climb separately. Although we were informed that this further assessment was completed, a separate assessment day form was not completed to show the results and we could not evidence completion of the ladder test.</p> <p>Without records of all assessments being carried out, there is a risk that unfair assessments may be carried out.</p> <p>We confirmed that each candidate was noted to have either passed or failed each of the assessments and where a failure was</p>	Low	The Service will ensure that all firefighter physical assessments are evidenced as being carried out with scoring of these assessments retained.	1 December 2017	Angela Mayer

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	<p>will scan and retain the evidence within the Authority's online system SharePoint for future reference.</p> <p>For experienced Firefighters, this assessment day is not required as experience is sufficient to evidence suitability for the position.</p>			noted, the candidate was not progressed to the next assessment stage.				
7	<p>All offers of employment are conditional subject to the outcome of the Occupational Health Screening Assessment, reference checking, proof of right to work in the UK, and DBS clearance (if applicable).</p> <p>Reference checks will be completed by the HR Department against the employment or academic history for the last three years. At least two references will be required from a current and previous employer; additional references may be required to ensure reference checking covers the last three years.</p> <p>In line with the conditional offer of employment, this information must be obtained prior to the</p>	Yes	No	<p>Through sample testing of five support staff and five firefighters, we confirmed pre-employment checks were carried out for eight out of 10. We identified two instances where pre-employment checks were not carried out, however this was due to the staff members already being employed at the Authority, and are only moving departments. Pre-employment checks for these two employees will have been carried out when they first joined the Authority.</p> <p>For the eight employees with pre-employment checks, we confirmed that an occupational health screening was carried out, proof of right to work in the UK was obtained in the form of a passport, references were obtained, and all the information was received prior to the employee start date.</p> <p>We identified one instance for a firefighter role where only one reference was retained</p>	Low	The Service will ensure at least two references covering employment for the previous three years are obtained, retained, and reviewed prior to confirmed employment of the staff.	1 December 2017	Angela Mayer

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	start date of the successful candidate.			<p>on file and the second required reference could not be located.</p> <p>Without two references obtained covering employment for the previous three years, potential red flags associated with the employee may not be identified.</p>				
8	<p>A Workforce Report is created on an annual basis providing an overview for Members on the Service's workforce for the year. The report was run from the data management system to drill down into the specific workforce metrics. The report is presented by the Director of Transformation to the Essex Fire Authority meeting.</p> <p>The report details the headcount figures compared against the previous year, age profile distributions, gender distributions, and ethnicity. Also included are figures on the staff turnover broken down by Firefighters, On-Call staff, Control staff and Support staff.</p> <p>The turnover rate is compared with the average turnover rate for public sector services obtained using the XpertHR system,</p>	Yes	No	<p>We obtained and reviewed the Workforce Report for 2016 and confirmed that sufficient reporting and follow up is in place to ensure retention of staff. We however noted that Recruitment has been included as a very minor addition only detailing the number of joiners. There is no further data with regards to performance of internal and external recruitment including feedback from candidates, timeliness from vacancy to filled post, and timeliness of candidate outcomes from staff at the Authority.</p> <p>Without recruitment data collated and reported appropriately, there is a risk that weaknesses in the recruitment process are not identified and followed up in a timely manner.</p> <p>Through discussions with the HR Advisor, we were advised that KPIs are not currently in place to track the performance of recruitment and retention data collated.</p> <p>Without KPIs assigned to the recruitment and retention data collected, the Authority do not have a target in place to facilitate efficient recruitment and ensure effective</p>	Medium	<p>The Service will collate data and report on the performance of the recruitment process.</p> <p>This will include assigning KPIs to both recruitment and retention data and ensuring oversight of the progress against the KPIs set.</p>	1 December 2017	Hannah Phipps with Martin Jones

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<p>Leavers are included as a separate section giving data on how many leavers there have been, reasons for staff leaving, and data on the length of service.</p> <p>A section is included in the report to detail the action being taken because of the data figures presented. This aims to address issues identified, and improve on workforce operations. These actions are gathered from individual action plans for each of the areas covered within the report.</p> <p>There are no current KPIs assigned to recruitment and retention data gathered and reported to Essex Fire Authority.</p>			<p>staff retention. This poses the risk of ineffective recruitment and retention processes not being improved upon.</p>				
9	An annual Pay Policy Statement is created by the Authority in line with the requirements of Section 38 of the localism Act 2011. This statement provides transparency regarding the Authority's approach to setting the pay of its employees by identifying:	Yes	No	<p>We obtained the Pay Policy Statement for 2016-2017 as presented to the Essex Fire Authority meeting. Through review of the statement we confirmed that the pay arrangements for Principle Officers has been detailed, and a section has been included under the heading "Determining Levels of Pay for All Other Staff".</p> <p>This section includes the pay scales for support staff (Green book) and operational staff (Grey book). We confirmed through</p>	Medium	The Service will ensure all figures including pay rise related information reported to the Essex Fire Authority, or alternative governance forum is up to date and correct.	1 December 2017	Hannah Phipps

