

Report of the Chief Officer (HR)

Report to Scrutiny Board Resources and Council Services

Date: 15th October 2012

Subject: Agency workers and overtime

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. On 3rd September this Board received a report on Agency workers and overtime.
2. The Board agreed and amended recommendations that are aimed at reducing the costs of these staffing requirements. The Board also requested that there was further consideration of the position in Directorates where there is highest use of overtime and agency workers.
3. The Directorates of Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Environment and Neighbourhoods have consequently prepared information relating their latest positions and plans to reduce use.
4. These are appended for consideration.
5. Also attached are proposed protocols to help all areas of the Council reduce expenditure. As part of the planned changes in the highlighted Directorates, these proposals are being tested to establish how they can be best applied.

Recommendations

6. Members are asked to consider the details of this report, and give a view on developments and plans to reduce reliance on these arrangements.

Purpose of this report

1. To provide the Scrutiny Board with an update on plans to reduce use and requirements for agency workers and overtime
2. To especially indicate steps that are being taken in services where there is greatest use of overtime and agency cover.

Background information

3. In September 2012, Members considered information showing agency workers and overtime accounted for approximately 5% and 2.5% of LCC's paybill or £20m and £10.5m respectively.
4. Members agreed recommendations that will support:
 - a) Finding ways to use our own potentially surplus staff instead of agency workers
 - b) Bringing aspects of agency work in-house and reducing overtime with core staffing
 - c) Setting out clearer guidelines and protocols on the use of overtime and agency staffing; including setting limits on how long agency workers ought to be hired before the option on putting them on our payroll could be considered
 - d) Internal Audit to undertake a VFM review of agency worker contracting arrangements
5. Members also asked that the Directorates with the highest use of overtime and agency workers attend this meeting to account for their positions and plans.

Main issues

Progress with Recommendations

6. Attached as Appendix I are draft guidelines for the use of agency workers. These have been developed in consultation with the directorates making highest use of agency workers and overtime. Key principles are:
 - a) Being clear on value for money.
 - b) Ensuring use is business critical (90% of roles are front line).
 - c) Review of agency assignments longer than 6 months duration.
 - d) Agency staffing to be an integral part of the Council's Workforce Planning process.
7. Subject to Members views this will be issued to all managers hiring agency workers with clear instructions that they will be expected to comply with the protocols and that this will be monitored.
8. Using internal staff - A business case is being finalised to invest in a pilot to create an internal "admin-pool". This is now being offered to any employees in the talent pool as option to supplement normal redeployment. Staff who have the capability to work in

peripatetic roles will be given the opportunity to take this up. Their services will be offered to managers as an alternative to hiring new administrative agency workers, and where possible, to replace existing agency workers in such positions.

9. Internal Audit has scoped an investigation into the Council's contract arrangements for agency workers and is beginning this Value For Money study.
10. Members are also asked to note that since information was last reported agency workers numbers have reduced, see Appendix II.
11. Finally Directorates are also considering internal audit findings about overtime and refreshed guidance is being drafted as a result of this. Also each Directorate will receive monthly exception reports to identify where staff are relied on to undertake high levels of overtime as a "Top 100" overtime report.

Directorates

12. Appendix III details the position and plans being applied in Environment and Neighbourhoods, Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

Corporate Considerations

Consultation and Engagement

13. Proposals in this report have been shared with the trade unions.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

14. A more detailed analysis can be provided but the diversity profile of agency workers is monitored. It is noteworthy that the proportion of agency workers from BME backgrounds is greater than the Council's work-force as a whole; around 25% of agency workers are from a BME background.

Council policies and City Priorities

15. N/a

Resources and value for money

16. Internal Audit has commenced a contractual review to ensure the contract continues to provide value for money in terms of its terms and subsequent usage.

Implications, Access to Information and Call In

17. N/a

Risk Management

18. N/a

Conclusions

19. Services will continue to rely on the flexibility of agency workers and overtime to deliver some of our most important front-line services.
20. However, the measures now being developed and applied will ensure that this is proportionate to needs and will avoid an over reliance on complementary cover.

