



Briefing note

Reference: 1352A2019-20

Structured Assessment 2019

Background

- 1 The Auditor General has a statutory requirement to satisfy himself that NHS bodies have proper arrangements in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of their resources as set out in Section 61 of the Public Audit Wales Act 2004. To help in the discharge of this responsibility, the Auditor General undertakes a Structured Assessment of corporate arrangements at each NHS body in Wales. This briefing note sets out the approach for Structured Assessment work in 2019.
- 2 This work continues to take place within an environment characterised by the need to maintain high quality, accessible services whilst also meeting challenging financial targets, managing increasing cost and workforce pressures and growing service demands. This external environment means that NHS bodies' and their Boards need to have sound corporate governance arrangements that can provide assurance to the public and key stakeholders that the necessary action is being taken to deliver high quality, safe and responsive services, and that public money is being spent wisely.

Scope and focus of 2019 Structured Assessment work

- 3 As in previous years, the key focus of our work remains on the corporate arrangements for ensuring that resources are used efficiently, effectively and economically. Auditors will pay critical attention on the progress made to address recommendations and opportunities for improvement identified in 2018 and previous years. Where appropriate, the approach will be tailored to specific local risks to reflect the unique features of individual NHS bodies. The work will be structured under the under the following themes:
 - Leadership and governance;
 - Strategic planning; and
 - Management of financial and workforce resources.
- 4 The work will be undertaken within the framework of audit questions set out in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Structured Assessment 2019 key questions

Does the organisation have arrangements in place to support good governance and the efficient, effective and economical use of resources?
<p>Is the organisation well led and well governed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Board and its sub-committees work effectively? • Are there proper arrangements to support the effective conduct of business? • Is the board assurance framework underpinned by an effective system of internal control? • Does the organisational structure support effective governance?
<p>Is there an effective approach to strategic planning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Board have a clear and comprehensive process for agreeing the organisational vision and strategic objectives/priorities? • Are stakeholders engaged in developing the organisation's vision and strategic objectives? • Is there an effective planning process for developing the strategic plan (i.e. IMTP)? • Is the strategic plan underpinned by appropriate clinical, workforce, digital and financial strategies/plans? • Are there arrangements for the effective oversight and scrutiny of strategic plans and associated service change?
<p>Are financial resources well managed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are financial planning arrangements robust? • Are arrangements for financial management and control effective? • Are the arrangements for accurate and timely oversight and scrutiny of financial performance satisfactory? • Is the organisation on track to achieve its financial objectives?
<p>Is the workforce well managed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the organisation taking steps to improve workforce productivity and efficiency, and to reduce fixed and variable costs? • Does the organisation have an effective approach to staff training and development? • Does the organisation know how staff feel?

Approach to delivering the work

- 5 This year's Structured Assessment work will involve evidence gathering from July 2019 through to reporting by December 2019. Where appropriate, auditors will give interim feedback if any issues of concern arise during the fieldwork phase.
- 6 We will use information already available and accessible, and place reliance on work of others such as internal audit wherever possible. Auditors will predominantly base their findings on:
 - interviews with key officers and Independent Members;
 - a small number of observations at Board and committee meetings;
 - review of documentation; and

- review of the NHS body's performance against key financial and performance information.
- 7 Where we process personal data, this is in accordance with data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation. Further information is set out in our fair processing notice attached at [Appendix 1](#).
- 8 Initial set up discussions will be held with officers to agree the precise timing and focus of the fieldwork, and the information required.

Timing of the work

- 9 The timing of the key stages of Structured Assessment is shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2: Timing of the work

Key stage	Timing
Set up	June / July 2019
Substantive evidence gathering	July - September 2019
Feedback and draft reporting	October - November 2019
Summary of key messages in the Annual Audit Report	December 2019

Reporting our findings

- 10 We will look to agree mechanisms with individual NHS bodies whereby auditors can provide informal feedback to Executive Officers as the Structured Assessment work progresses, particularly where any problems or concerns are emerging.
- 11 The results from our Structured Assessment work will be reported to NHS bodies through the normal performance audit reporting channels. As in previous years, a formal Structured Assessment report will be prepared, and the key messages summarised in the Annual Audit Report.
- 12 In line with the Wales Audit Office's arrangements for public reporting, we will publish the report on our website once the final report has formally been considered by the relevant Board committee.

Appendix 1

Fair Processing Notice

This privacy notice tells you about the potential collection of your personal information by the Auditor General for Wales (and by the Wales Audit Office on his behalf).

Who we are and what we do

The Auditor General's work includes examining how public bodies manage and spend public money. The information collected will be used for this examination and may also be used in our wider statutory audit work (such as the Structured Assessment and Annual Audit Report).

The relevant laws

We process your personal data (including special category personal data) in accordance with data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.

Our work in relation to the NHS is done under section 61 Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004, section 145 Government of Wales Act 1998 and s15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

What we will do with your information

We are collecting information to undertake an examination to help inform the Auditor General's conclusions in relation to his statutory duties, as outlined above. We are asking for information and opinions about the arrangements that the body has put in place to achieve its Well-being Objective(s). Some of this information may be information about identifiable individuals, which would make it personal information, even though the purpose of our work is not in itself to collect information about identifiable individuals. The Auditor General and the study team from the Wales Audit Office will have access to the information you provide. We may share some information with senior staff of the health body and our report may include some information as outlined below.

The information that we share and publish will be anonymous and will be about the themes and trends that we identify. We will keep the information collected, including your personal data, for a period of 7 years (and 25 years in the case of any published report).

Your rights

Under data protection law you have the right to request a copy of the current personal information held about you and a right to raise an objection to data processing that causes unwarranted and substantial damage and distress.

If you wish to discuss any objections or concerns, or obtain a copy of the current personal information held about you, please write to: The Information Officer, Wales Audit Office, 24 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ or email infoofficer@audit.wales

The Information Commissioners Office

If you require further information in relation to your rights under data protection law or are dissatisfied with how we are handling your personal data you may contact the Information Commissioner at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, or email casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk, or telephone 01625 545745.