

Agency Staff

Report by John Blair, Director Resources

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the Agency Staff utilised by the Council in the provision of services.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Committee at its meeting on 8 June 2016 during consideration of the Quarter Four 2015/16 report regarding Adult Social Care requested a report on Agency Staff employed across the Council.

3 Agency Staff

3.1 Spend by Directorate

The following table details the spend for each of the three financial years to 31 March 2016 ordered by Directorate.

Table 1 – Spend by Directorate

	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15	FY 2015/16
Education, Communities and Economy	£276	£375	£327
Health and Social Care	£749	£989	£923
Resources	£1,600	£1,630	£1,811
Grand Total	£2,625	£2,994	£3,061

Table 2 details the spend for each of the three financial years to 31 March 2016 by Head of Service.

Table 2 Spend by Head of Service.

	FY 2013/14	FY 2014/15	FY 2015/16
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Children's Services	£248	£351	£309
Communities and Economy	£28	£20	£18
Education	£--	£4	£--
Directorate Total	£276	£375	£327
Adult and Social Care	£610	£727	£759
Customer Housing Services	£139	£262	£164
Directorate Total	£749	£989	£923
Commercial Operations	£11	£156	£192
Finance and Integrated Service Support	£306	£301	£268
Property and Facilities Management	£1283	£1172	£1351
Directorate Total	£1,600	£1,630	£1,811
Grand Total	£2,625	£2,996	£3,061

3.3 Commentary

3.3.1 Children's Services

The Head of Children's Services comments that expenditure on Agency staff relates to social workers required to undertake statutory work in connection with looked after children, and children going forward to fostering and adoption.

3.3.2 Communities and Economy

The Head of Communities and Economy comments that expenditure on Agency staff is for Environmental Health officers to cover vacant positions. These posts are now filled by permanent employees.

3.3.3 Education

The Head of Education comments that the one off expenditure on Agency staff was to provide short term administration cover.

3.3.4 Adult and Social Care

The Head of Adult and Social Care comments that the majority of agency spend is on provision of care staff, this is necessary to ensure that the service can meet safe staffing levels which have been set out by the Care Inspectorate. In all services Managers endeavour to utilise existing staff or the locum bureau prior to approaching agencies. There is some use of agency within fieldwork services (Social Workers and Occupational Therapists) to ensure that the service meets the challenges of assessing and reviewing service provision in a timely manner. Agency staff are utilised to fill vacant posts also whilst in the process of recruiting.

3.3.5 Customer and Housing Services

The Head of Customer and Housing Services comments that the spend on agency workers has been met from within the service overall staff budget for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Agency staff were employed in Revenues to resolve a benefit claims processing backlog. There has been a reduction to 2 staff in the current financial year funded from external Department of Work and Pensions resources.

Agency staff were previously employed in Customer Services to provide reception cover to allow permanent staff to manage the range of gateway services accessed through the Contact Centre. There have been no agency staff employed this year as the Customer Service Review is presently in a formal staff structure change consultation with staff and unions.

A short term two week agency driver provided holiday cover in 2016 to continue the Mobile Library shared service with East Lothian Council when no internal staff were available.

3.3.6 Commercial Operations

The Head of Commercial Operations comments that it is necessary to utilise Agency staff to cover vacant positions within Waste Services and Fleet Transport services. Furthermore Agency staff were used in advance of the introduction of food waste collection to enable existing staff employed on general waste collection to be transferred to permanent food waste positions.

It was also necessary to utilise agency staff at the Council's recycling centres to cover staff absence.

3.3.7 Finance and Integrated Service Support

The Head of Finance and Integrated Service Support comments that it was necessary to utilise agency staff to cover vacancies, staff absence and workload peaks in the following areas – Business Services, Communications and Marketing, Digital Services, Human Resources and Procurement.

3.3.8 Property and Facilities Management

The Head of Property and Facilities Management comments that agency staff were used by Building Maintenance Services to complete the Council's comprehensive building and refurbishment programmes.

Within Construction and Design Services agency staff were engaged to cover increased work levels arising from the Council's developing Capital Project Programme including Dalkeith Town Centre, Review of Depot and Asset Disposal Strategy. These costs were met by the Project Fees.

There are plans being allocated to commit agency positions to directly employed staff where the business case supports this approach.

3.3.9 Review of Terms and Conditions

One of the key underlying principles associated with the Review of Local Government Pay and Grading as approved by the Council in June 2016 was to increase the resilience of services and to secure service commitment from employees via contractual arrangements. This replaces the existing arrangements which in some services have evolved over time including the use of agency staff which potentially impacts on service provision capabilities.

4.0 Resource Implications

The following table details the Council staff costs budget for 2014/15.

Table 3 Staff costs 2014/15

	Budget 2014/15	Actuals 2014/15	Variance 2014/15
Education, Communities and Wellbeing	£65,098	£63,484	£(1,614)
Health and Social Care	£18,265	£19,007	£42
Resources	<u>£38,640</u>	<u>£38,289</u>	<u>£(351)</u>
	<u>£122,003</u>	<u>£120,780</u>	<u>(£1,223)</u>

The following table of Council Staff costs budget for 2015/16.

Table 4 Staff costs 2015/16

	Budget 2015/16	Actuals 2015/16	Variance 2015/16
Education, Communities and Wellbeing	£66,691	£64,235	£(2,456)
Health and Social Care	£18,083	£18,888	£805
Resources	<u>£37,414</u>	<u>£37,868</u>	<u>£(454)</u>
	<u>£122,188</u>	<u>£120,991</u>	<u>(£1,197)</u>

Overall, the spend on Agency workers has been met from within the Council's overall staff budget for 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Similarly in 2013/14 the Council's overall staff budget was under spent by £1,715,000. The 2013/14 budget reported on the previous management Structure therefore a like for like comparison by Directorate is not possible.

Tables 3 and 4 do not include the effect of the devolved school management budget being carried forward. Within the Resources Directorate the costs of the Council's Switch programme are detailed in the Actuals column.

4.1 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☒ None of the above

4.2 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The revision to the Council Staff Terms and Conditions and contractual working arrangements following the Review of Low Pay will assist in reducing the dependency on Agency workers by Services.

4.3 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The proposal outlined in this report does not directly impact on the adoption of a preventative spend approach.

4.4 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Internal consultation has taken place within Officers of all Divisions of the Council in the preparation of the report.

4.5 Ensuring Equalities

There are no direct equality issues arising from this report.

4.6 Supporting Sustainable Development

There are no sustainability issues arising from this report.

4.7 IT Issues

There are no direct IT issues arising from this report which are not already being managed by the Council.

5 Recommendations

The Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider the contents of this report.

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Background Papers: