

[View this email in your browser](#)

www.onewest.co.uk



Useful information relating to your audits - please pass to your Business Manager

Undertaking Internal Audits remotely

What potential for the future?



Even though schools are largely closed to pupils – some things just need to carry on.

That has been a challenge that One Wests' **Chantelle Cresser** and **Lindsey Cohen** have helped address with respect to **Internal Audit** provision.

All academy trusts **must** have a programme of internal scrutiny to provide independent assurance to the board that its **financial** and **other** controls, and **risk management** procedures, are operating effectively.

This applies to '**stand alone**' schools & **federations** also.

This usually means upwards of **3** audit related visits per year. Many Trusts though as they **form**, **grow** and **evolve** need significantly **more**.

Chantelle as a **Senior Auditor** also has long experience as a **School Business Manager**. She has applied her understanding of **both** and with the One West team taken a long hard look at how audits might be delivered to schools whilst working **remotely**.

The result is that because of '**different thinking**' and a **creative** approach, we have been able to deliver a high number of Academy internal audit needs during COVID-19 remotely, **meeting** our usual **very high** standards.

But how has the Audit team working with Chantelle done it?

#1 Analysis

Over a range of 15 audit types they took a **bold** look at what can be provided electronically, conveyed verbally or really, **must** be physically verified.

#2 Reality checking

They **isolated** the physical verification need and worked at keeping it proportionally as **low as possible**. They then established **other** ways to realise it (Skype etc.) and went about doing that.

#3 Adding a layer of Customer Service

They offered **different** digital visual platforms so that schools could work with the one they were **familiar** with. To create **confidence** when sharing information they provided **enhanced** security options and where things were different they offered **extra** customer guidance.

#4 Mutually committing to action and completion

They established an **informal 'contract'** to agree to work through any difficulties on route whatever arose. Because of other job pressures faced by Academies they also ensured work times which really **fitted** when those involved were not only **present** but **fresh** to face the challenge.

#5 Maintaining quality

In an audit the right **questions** have to be asked, the right **issues identified** and a **remediation plan** agreed which is **achievable**.

The **ability** to communicate remotely using the visual technology available **combined** with the approach developed **enabled** One West auditors to **consistently** work to the professional level required

What about outcomes?

Overall these have been **excellent** with customer satisfaction on completion **high**. Some of our customers have indicated they would like to work with us in this new way as the **norm**.

In addition future **legacy** opportunities have also become apparent and in particular these **link** to other things we should **all** be concerned about.

Different ways of working don't just mean added **efficiency** – they also tie in with One Wests aspirations to reduce its **carbon footprint** and we know this aspiration is absolutely **shared** by schools & others.

Yes - of course it is **early days!**

However in establishing the 'new normal' we are keen to **hang on** to what we have learned under the pressure of simply '**having to deliver**' and so, working with customers we want to **develop** our approach further.

Our approach is something that the **Institute of School Business Leadership** (ISBL) isbl.org.uk is taking an active interest in and we are happy to be working with them to communicate what we are doing.

Want to know more? One West would be very happy to tell you **more** about this initiative and explore whether it might be used to help you.

Drop a line to us at: One_West@bathnes.gov.uk

Thanks & we look forward to speaking with you.

The One West Team



Copyright © 2020 One West, All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

One_West@bathnes.gov.uk

Want to change how you receive these emails? Just let us know
