

Risk, Internal Audit, Counter
Fraud & Assurance

Annual Report - June 2022

Partnership Management
Committee



Support, Assurance and Innovation

Report of the Head of Audit Partnership

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to confirmation by the Committee before taking effect.

Recommendation: that the Committee notes the current status of the Partnership and current issues.

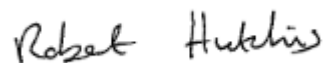
Key initiatives since February 2022

We are in conversations with the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (D&SFRS) with regards then joining the Partnership. We have worked with, and supported, the Service since the inception of DAP (in 2009) and so we really welcome this opportunity to extend our working with them, and the opportunity to invite a “blue light” service to join us to help further guide and develop what we do.

In March we requested our strategic partner, OneWest, to examine and review the way we deliver IT assurance services. We have received a most helpful report from OneWest which contains a good number of recommendations that will help us as we look to develop this area of our business. We are fully aware how critical IT is to all our partners and customers, and we need to be able to provide them with the high quality, value added service that they require in this most critical of fields.

This is my final report as Head of DAP as I have decided that the time is right for me to leave my role, with my last day being 30th June. I have been in the role for 10 years now and, whilst I still really enjoy what I do, I think the time is right to hand over the reins to someone else to take the Partnership forward for the next 10 years. My intention is to take a few months off, enjoy the fabulous west-country summer, but then to undertake work over the late autumn / winter period.

So, I wanted to use this opportunity to let you know of my plans and to pass on my thanks to you for your support to DAP over the years. We have a great team of people, with a fabulous bunch of managers, and I am sure that the future will be very bright.



Robert Hutchins
 Head of Devon Audit Partnership June 2022

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Finance, new business and new staff

Budget position

I am pleased to report that the Partnership continues to remain within budget. Our outturn position for 2021/22 shows a small financial surplus (£1,200) – set against the backdrop of the Covid crisis and other challenges this is a very pleasing result.



New Business – as referred to previously, we are in conversations with the Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, with the aim of them becoming a full partner of DAP during 2022/23.

We also continue to be successful in our EU grant work – we are a little surprised that the need to support new claims seem to be continuing, but we welcome the new work none-the-less. Such new work includes the D2Grids and C-CARE Interreg projects for Plymouth City Council as well as the MustB0 project for Sutton Council. and the Interreg 'Mustbe0' project for the London Borough of Sutton.

New staff and Staff Changes

To meet the demands of our partners and clients, and also to ensure we have a good level of continuity as staff look to retire, we have taken on further new staff to help deliver our assurance services. Since March Ethan Shears has joined us an Audit Apprentice, and Joel Moors has left us to pursue new career avenues.

With changes in our staffing, and changes in the services requested by Partners and Clients, we will take the opportunity to re-consider our staffing structure. We wish to embed the need to effectively deliver wider “assurance” services (for example not limited to Internal Audit) and to ensure that all our staff become “assurance officers” albeit with specialisms in certain areas. We will follow the expected consultation processes for any changes, but expect that the impact of any cost changes will be at most minimal. Changes to our structure will take place during the Summer.



Adding Value

We are well aware that “doing an audit” is not enough to meet our customers’ expectations; we know that senior management and those charged with governance very much value our independent assurance & welcome our identification of untreated risk or control weaknesses, but they also want an audit service that “adds value”.

Added value will mean different things to different people at different times; it is not about a “buy one get one free” approach, but it is about using our professionalism and ability to apply a unique and independent approach to help organisations and managers provide their services in the best possible fashion. We employ staff who can make a difference and encourage them to “add value” at every step in the audit process. We set out below some comments received from customers **since March 2022** who agreed that we have achieved this aim.

.Careers Hub - Identifying gaps, risks and ensuring these are well documented (and has also helped with pushing for decisions to be made on the future of the service) has **added value**.

District Council.
The findings of the report help to lend weight to the prioritisation of relevant projects and workstreams, which helps to gain management buy-in to resource and fund those activities

Commercial Waste
Yes it did **add value** as it uncovered some aspects of the Service that I needed to investigate further and also put some of the modernisation requirements that are absolutely imperative to be known by a wider audience, even if the support for them wasn't overly positive.

District Council –
The audit was conducted in a professional manner.The advice given was useful. All in all I cannot report on anything that I believe could have been improved or anything further to

Blue Light Service
The audit covered all aspects requested, and provides useful recommendations for improvement moving forward that can be utilised to inform Business Planning.

Customer Service Excellence (CSE)

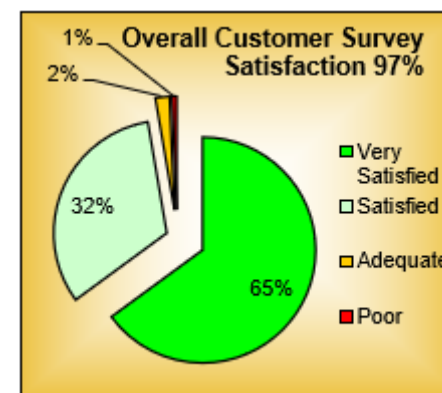
DAP holds the Customer Service Excellent award.

After every audit we issue client survey forms. The results of the surveys returned remain very good and very positive. The overall result is very pleasing, with near 99% being "satisfied" or better across our services, see appendix 1. It is very pleasing to report that our clients continue to rate the overall usefulness of the audit and the helpfulness of our auditors highly.

However, the real value in seeking feedback is to identify at an early stage where we have not met expectations and take action to address this.

We seek feedback from customers from all sectors. An extract from some of the feedback received since October is shown below:-

DAP – Customer Survey Results
2021/22



- **School** –positive experience and audit delivered professionalism and expertise.
- **External company** - Showed a practical and empathetic approach to the needs of the business
- **Careers Hub** - xx was excellent throughout.
- **Waste** - Excellent planning from the start. Setting the scope is obviously very important to get right and xx and I discussed in depth and I was guided rightly so by xx as to the priorities as there was a lot that could have been in scope but focusing on a smaller area but ensuring it was very detailed was the right decision.
- **Waste** - I really did enjoy working alongside xx and the whole audit process. I've previously had audits in the private sector where I worked for many years and always have found them to be beneficial.

DAP - Internal Audit Performance

Devon Audit Partnership		Year end performance (end of March 2022)			Commentary
Performance to end of March 2022					
Local Performance Indicator (LPI)	Full year Target	Full year Performance	Outurn 20 / 21	Direction of Travel (where applicable)	<p>A number of planned audits have been cancelled by clients, with a number taking place during 2022/23.</p> <p>Productivity is slightly down against target, but reflects the high number of new starters and apprentices who have bene recruited in the last 18 months.</p>
Percentage of (Adjusted) Audit Plan Started (exc Schools)	100%	98.0%	97.7%	↑	
Percentage of Audit plan Completed (exc Schools)	90%	87.1%	91.3%	↓	
Percentage of chargeable time	65%	63.9%	65.7%	↓	
Customer Satisfaction - % satisfied or very satisfied as per feedback forms	93%	97%	99.0%	↓	
Draft Reports produced within target number of days (currently 15 days)	90%	87%	84.2%	↑	
Final reports produced within target number of days (currently 10 days)	90%	94%	89.0%	↑	
Percentage of staff turnover	5%	20%	20.0%	→	
Out-turn within budget	Yes	Yes	Yes	→	

Appendix 1 - Customer Service Excellence Results – 2021/22

Customer Survey Results April 2021 to March 2022

Summary of 55 responses

Customer Survey Results April 2021 - March 2022

