

**Summary of Recommendations and Management Responses from Internal Audit Reports
issued Quarter 2, 2024/25**

Recommendation	Rating ¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response	Target Date
Customer Access Facilities – September 2024				
Staff should be reminded to thoroughly check all letters before these are folded and sent for posting.	Medium	Customer Services Team Leader	Staff will be reminded of the importance of checking documents prior to posting, in order to comply with the relevant Data Protection regulations. The introduction of Hybrid Mail should negate the need for hand-printed mail.	31 August 2024
Refresher Data Protection Training should be held on an annual basis.	Low	Head of Customer & Digital Services	A cyber-security training plan has recently been developed which includes the requirement for all staff to undertake regular data protection refresher training within the next 12 months.	Completed.
Guidance should be compiled outlining where and how CSC staff can report facility issues.	Low	Benefits & Customer Services Manager	We will determine the mechanism through which the CSC can report issues with the building and provide feedback to the CSTL.	31 August 2024
Guidance needs to be distributed to WDC staff (e.g. through the Intranet) explaining the roles and responsibilities of the CSC following their move to the Pump Rooms.	Low	Benefits & Customer Services Manager	Agreed to compile document and get this distributed.	30 September 2024

¹ The ratings refer to how the recommendation affects the overall risk and are defined as follows:

High: Issue of significant importance requiring urgent attention.
Medium: Issue of moderate importance requiring prompt attention.
Low: Issue of minor importance requiring attention.

Recommendation	Rating ¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response	Target Date
Any documents in the manual that refer to Riverside House should be updated. The waste and recycling procedure will also need updating to reflect the calls being brought back into WDC.	Low	Customer Services Team Leader	This will be an ongoing project taking place as and when procedure notes are transferred to the wiki 'how-to' guides.	January 2025
The KPI relating to the number of Benefits and Revenues calls taken, needs to be updated to reflect that the CSC also handle Elections and Switchboard calls.	Medium	Head of Customer & Digital Services	This will be actioned as soon as the replacement Contact Centre Telephony Management system is in place (August 2024) for inclusion within SAP performance reporting requirements. Because of how the previous (outgoing) system was setup, differentiation between call types was problematic.	31 October 2024
Call statistic reports should be sent onto the Head of Customer & Digital Services, as appropriate.	Medium	Benefits & Customer Services Manager	This will be done on a monthly basis.	30 September 2024
All Council departments should ensure that all staff are subject to thorough verification checks before being given access to a specific system.	Medium	Head of Customer & Digital Services	Completing baseline security checks is a requirement of our Memorandum of Understanding with the DWP regarding access to their data. All current staff recruitment exercises include this requirement. Work will be undertaken with HR to ensure that all current employees have undertaken appropriate checks.	30 December 2024
A fully comprehensive risk assessment of the Pump Rooms reception should be completed as a matter of urgency.	High	Benefits & Customer Services Manager; Casual Health and Safety & Premises Manager.	This will be completed as a matter of urgency.	End of August 2024.

Temporary Accommodation – July 2024

Recommendation	Rating ¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response	Target Date
<p>A temporary accommodation policy should be compiled. This should make reference to the different types of temporary accommodation that the Council provides, as well as the standards expected of these properties and the various charges. A policy of this nature should also refer to serviced apartments and the circumstances in which these can be used.</p>	Low	Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	<p>Agreed. We have serviced apartment providers on the DPS for use if needed. A policy will be developed to clarify when they can be used and to ensure value for money.</p>	31 December 2024
<p>A full inventory of furnishings/stock purchased for temporary accommodation placements should be compiled. The expected standards of the provision of white goods and furniture should be included under a temporary accommodation policy.</p>	Medium	Homeless Services Manager	<p>Existing stock control procedures were not being followed. The HSM has spoken with officers to remind them that they must complete inventory sheets. A full stock check has now been completed and will be audited by the HSM each month. Items that are included in the WDC stock have been checked to ensure that they are in good working order. Any nonstandard items will be removed and if clearance of items is required, this will be arranged, and the outgoing tenant will be sent an invoice for the cost. End of tenancy visits will be carried out when the staffing levels permit.</p>	Completed
<p>Any homeless records older than 2019 should be disposed of accordingly.</p>	Medium	Homeless Services Manager; Senior Housing Advice and Allocations Officer	<p>The HSM will dispose of records pre-2019. The Senior Housing Advice and Allocations Officer will ensure archived records are deleted prior to 2019 on the LOCATA system.</p>	30 September 2024