Recommendations

21. Members are asked to consider a series of options outlined in this report. In summary this includes:
 - a) Finding ways to use our own potentially surplus staff instead of agency workers
 - b) Bringing aspects of agency work in-house and reducing overtime with core staffing
 - c) Setting out clearer guidelines and protocols on the use of overtime and agency staffing
 - d) Internal Audit to conclude their VFM review of agency worker arrangements
 - e) To consider the specific actions being taken in high-use Directorates to address issues.
22. The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider this and make recommendations accordingly.

Background documents¹

None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Draft Protocols – Hiring Agency Workers

Overview

Agency workers provide the Council with complementary skills, which will be a crucial element for delivery of services. However, in line with the Council's values, managers who use agency workers must be properly accountable for managing costs and good employment practices.

The following protocols must be adhered to support this.

Monitoring

There will be regular monitoring of agency spend and usage via the People Plan Scorecards, which are available for each Chief Officer. This will be reported to CLT/Scrutiny on a month/quarterly basis. At service and team levels managers will be advised on how to monitor their own use too.

Value for Money

Our contract arrangements will be subject to on-going review to ensure we achieve best value for money in terms of the rates suppliers receive and the rates for agency workers.

Work-force Planning

Workforce Planning will be undertaken to establish the need for agency supply on an on-going basis. This will identify wherever there are opportunities to substitute potentially surplus staff in the Council for agency workers.

All requests for agency workers must be vetted against the Council's Talent Pool. LCC staff within the Talent Pool with the requisite skills will be immediately considered for these roles to reduce the reliance on agency provision.

Where relevant peripatetic posts will be created to provide an internal pool of staff as an alternative to agency workers.

Consideration will also be given regarding the need to use agency workers to support transition and service change i.e. to backfill vacancies with agency staff to avoid future job losses.

Length of Assignment

All new assignments should be for less than 13 weeks; unless agreed otherwise by Chief Officers.

All assignments that have continued for more than 6 months, must be initially be reviewed at this point and then at 12 months. Unless there are exceptional reasons; agency workers

who have continuously worked over a 6 to 12 month period should be offered the opportunity to work for Leeds City Council, either on a fixed term contract or permanent basis. If agency workers do not wish to do this they should no longer be hired.

Managing Operations

Services which have a high use of agency workers will be expected to review their staffing mix to establish whether or not shift and rota patterns can be developed to reduce the need for cover. This can include options to employ a different mix of staff, controls over annual leave booking, shift swapping opportunities etc.

Exceptions

Where there are exceptions these will be recorded and a register of all agency staff employed for more than 6 months kept. This will be shared with Chief Officers who will be asked to identify why exceptions are needed.

Legitimate reasons for this may include:

The need to backfill with agency workers in light of imminent reductions in jobs through restructures

Where agency workers are directly fee earning, or externally short-term funded

Specific requirements regarding skills shortages and the need to support projects or provide service continuity where this is critical to the Council meeting its objectives

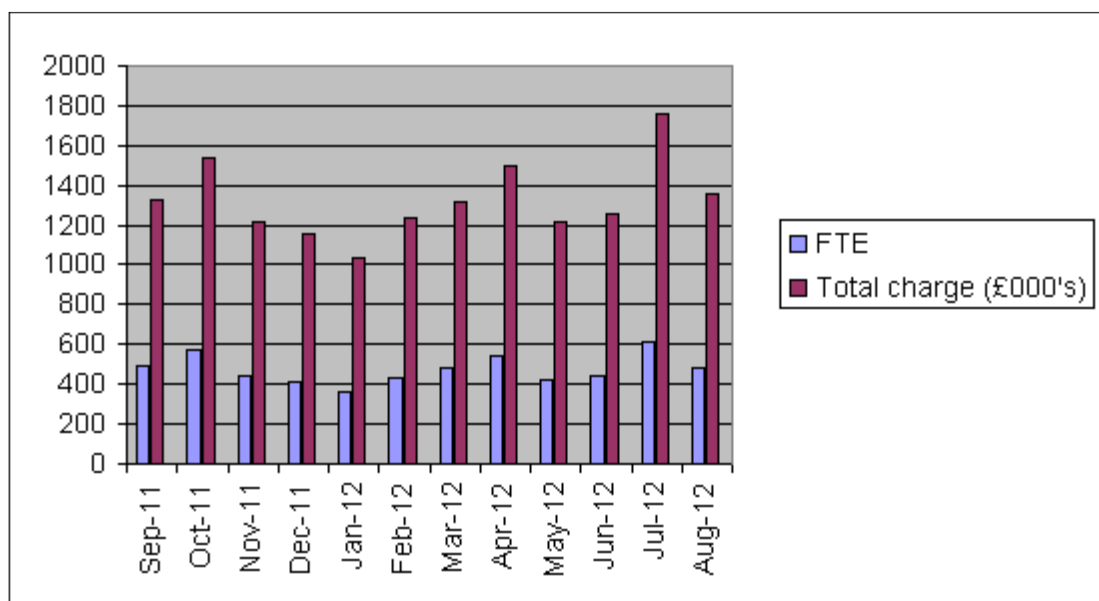
Support

All managers who hire agency workers and/or approve their timesheets will be issued with this protocol. Their HR team will provide additional support enabling effective recording and monitoring of agency worker use.

Comensura Spend Analysis 12 months to end of August 2012

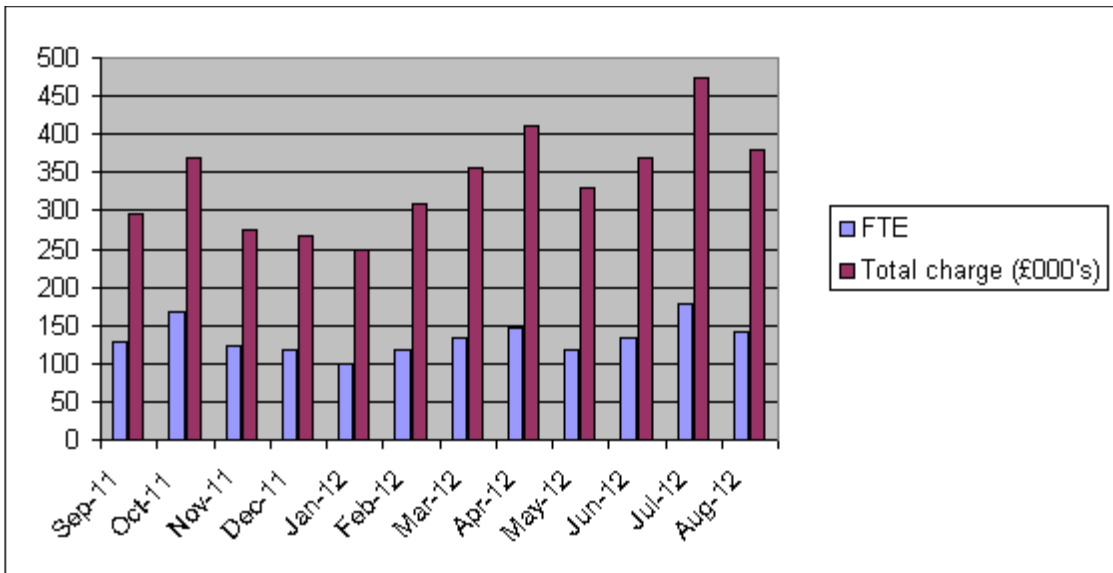
ALL

Month effective	FTE	Total charge (£000's)	Hours Booked	Average Cost per hour
Sep-11	496	1,330	79772	£16.67
Oct-11	571	1,538	91908	£16.73
Nov-11	443	1,221	71336	£17.12
Dec-11	414	1,153	66576	£17.32
Jan-12	361	1,036	57987	£17.87
Feb-12	436	1,240	70201	£17.66
Mar-12	486	1,316	78157	£16.84
Apr-12	539	1,495	86618	£17.26
May-12	425	1,214	68361	£17.76
Jun-12	439	1,255	70613	£17.77
Jul-12	617	1,763	99219	£17.77
Aug-12	483	1,359	77642	£17.50



