

"Added value
housing consultancy"

BG
CONSULTANCY



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'Under One Roof' The newsletter of BG Audit & Consultancy

Christmas is here...

Another year has shot past and hopefully we have all grown and developed. It has been an eventful year again for BG Audit & Consultancy, as we've faced challenging new assignments and learnt new skills. This is a shorter than usual newsletter but a longer one will appear in the new year with contributions from other consultants.

As in previous years, we have made a donation to a charity instead of sending Christmas cards. This year's charity does not have anything to do with housing for a change but has a personal connotation.

A long-standing friend of mine, who I first met in my initial tutorial group at University, has been diagnosed with breast cancer. She had only recently given birth to her second child and this came as a great shock. But as usual, she and her family have faced this challenge with patience, stoicism and determination. The treatment is draining and uncomfortable but she has faced these resultant difficulties without a cross word.

Her attitude is a lesson to us all and has made me re-evaluate some of my feelings at times when things haven't worked out as I would wish. So this year, I'm making a donation to Cancer Research UK. Christmas cards are always appreciated but if you would prefer to give a donation to Cancer Research UK, I would be very grateful.

Risk based internal audit

Risk based internal audit has been around a while now but there is still a mystique surrounding it. A development, as all new techniques often are, of the existing systems based auditing, risk based auditing has gained favour within the audit profession, mainly because people believe it to be more efficient. For some this is about reducing costs, whilst for others it is all about spending valuable audit time on the areas that matter.

We have recently run some training for a PLC internal audit team around this subject. It was interesting seeing a private sector perspective on this, as most of our training is in the public or not-for-profit sector.

Risk based internal auditing is here to stay but it does require the basics to be learnt from compliance and systems based auditing. Internal Auditors nowadays need to be able to select from a menu of approaches and techniques to decide which is most appropriate in any given situation.

If you feel that your internal audit team could benefit from some training in this rapidly developing area, please contact us.

Supporting People

The delights of Supporting People never end. A number of RSLs are currently involved in producing tenders for new services. Although service provision is

paramount, the big risk for all RSLs is getting the costing of the service right. Too many providers have fallen by the wayside as they have struggled to meet the demands of Supporting People and the QAF on a shoestring.

Ensuring that the costs are correctly accounted for can often be difficult for housing management/supporting people staff and finance staff may not get involved. Playing hard-ball with SP teams to ensure that contracts are adequately funded is a challenge if you don't fully understand the ramifications of any staff cuts or overall reduction in funding.

We have been involved in a number of exercises around this subject and Bill has been a leading exponent on auditing Supporting People projects. If you would like any advice around this subject, please contact us.

Conferences and training

The NHF Finance Conference will be upon us again soon. Bill has tired of talking about mergers and groups, so this year sees an interesting presentation entitled 'Running a social enterprise business within a small RSL'. Bill will be joined by Mark Nesbitt, Head of Equality & Diversity at Tung Sing, and they will be talking about the challenges facing Tung Sing's Equality & Diversity Unit. There's been a lot of interest locally about this already, so we're hoping that it will be a popular session and help to raise the profile of Tung Sing's EDU even further.

As well as training on risk based auditing, Bill will also be looking at the effectiveness of Audit Committees, at the NHF's seminar 'Understanding Audit Committees' on 13th February in Birmingham.

Service Improvement

BG Audit & Consultancy has branched out into providing service improvement reviews. Sarah-Jane Brown has provided us with an excellent template framework and handbook. With Bill's extensive audit background, the approach taken ensures

that improvements are based on efficient approaches and adequate evidence is obtained to support them.



In conjunction with this, we have teamed up with Mitchell Charlesworth Chartered Accountants and our Associate, Sarah-Jane Brown, to offer a range of services around these reviews, including pre-inspection health-checks.

A last thought....

Bill is still networking as always. The next newsletter will include details of his role as a shadow Board Member of Salix Homes, the proposed new ALMO in Salford plus contributions from a solicitor and mediator.

All the best for the festive season.

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