Recommendation	Rating¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response	Target Date
Where purposeful damages have been caused in private temporary accommodation, the temporary placement should be ended promptly.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager	Agreed. There is an existing warning system in place whereby any breaches of occupancy due to wilful damage will result in financial penalties and eviction. Staff have been informed of this.	Completed.
Payments to providers of temporary accommodation should be made in a timely manner to avoid the risk of losing sources of accommodation.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager	Invoices are received and checked before being approved. Payments are made in line with WDC Procurement, Purchasing and Payments. The service maintains invoicing records to ensure payments are made in a timely manner.	Completed.
Officers should, where possible, be trying to recoup any monies from applicants where WDC have had to foot the bill for damages.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager; Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	Debt recovery policy to be implemented and sundry accounts to be set up on ActiveH.	30 September 2024
All User and Occupation Agreements should be uploaded to Locata.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager.	Agreed. The HSM will remind staff of the importance of accurate record keeping. When staff vacancies are filled, this will provide capacity to ensure this is done in all cases.	31 July 2024
Staff should be reminded to upload key receipts, fire door agreements, next of kin forms, and non-secure tenancy agreements to the DIP for all WDC temporary accommodation placements.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager.	Agreed. The HSM will remind staff of the importance of accurate record keeping. When staff vacancies are filled, this will provide capacity to ensure this is done in all cases.	31 July 2024

Recommendation	Rating¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response	Target Date
Staff should be reminded that these documents must be fully signed, dated and names printed by both the applicant and the WDC officer in all cases. The HSM should also undertake regular audits of these documents.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager.	Agreed. The HSM will remind staff of the importance of accurate record keeping. When staff vacancies are filled, this will provide capacity to ensure this is done in all cases.	31 July 2024
Staff should be reminded to update both Locata and Active H where possible.	Low	Homeless Services Manager.	This will be done during team meetings and 1:1s. The HSM will remind staff of the importance of accurate record keeping.	31 July 2024
Rent statements should be hand delivered to the applicant where possible. Where rent statements have been delivered to the property, a visit should accompany this.	Low	Homeless Services Manager.	Every Monday rent statements are issued; where the occupant is present the team will speak with them, but this is not done through a supported visit. A support visit is arranged in line with occupant and officer availability at an agreed date during the week. When staff vacancies are filled, this will provide the capacity to ensure that this is done in all cases.	Completed
Management should consider the resources needed in order for the team to be able to conduct weekly visits to all homeless applicants placed into temporary accommodation.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager; Housing Advice and Allocations Manager	Agreed. Support visits are taking place, but the reduced staffing levels do not allow a visit every week. Weekly visits will resume when the service has its full complement of staff. Weekly block inspections of WDC stock are recorded on ActiveH.	31 July 2024
Staff should be reminded to note housing benefit start dates on the Locata journal notes where relevant.	Low	Homeless Services Manager	Agreed. A record of housing benefit claim numbers will be uploaded on LOCATA and cross-referenced with the temporary accommodation spreadsheet.	31 July 2024

Recommendation	Rating¹	Responsible Officer	Management Response	Target Date
Staff should be reminded to notify the Benefits team immediately once the placement end date is known.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager	The recruitment of a Temporary Accommodation Assistant will ensure this recommendation is complied with.	30 September 2024
Staff should be reminded to make weekly contact with their assigned applicant. In cases where contact cannot be established, this should be documented on the Locata journal.	Medium	Homeless Services Manager	The recruitment of a Homeless Support Officer will ensure full compliance of this recommendation.	30 September 2024