

Glasgow City Council Internal Audit Section Committee Summary

Item 2(h)

26th March 2025

Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability – Alarm Receiving Centre

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan, we have carried out two reviews of the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) operated by Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability (NRS).
- 1.2 The ARC is responsible for monitoring fire and intruder alarms at over 1,100 sites and deals with over 14,000 alarm activations each year. The ARC is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The ARC is accredited by the National Security Inspectorate (NSI) as a GOLD standard ARC. To maintain this accreditation, the ARC must meet the requirements of British Standards (BS) 5979:2007, 7858:2019, 8484:2016 Clause 7 and BS EN ISO9001:2015.
- 1.3 The purpose of the audit was to provide an assessment of the ARC's compliance with the standards noted and to gain assurance that, for a sample of the BS requirements, ARC management can provide evidence of compliance.
- 1.4 Internal Audit currently review the ARC's compliance with the requirements of the BS' twice per annum. The scope of the reviews included:
 - BS5979: Section 5 – Construction and Facilities.
 - BS5979: Section 6 – Operation of an ARC.
 - BS5979: Section 7 – Records.
 - BS5979: Section 8 – Contingency Plan.
 - BS7858: Screening of individuals working in a secure environment.
 - ISO9001:2015 – Quality Management Systems.
 - Ensuring that any outstanding audit recommendations have been implemented.
- 1.5 This report outlines the findings from both reviews.

2 Audit Opinion

- 2.1 Based on the audit work carried out, a **satisfactory** level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment. The audit has identified **three opportunities for improvement** which management should consider.

3 Main Findings

- 3.1 We are pleased to report that ARC management were able to provide satisfactory evidence of compliance with the sample of BS requirements for BS5979:
- Section 5: Construction and Facilities
 - Section 6: Operation of an ARC
 - Section 7: Records
 - Section 8: Contingency Plan
- 3.2 Compliance was also confirmed in all sampled areas of BS7858: Screening of individuals working in a secure environment and ISO9001:2015: Quality Management Systems.
- 3.3 Some administrative improvements were notified to management as part of the reviews, but these do not affect compliance with the BS requirements.
- 3.4 Over recent reviews we have noted a significant improvement in the completion of the daily and weekly checks required as part of BS5979: Section 6 - Operation of an ARC.
- 3.5 We confirmed that all outstanding Internal Audit recommendations have been implemented including a recommendation relating to record keeping for equipment maintenance. We reviewed this area again and are pleased to report there has been a significant improvement; ARC management continue to engage proactively with third parties to obtain the records required to evidence compliance with the requirements of the standard.
- 3.6 We confirmed that ARC management has acted upon the 'audit notes' received during previous NSI visits (June 2022 and July 2024), and that these have also been closed by the NSI.
- 3.5 Maintaining minimum staffing numbers is imperative for compliance with BS5979; while ARC management has confirmed that the requirements have always been met, they do acknowledge that the risk of these not being maintained is higher than in previous years due to resourcing challenges, and that additional mitigations should be considered.

- 3.6 An action plan is provided at section four outlining our observations, risks, and recommendations. We have made three service improvements:

Priority	Definition	Total
High	Key controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved. Urgent attention required.	0
Medium	Less critically important controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	0
Low	Lower-level controls absent, not being operated as designed or could be improved.	0
Service Improvement	Opportunities for business improvement and/or efficiencies have been identified.	3

- 3.7 The audit has been undertaken in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- 3.8 We would like to thank officers involved in this audit for their cooperation and assistance.

4 Action Plan

No.	Observation and Findings	Service Improvement	Management Response
1	<p>Senior Management have a standing invitation to the annual quality management meetings that ARC management have in accordance with ISO9001:2015. Due to previous Senior Managers' workloads, although invited it was often difficult for them to attend these meetings. The Senior Management sponsor of the ARC has recently changed and therefore there is an opportunity to enhance the current arrangements by continuing to invite Senior Management but also providing them with a summary after the meeting.</p>	<p>ARC management should explore opportunities for Senior Management participation in the ARC quality management meetings by considering providing a summary of the annual quality management meetings</p>	<p>Response: Accepted.</p> <p>Officer Responsible for Implementation: Operations Manager(Security Services and ARC)</p> <p>Timescales for Implementation: 30 November 2024 - complete</p>
2	<p>ARC management advised that they have been approached by other Scottish Local Authorities about whether the ARC could deliver the alarm monitoring service for them.</p> <p>Whilst ARC management advise that there is potential within the ARC to take on additional work, this has not yet been fully explored.</p>	<p>ARC management should discuss with Senior Management the possibility of the ARC providing the similar service to other Scottish Local Authorities. Whilst this would increase the workload of the staff within the ARC, it would generate additional income for the Council so there may be a business case here to be considered.</p>	<p>Response: Accepted.</p> <p>Officer Responsible for Implementation: Operations Manager (Security Services and ARC)</p> <p>Timescales for Implementation: 31 March 2025</p>

No.	Observation and Findings	Service Improvement	Management Response
3	<p>During discussion ARC management advised that there have been some resourcing challenges over recent months due to both staff sickness absence and vacant posts which take time to fill due to security screening requirements and delays in that process (outwith ARC management's control).</p> <p>Maintaining minimum staffing numbers is imperative for continued compliance with BS5979, and while ARC management have confirmed the requirements have always been met to date, it is acknowledged that the risk of minimum staffing numbers not being maintained is higher than in previous years.</p> <p>Currently, appropriate continuity arrangements exist which would allow monitoring to be transferred to the sister ARC in Sunderland were minimum staffing numbers not achieved; however, this is not an appropriate long-term solution nor one which should be used regularly.</p>	<p>ARC management should explore options for extending the available staffing pool for use if minimum staff numbers are not achieved.</p>	<p>Response: Accepted.</p> <p>Officer Responsible for Implementation: Operations Manager (Security Services and ARC)</p> <p>Timescales for Implementation: 30 September 2025</p>