Ref	Control	Adequate control design (yes/no)	Controls complied with (yes/no)	Audit findings and implications	Priority	Action for management	Implementation date	Responsible owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The methods by which salaries of all employees are determined; and The detail and level of remuneration of its most senior staff. <p>The Authority's pay policy is based on a nationally negotiated pay scheme which applies to local government employees. This nationally negotiated pay scheme is provided by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services.</p> <p>The NJC provide separate documentation for operational and support staff. Operational staff pay rates are outlined within the "Grey Book" and support staff pay rates are outlined within the "Green Book"</p>			<p>review of these pay scales that the Green Book salaries noted within the Pay Policy Statement were in line with the grading as detailed in the NJC pay scales for 2014, however, not in line with the latest pay scales for 2016/17.</p> <p>Through discussions with the HR Policy and Strategy Manager we were informed that this is a mistake in the report and actual salaries reflected the new pay scales. It was also noted within the statement that the latest 2016/2017 NJC pay scales will be utilised.</p> <p>We confirmed the salary increase in a green book staff on SAP and confirmed that this was in line with the gradings per the NJC pay scales for 2016/2017.</p> <p>Through review of the operational staff levels of pay as per the Pay Policy Statement, we found that the pay rates differed to the grey book NJC pay scales by 1%. Through discussions with the HR Policy and Strategy Manager, we were informed this was also a mistake in the report and the 1% increase was considered at the Authority. The statement included note of the 1% increase in line with the latest NJC.</p> <p>Through review of the SAP system, we confirmed that a 1% increase was indeed applied to operational staff post 1 July 2017.</p> <p>Without latest information updated on documentation provided to the Essex Fire</p>				

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Authority meetings, there is a risk that incorrect information is discussed and reviewed at this level leading to incorrect oversight.

APPENDIX A: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following risks:

Objective of the risk under review	Risks relevant to the scope of the review	Risk source
To ensure that high quality staff are recruited and retained by the Authority.	Failure to recruit and retain right staff mix and have appropriate evidence to support this.	Link to risk register and management concern

When planning the audit the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

Recruitment

The Authority follow the best practices outlined in Section 11 of the safer recruitment pathway, the scope of the review will be to provide assurance that there is a robust and effective recruitment process for Firefighters and support staff.

In particular, we will ensure that:

- Policies and procedures are in place, up to date and available to relevant staff in line with Section 11;
- Firefighter and support staff posts (and specifications) are controlled and recruitment is subject to approval;
- Posts are advertised in line with the policy to ensure the best candidates are reached;
- A standard short listing process is applied and decisions evidenced;
- Interviews are held and there is an equitable panel for deciding successful applicants;
- The outcome of the interview is clearly documented and the successful, and unsuccessful applicants informed of the outcome;
- Relevant employment checks undertaken prior to employee commencing in post. (Checks include confirmation of right to work in the U.K, DBS clearance where required, fitness test where required and references); and
- Positions have been accepted including the receipt and retention of signed contracts (this includes confirming the key job specifications agreed have been reflected in the contract).

Where appropriate, we will compare our findings with those of the Authority's safeguarding team, who undertook a review of the recruitment processes in 2016/17, and comment on the progress made to address the issues identified.

Retention

To support a robust recruitment and selection process, the Authority must ensure that where the best staff have been recruited, they are retained within the organisation so that their full potential can be realised and have a positive impact on the organisation. We will therefore ensure that:

- The Authority has identified areas of abnormal attrition (benchmarked against national rates);
- A review of pay and benefits has been undertaken;
- Risks have been identified, escalated and recorded appropriately on the Authority's risk register; and
- Action has been taken to address risks.
- In addition to this, we will confirm that senior management are updated on recruitment and retention issues. This includes the receipt of recruitment performance information on key performance indicators.

Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

- We will not confirm that the Authority's recruitment process is in line with the safer recruitment pathway;
- We will not comment on the appropriateness of any appointments made;
- We will not review the appointment, starting or payroll procedures or compliance with these;
- We will not provide an opinion on the performance of individual members of staff, or the training or qualifications of those involved in the recruitment process;
- We will not comment on the completion of all aspects of the Section 11 Safer Recruitment Pathway action plan;
- We will not assess the Authority's appraisal / performance development processes as part of this audit;
- This review will not consider probationary processes, lengths of probationary periods or compliance with these;
- We will not cover the whole scope of the Authority's safeguarding teams self-audit on recruitment practices, we will only cover those areas agreed within the Audit Planning Sheet of this review;
- We will not comment on the appropriateness of the pay and benefits, only that they have been reviewed;
- Any testing undertaken during the audit will be performed on a sample basis only; and our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

APPENDIX B: FURTHER INFORMATION

Persons interviewed during the audit:

Colette Black – Assistant Director of HR

Glenn McGuinness – Assistant Director of Finance

Ben Pilkington – Assistant Director, Programme 2020

Jenny Leonard – HR Business Partner

Hannah Phipps – HR Policy and Strategy Manager

Nikki Geaves – Inclusion & Diversity Lead

Lorraine Yelland – HR & OD Advisor

Natasha Heard – Recruitment Lead

Sabina Miah – HR Assistant

Benchmarking

We have included some comparative data to benchmark the number of management actions agreed, as shown in the table below. In the past year, we have undertaken a number of audits of a similar nature in the sector.

Level of assurance	Percentage of reviews	Results of the audit
Substantial assurance	33%	
Reasonable assurance	50%	
Partial assurance	17%	✓
No assurance	-	
Management actions	Average number in similar audits	Number in this audit
	7	8

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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