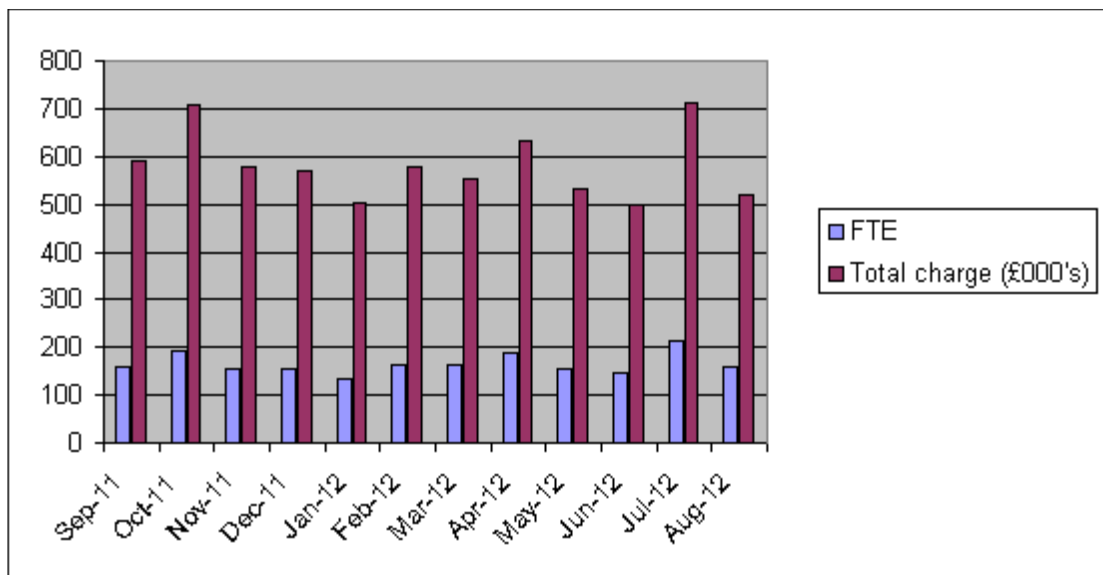
ASC

Month effective	FTE	Total charge (£000's)	Hours Booked	Average Cost per hour
Sep-11	129	297	20720	£14.33
Oct-11	167	368	26788	£13.74
Nov-11	123	275	19832	£13.87
Dec-11	117	266	18775	£14.17
Jan-12	100	250	16070	£15.56
Feb-12	117	310	18838	£16.46
Mar-12	134	356	21621	£16.47
Apr-12	148	410	23726	£17.28
May-12	117	331	18819	£17.59
Jun-12	133	368	21393	£17.20
Jul-12	177	475	28467	£16.69
Aug-12	141	379	22646	£16.74



