



AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE – SPECIAL MEETING

MINUTES AND ACTIONS – APPROVED

19 APRIL 2023 – TIME 09:00-10:00, online via Microsoft Teams

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ACTIONS

Item	Action	Owner	Deadline
2.16	ACTION: that additional physical site inspections would be undertaken from a broader sample of University student residences to provide further assurances to Audit and Risk Committee regarding the Management of Student Housing;	Registrar and Secretary, Assistant Director, Compliance and Risk	May 2023

DECISIONS

Item	Decision	Paper No.
2.16	AGREED: that if feasible the additional site inspections would be undertaken in time for the findings to be included within the internal audit report for submission by the deadline of 30 April 2023, but where this was not possible an update would be provided to Audit and Risk Committee and a further report provided by the end of May 2023;	AUD/23/11
2.16	AGREED: to endorse the internal audit Report 2022/23 – UUK Accommodation Code of Practice Compliance for submission by the deadline of 30 April 2023.	AUD/23/11

Attendees

Members Present

Nicholas Cheffings	Chair and Independent Member
Graham Cole	Independent Member
David Dupont	Independent Member
Alison Reed	Independent Member

In attendance

Mike Shore-Nye	Registrar and Secretary
Ben Lawlor	Insurance, Audit and Risk Manager
Kate Lindsell	Assistant Director, Compliance and Risk
Matthew Elmer	Senior Risk Manager, PwC
Dr Jeremy Diaper	Assistant Director, Governance (minutes)

Apologies

Simon Enoch	Independent Member
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1. Welcome and Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting. It was noted that the exceptional meeting had been arranged to review and endorse the Internal Audit Report on Compliance with the UUK Accommodation Code of Practice;
- 1.2 that there were no declarations of interest in relation to agenda items under discussion.

2. Internal Audit Report 2022/23: UUK Accommodation Code of Practice Compliance (AUD-23-11/11a)

- 2.1 Matthew Elmer (PWC) explained that Universities UK (UUK) had introduced a revised Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing which served as one of the approved codes of practice for HE “managed and controlled” accommodation under the Housing Act 2004;
- 2.2 Institutions that had signed up to the Code were required to review the management of student accommodation through an independent audit every three years. The latest compliance report was required to be submitted under the requirements of the Code by the deadline of 30 April 2023;
- 2.3 the objective of the internal audit was to review the controls, systems and processes operating within the University to ensure that the student residences remained compliant with the UUK Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing;
- 2.4 as part of the review a physical site inspection was undertaken of a sample of five rooms and associated communal areas across Halls of Residence as detailed on page 3 of the Appendix 1, along with a desktop review of supporting documentation;
- 2.5 in accordance with the approach agreed with the UUK, the findings were not risk rated and all exceptions to the mandatory elements of the Code had been identified and reported;
- 2.6 PWC advised that the findings of the internal compliance report indicated that the University compared well with other HE institutions;
- 2.7 the following exceptions to the mandatory elements of the Code had been identified:
- 2.7.1 *Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)*: a number of medium and low priority remedial actions had not been signed off within the FRAs and as specific target dates had not been assigned, it was not clear how long the actions had been open for;
- 2.7.2 *Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) - British Standard Reference*: The FRAs did not make any reference to the appropriate year that the fire alarm system had been tested as per the requirements of the Code;
- 2.7.3 *Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets – annual servicing certificates*: annual servicing certificates covering all fire safety equipment (including fire extinguishers and fire blankets) was not provided for Holland Hall and Lopes Hall;
- 2.8 the following exception had also been identified, which was not a requirement of the UUK Code checklist but recommended to be addressed in line with good practice:

- 2.8.1 *Management of Policies and Procedures*: the University's Health and Safety Policy and CCTV Policy did not have a version control record.
- 2.9 a target date of 30 June 2023 had been set for completion of the actions which was considered to be achievable in light of the relatively minor issues identified and the fact that the fieldwork had been undertaken a number of weeks ago which provided sufficient time for these to be addressed.
- 2.10 it was agreed that moving forwards it would be beneficial for Audit and Risk Committee to be provided with an interim statement of progress to provide assurance that no major issues had been identified and that any actions could be delivered in the specified timeframes;
- 2.11 it was confirmed that the physical inspections undertaken across a small sample of five rooms and associated communal areas in East Park, Lopes Hall and Holland Hall had been completed alongside a review of relevant policies, procedures and certification, and that that this was sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the code;
- 2.12 it was recognised that there were a wide range of other student Halls of residences owned and managed by the University that were registered with the UUK which would have been within the scope of the internal compliance audit. Physical inspections had not been undertaken on all of these University facilities;
- 2.13 all overarching policies, procedure documentation and other relevant guidance applicable to University student residences had been reviewed as part of the desktop exercise. However, the specific supporting documentation required to demonstrate compliance with the Code had only been reviewed in the small sample of rooms and communal areas selected for inspection;
- 2.14 whilst it was recognised that only relatively minor actions had been identified from the physical site inspections undertaken and no specific causes for concern had been highlighted within the internal audit compliance report, Audit and Risk Committee agreed that further assurances could be provided from a broader sample of site inspections which would help to further test management of student residences against the policies and procedures;
- 2.15 it was highlighted that it would be particularly helpful to have additional assurances regarding smaller University owned and managed properties which would provide a helpful comparison to larger student Halls of residence such as Holland Hall;
- 2.16 in relation to section 4 of the report, it was suggested that the first sentence should be updated with a management response indicating when the Health and Safety Policy was last updated, when it is next due for review and confirming that a version control box would be included to highlight when it had last been reviewed.

ACTION: that additional physical site inspections would be undertaken from a broader sample of University student residences to provide further assurances to Audit and Risk Committee regarding the Management of Student Housing;

AGREED: that if feasible the additional site inspections would be undertaken in time for the findings to be included within the internal audit report for submission by the deadline of 30 April 2023, but where this was not possible an update would be provided to Audit and Risk Committee and a further report provided by the end of May 2023;

AGREED: to endorse the internal audit Report 2022/23 – UUK Accommodation Code of Practice

Compliance for submission by the deadline of 30 April 2023.

Secretary's Note: *Following the discussion at Audit and Risk Committee on 19 April 2023, an email was circulated by the Secretary on behalf of the Assistant Director (Compliance and Risk) on Friday 21 April 2023 to confirm that a plan was underway to review an additional block of residencies, with a specific sample of rooms and associated communal areas selected by PWC. It was clarified that in order to undertake this further review, the University was required to complete a sizable self-assessment which was already underway by two staff members from Estates and Commercial, Residential and Campus Services who had been allocated from other tasks to deliver this.*

In terms of timeframes for delivery, it was highlighted that the self-assessment would be submitted to PWC for review in the w/c 24th April 2023 and that a video inspection had also been arranged to take place next Thursday (27th April)/Friday (28th April) where PWC would be able to review the arrangements via video link and students informed of access requirements.

However, as PWC would then require time to write the report and have this internally reviewed it was decided it would not be possible to include this within the UUK compliance report, which would therefore be submitted in its current form by the deadline of 30 April 2023.

It was also reaffirmed to Audit and Risk Committee that the current sample size had been discussed with PWC who had confirmed it would meet the UUK requirements in full.

3. Any Other Business

3.1 Audit and Risk Committee noted that the findings from an internal fire audit would also be presented in the next few months;

4. Chair's Closing Remarks

4.1 The Chair thanked members of Audit and Risk Committee for their contribution to the meeting and indicated that an update on the approach to the additional site inspections would be provided by the Secretary to members of the Committee via email.