INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

NEW STARTERS AND CASUAL WORKERS

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

	Critical	Significant	Moderate	Opportunity
Findings	0	0	0	1
Overall audit opinion		**Substantial assurance**		

Status: Final

Date Issued: 5 December 2025

Responsible Officer: People Manager

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INTRODUCTION

The Peak District National Park Authority (the authority) employs approximately 225 members of staff and 213 casual workers. It is important that recruitment systems are structured effectively to attract and appoint qualified individuals who contribute to the organisation's objectives and overall performance.

To achieve this, robust controls must be in place to ensure that all employees involved in hiring are aware of, and consistently apply, the relevant policies and pre-employment checks. Adherence to these procedures supports the effective management of human resources processes, particularly in relation to the recruitment of staff and the engagement of casual workers.

The authority uses the e-recruitment system, WebRecruit Fusion. This is a partially self-serve recruitment system which allows candidates to submit standard information during the application process. Appointment processes are managed separately by the Human Resources team using the onboarding module of the system. The authority has an umbrella agreement with Derbyshire County Council provided as part of a service-level agreement to undertake the payroll function.

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The purpose of this audit was to provide assurance to management that procedures and controls within the system ensure that:

▲ Processes for the recruitment and appointment of new starters are in place and followed consistently, including the completion of pre-employment checks.

▲ Casual workers are appropriately appointed, and payments are correctly authorised.

▲ Signed contracts are retained and held securely

The audit included a review of the retention of signed employment contracts, following the recommendation by External Audit in their February 2025 report.

KEY FINDINGS 🔍

Documented guidance and processes are in place for the recruitment and appointment of new starters, both contracted and casual workers. These cover all stages of recruitment and appointment, including pre-employment checks and the new starter payroll set-up. An internal process has been implemented on PeopleHub (human resources system) to address any late return of signed contracts and/or terms of engagement.

The online recruitment system, WebRecruit Fusion, provides an online resource that forms the recruitment/appointment checklist for both contracted employees and casual workers. Contracts and Terms of Engagement are only issued once all onboarding documents have been received. Sample testing confirmed that all documents required had been received prior to the relevant start date. There is no requirement to complete the shortlisting record and interview record electronically. Paper copies completed by recruiting managers are not consistently scanned and saved to the post recruitment folder.

Derbyshire County Council provides payroll services and set payroll timelines. The authority process requires that all new starters are authorised by the People Manager prior to being notified to the council for payroll processing. Nine out of 10 approvals in our sample were provided, but one of the casual worker approvals was missing. We determined minimal risk from other evidence supplied, however it is noted here to recognise that this lack of oversight was identified.

All rates of pay in the payrun matched those in the sample of contracted employees. For the sample of casual workers we found that four of the rates matched, however, there was one where the terms of engagement misquoted the hourly rate. We were satisfied that the rate of pay is sufficiently documented within recruitment documents and the terms of engagement that mitigates any associated risk. All contracted employees and casual workers had been set up in time for the next pay run after their start date.

Documented arrangements are in place for the storage of recruitment documents. Documents are held in personal employee folders in the HR drive. Retention timescales are detailed in the HR Retention Schedule for the different types of employment contracts. All sampled employees had signed contracts or terms of engagement held on file.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS 💬

A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited. Our overall opinion of the controls within the system at the time of the audit was that they provided Substantial Assurance.

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1 Record keeping: Shortlisting and interview scoring

Opportunity

Area for potential improvement

Shortlisting and interview records are required to be completed, but they are not always completed electronically and retained on the post's recruitment file.

What is the opportunity?

Maintaining electronic records rather than paper copy may make it easier to provide evidence and defend against legal claims of discrimination from unsuccessful candidates.

Findings

The authority recruitment and selection guidance includes that:

"Recruiting managers must complete the HR-RS5 Shortlisting record and send a copy to HR before inviting any candidates to interview, so that HR can carry out the relevant checks. The record will be retained for 6 months by Human Resources after the conclusion of the recruitment."

And, that managers:

"should use the HR-RS6 Interview record to record the interview scoring."

We confirmed that the shortlisting and interview records for the sample of recruitments tested had been supplied to HR and had been retained in line with the 6-month retention timescales. However, we found that managers were not supplying scanned or electronic versions of these records for the recruitment/post file. None of the copies in the sample were saved to the recruitment folders and all were in paper format, securely stored within the HR office.

Agreed action

Managers will be requested to supply electronic copies of the recruitment shortlisting and interview records that HR will then save to the appropriate recruitment folder.

Responsible officer: People Manager **Timescale:** 31 December 2025

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Audit opinions

Audit work is based on sampling transactions to test the operation of systems. It cannot guarantee the elimination of fraud or error. Our opinion is based on the risks we identify at the time of the audit. Our overall audit opinion is based on four grades of opinion, as set out below.

Opinion	Assessment of internal control
Substantial assurance	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
Reasonable assurance	There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
Limited assurance	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.
No assurance	Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.

Finding ratings

Critical	A fundamental system weakness, which presents unacceptable risk to the system objectives and requires urgent attention by management.
Significant	A significant system weakness, whose impact or frequency presents risks to the system objectives, which needs to be addressed by management.
Moderate	The system objectives are not exposed to significant risk, but the issue merits attention by management.
Opportunity	There is an opportunity for improvement in efficiency or outcomes but the system objectives are not exposed to risk.