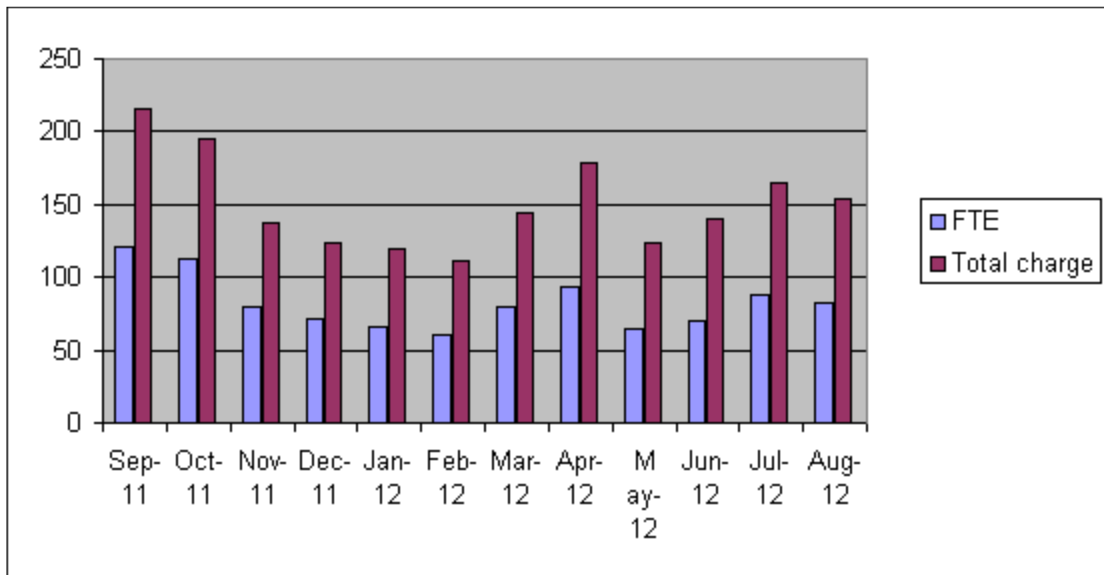
Children's

Month effective	FTE	Total charge (£000's)	Hours Booked	Average Cost per hour
Sep-11	160	592	25752	£22.99
Oct-11	191	707	30784	£22.97
Nov-11	157	579	25248	£22.93
Dec-11	155	569	24978	£22.78
Jan-12	134	502	21630	£23.21
Feb-12	163	576	26146	£22.03
Mar-12	165	554	26554	£20.86
Apr-12	188	634	30196	£21.00
May-12	155	534	24932	£21.42
Jun-12	148	499	23806	£20.96
Jul-12	215	710	34634	£20.50
Aug-12	158	519	25414	£20.42



E&N

Month effective	FTE	Total charge	Hours Booked	Average Cost per hour
Sep-11	121	215	19388	£11.09
Oct-11	112	195	18056	£10.80
Nov-11	80	138	12876	£10.72
Dec-11	71	123	11401	£10.79
Jan-12	65	120	10,522	£11.40
Feb-12	61	111	9777	£11.35
Mar-12	80	144	12919	£11.15
Apr-12	94	179	15100	£11.85
May-12	64	124	10294	£12.05
Jun-12	70	140	11260	£12.43
Jul-12	88	165	14155	£11.66
Aug-12	83	154	13286	£11.59



Please Note:

- *The overall spend data shown is the charge invoiced in the month to the service.*
- *The individual assignments information is taken from an analysis of individual timesheets submitted in the month. These timesheets may not yet have been invoiced.*

Specific Service Issues

Environment and Neighbourhoods

In the last 2-3 years there has been a high reliance on the use of agency workers. Before the Agency Worker Regulations came into force, agency workers were a more economic means of providing cover. There have been fluctuations in demand in the last 12 months. However given the need to control costs the position on the Directorate has improved, with an overall 40% reduction in FTE and 30% reduction in spend:

Month	FTE	Monthly spend	Unit cost
Sept 2011	121	£215k	£11.09
Aug 2012	83	£154k	£11.59

An update regarding the September position will be given at the meeting. However in the interim 23 Agency workers who have long-standing service have been recruited which should further reduce demand.

Agency worker and overtime issues are explained below in the two main services which utilise these forms of cover. A range of measures are now being put in place to ensure sustained reductions continue. A recent summary position is given below, together with a more detail discussion on how improvements will be made.

Summary of Environmental Services contribution Spend/Hours					
Service	July-12		August-12		Change from Previous Month
	Hours	Charge	Hours	Charge	£
Waste Operations	9986	£126,061	8717	£108,637	-£17,424
Environmental Action	3938	£36,593	4363	£45,438	£8,845
TOTAL	13924	£162,654	13080	£154,075	£-£8,579

(Note: roles hired are Drivers, De-litterers and Refuse Collectors)

Waste Management

Most agency use is in Waste Collection; with assignments used to cover absence for Refuse Drivers and Collectors. A similar position applies for overtime.

Rota planning is being refined to ensure arrangements are continually well managed. Currently to operate effectively the Refuse service needs to have a set number of drivers and collectors available to “crew-up” for daily routes. Presently this is 309 staff.

Obviously all staff will not be available for a variety of reasons: annual leave, turnover, sickness etc. For these reasons the mix of staff who can provide a “cover pool” has been analysed.

In terms of the most cost effective mix, this should be around 80% overtime and 20% agency. This is influenced by the fact that the PRP scheme means overtime is a less costly option for the refuse collectors; hence the preference to use this.

The position for Drivers is different, where the use of agency workers is a lower cost option to the use of overtime. However where Drivers are concerned knowledge of routes is critical to service delivery and inexperienced agency workers hired for short periods as Drivers is avoided. Instead some collectors are being trained to work as substitute Drivers. The option to extending this to other staff who could be trained to drive vehicles is now also be explored. For example staff in Parks.

As part of the review of the best staffing mix for the service, a review of agency worker assignments has also begun. As part of this 23 agency workers have been recruited as LCC staff.

These appointments are part of a plan to increase the internal core staffing levels. This will require careful management to bed-in; with staff appreciating that their daily duties could be more varied and that they may not always be assigned to a fixed route/crew. Likewise the cost of cover is also increased as rotas will now have to account for additional absences. It is intended to offset these costs by adopting a policy of hiring agency workers for shorter periods of under 13 weeks and to stop assignments drifting.

Environmental Action

Relatively similar arrangements for cover also apply for Environmental action; needing front-line cover for De-litterers and Drivers however there is a slightly lower cover ratio needed than in refuse collection. As there is no PRP scheme, overtime is more costly than long-term agency cover. A review is being undertaken regarding all long term assignments, with the aim to offer posts to agency workers. Currently four vacancies will be earmarked for this.

In addition to this, another option is to explore if cover could be sourced differently. In particular our contractor for Grounds Maintenance annually releases staff who undertake seasonal grass cutting. Discussions are being held to establish whether some of these workers can be substituted for agency workers too. This could include providing cover through the winter and to deal with shorter term requirements like leaf clearing.

Children Services

As part of the OFSTED improvement plan, following the 2009 inspection, the Children's Social Work Service was been redesigned to meet the required improvements in service delivery and the related improved outcomes for children, young people and families. The redesign was implemented in March 2012.

As part of the service redesign the number of Social Workers on the structure was increased by 40 (fte) and in additional 56 (fte) Advanced Practitioners roles were introduced. The service was reconfigured in to locality teams with a more focussed approach to Looked After Children by the creation of specialist LAC teams in each area. This, along with the need to reduce the number of cases held by each social worker, has led to staffing challenges for the service

The number of inexperienced Social Workers (less than 2 years post qualified) currently makes up 42% of the workforce. This puts additional pressures on the Social Work teams as the Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) need additional support, guidance and can not be expected to lead on complex child protection cases. In addition, the lack of experienced social workers (Advanced Practitioners) means that Leeds needs to hire experienced agency workers to support the team and team managers with the overall workloads and undertaking complex cases but also with support and mentoring of the NQSW. Currently around 47.13 fte agency Social Workers are engaged to support Fieldwork. Generally, this also reflected skill shortages in the labour market

46 new staff have been recruited and will be joining the service in the autumn. On a phased basis these staff will be used to significantly reduce agency requirements by the end of the calendar year. The service continues to recruit to the Social Worker and Advanced Practitioners vacancies with a rolling advert and a newly developed recruitment micro-site. The service is committed to developing a retention strategy to develop a career structure for Social Workers with a long term goal of growing our own Advanced Practitioners.

Other requirements include care officer cover especially in residential services, where there may be a requirement to provide individualised care for children such as 1:1 or 2:1 care. Here a mixture of overtime and agency cover is used. There is a preference to use overtime as this provides continuity of care. A review of Residential staff is on-going and will consider how improvements can be made to the staffing mix.

The final area of agency use is Administrative support staff who deliver key aspects of social care administration to ensure that the qualified professional staff can concentrate on their statutory requirements. There has been a necessary expansion of this support reflecting the increase caseloads in Social Care. These posts have been released and where possible the Talent pool option described in this report will also be considered.

Data on agency usage is given below.

Note:

- *The overall spend data is the charge invoiced in the month to the service.*
- *The individual assignments information is taken from an analysis of individual timesheets submitted in the month. These timesheets may not yet have been invoiced.*

Monthly Analysis of Comensura Agency Hours and Spend

Summary of Children's contribution to Q2 2012/2013 Spend / Hours				
Service	July-12		August-12	
	Hours	Charge	Hours	Charge
Complex Need	932.5	£27167	771.5	£24,290
Partnership Development & Business Support	637.5	£ 8,637	771.5	£11,109
Learning Skills & Universal	5419.5	£69,118	2763.8	£33,802
Safeguarding & Reviewing	1857.3	£55,566	1031.8	£28,731
Social Work & LAC	25052	£543,877	19752	£421,397
Strategy, Commissioning & Performance	29.75	£ 745.53	234.75	£ 4,024

Analysis of Front Line Roles in Children's Services

Catering / Hospitality/	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	9	13	Agency workers used for front line services in Children's Services. Assignment Average per Month: Cook/Chef – 4 Domestic – 5
No of Workers	8	11	
Total Hours	915	1,103	
Total Cost	£11,212	£13,431	
Average Hours per Week	183	220.6	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	20.3	17	
FTE Equivalent per Week	4.9	5.9	

Social Care - Qualified	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	82	81	Agency used in front line service delivery teams and LD. Assignment Average per Month: Safeguarding & Reviewing Officer - 8.3 Social Work Team Manager - 7 Social Worker Advanced – 47 Social Worker Standard – 15.3 Social Worker Newly Qualified - 1 Social Work recruitment for permanent appointments is ongoing. Appointments likely to start in Q3. This should reduce the number of agency Social Workers.
No of Workers	80	79	
Total Hours	14503	10,502	
Total Cost	£438926	£317,957	
Average Hours per Week	2900	2100	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	35	25.9	
FTE Equivalent per Week	78.3	56.8	

Social Care - Unqualified	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	160	110	Agency used for front line services in Children's Services. Assignment Average per Month: Care Officer - 65 Nursery Worker – 39.6 Social Work Assistant - 20 Recruitment for the above categories is underway this will reduce agency use
No of Workers	111	84	
Total Hours	15995	11553	
Total Cost	£265,237	£200,108	
Average Hours per Week	3199	2310	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	19.9	21	
FTE Equivalent per Week	86	62	

Secretarial & Administration	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 Weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	44	44	Agency administrators used for front line services in Children's Services to support Front line workers. Assignment Average per Month: Admin Level 1 – 34 Admin Level 2 – 8.6 Admin Level 3 – 3.3 Minute Taker – 1.3
No of Workers	44	44	
Total Hours	7440.5	6,348	
Total Cost	£85,535	£73,539	
Average Hours per Week	1488	1269.6	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	33.8	28.8	
FTE Equivalent per Week	40.02	34.3	

Adult Services

The Adult Social Care directorate uses agency staff to cover vacant posts, sickness and key holiday periods for front-line services involved in the support of vulnerable adults. These are primarily social worker posts and support worker posts based in residential homes, supported accommodation and day services. Occasionally agency staff are used for short-term periods for, often externally, funded projects.

In determining the use of agency staff, consideration is given to standards set by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which determine the levels of staffing necessary to deliver a quality service within a safe environment.

Staffing in this sector has a current and historical high turnover rate, an issue in both Children's and Adult Social Care

Financial Background

Whilst the value of agency is high, in excess of £3m for this and each of the last 3 years, it should be noted that:

- this represents 4-5% of the staffing budget
- for each of the last 5 years the directorate has spent within its approved staffing budget
- agency spend in 2012/13 is expected to be 11% smaller than last year

Numbers

Summary of ASC contribution to Q2 2012/2013 Spend / Hours					
Service	July-12		August-12		Change from Previous Month £
	Hours	Charge	Hours	Charge	
Access and Inclusion	3941	£98,946	3709	£87,738	£-11,208
Older People and Learning Disability Services	21070	£306,391	16335.5	£236,213	£-70,178
Resources and Strategy	3458	£70,018	2601.75	£55,028	£-14,990

Catering / Hospitality	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	102	84	Agency workers used for front line services in Adult Provider Services, DCs and HOPs. Assignment Average per Month: Catering Assistant – 4 Cook/Chef – 35.5 Domestic – 38 Kitchen Assistant – 1 Kitchen Domestic – 12.5 Laundry Assistant – 1
No of Workers	44	41	
Total Hours	2952	2775	
Total Cost	£33,475	£31,387	
Average Hours per Week	590.5	555	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	5.78	6.60	
FTE Equivalent per Week	15.96	15	

Social Care – Qualified	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	32	30	Agency used in front line service delivery teams and LD. Assignment Average per Month: Social Worker Advanced – 15.5 Social Worker Standard – 13.5 Social Worker Newly Qualified - 2 Social Work recruitment for permanent appointments is ongoing. Appointments likely to start in Q2. This should reduce the number of agency Social Workers.
No of Workers	32	30	
Total Hours	4504.75	4341.75	
Total Cost	£124,009	£117,153	
Average Hours per Week	900.95	868.35	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	28.15	28.95	
FTE Equivalent per Week	24.35	23.47	

Social Care – Unqualified	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	536	516	Agency used for front line services in Adult Provider Services, day services, LD and HOPs. Assignment Average per Month: Care Assistant – 298.5 Mental Health Housing Support and Development Officer – 1 Skill Share Worker – 1 Social Work Assistant - 1 Support Worker – 51 Support Worker Tier 1 (Supported Living) – 172.5 A review of resourcing solutions in LDS is being undertaken focusing on filling care vacancies.
No of Workers	180	164	
Total Hours	15144.75	14831.75	
Total Cost	£217,453	£212,935	
Average Hours per Week	3028.95	2966.35	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	5.65	5.75	
FTE Equivalent per Week	81.86	80.17	

Secretarial & Administration	July 2012 (5 weeks)	August 2012 (5 Weeks)	Comments
No of Assignments	17	15	Agency administrators used for front line services in A&I service delivery teams, LD and R&S. Assignment Average per Month: Admin Level 1 – 8 Admin Level 2 – 1.5 Admin Level 3 – 3 Telecare Admin Asst – 1.5 Minute Taker – 1 Project Management - 1
No of Workers	17	15	
Total Hours	2286.5	1806.75	
Total Cost	£26,029	20,540	
Average Hours per Week	457.3	361.35	
Average Hours per Assignment per Week	26.9	24.09	
FTE Equivalent per Week	12.35	9.75	

Controlling Mechanisms

Managers are instructed to use agency if:

1. the post must be covered, and
2. it is shown to be cheaper option (e.g. provided at a lower cost than overtime)

The Departmental Leadership Team receive regular reports on the incidence, pattern and cost of agency usage (extracts attached for information), and Chief Officers are questioned as to its usage, its justification, and action to be taken to mitigate the situation

Hot Spots

In 2012/13 the services of Access and Inclusion and Operational Services will employ the vast majority of agency staff. There are a number of reasons for this including:

Learning Disability:

- the service has retained a high number of vacant posts to facilitate switching of employees from the talent pool within ASC and from the wider Authority. The take up of these posts has been slower than anticipated thus necessitating the use of agency. It is explained in the next section the steps being taken to minimise the use of agency staff
- in services being decommissioned including some in-house residential and day services, managers have determined that the use of agency is financially beneficial to employing permanent members of staff during this period

Access & Inclusion

- agency here is primarily for social worker posts. This is an area where both Children's and ASC are encountering recruitment and retention problems. In order to maintain acceptable caseload levels the use of agency is used whilst recruitment continues. The next section identifies the steps being taken to address the pressure this has caused

Action Being Taken

ASC is currently considering a rolling programme of recruitment for social workers, rather than the periodic recruitment drive currently employed. This will help manage the replacement of posts quicker and at a financial saving

ASC has recently approved a recruitment drive for temporary support workers within Learning Disability services, targeting increased hours for those on contracts less than 37 hours, and offering temporary contracts for up to 25 hours a week. This appears to be proving successful and impacts are expected toward the end of the calendar year. These temporary contracts enable consistency of service, whilst recruitment to the full-time posts is ongoing.

The law change that gave employee rights to agency staff employed for 12 weeks, has and will continue to influence the action taken by managers within the directorate when determining that agency is the most appropriate option.

VER/VS

Last year the Authority spent considerable sums on the Early Leaver Initiative, whilst it is difficult to correlate a direct relationship between the posts released and the incidence of agency fees, it can be stated that the staffing budget was based (in part) on the savings expected to be delivered from the ELI, and that the directorate is projected to spend within its staffing budget in 2011/12.

Conclusion

Whilst the use of agency is an essential tool in managing support to our service users, managers recognise that an over reliance on agency staff has an adverse impact on consistency and quality of care provided and the cost effectiveness of service delivery.

Agency is used when it is essential that the post is covered, and then only if it is the cheapest or only available option. The directorates DLT receives financial and HR based monitoring reports and questions the use of agency. Managers have clear understanding of the employment of agency. Actions are in place or will be put in place to manage down further the use of agency