

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	Cabinet Member for Resources
2.	Date:-	12 <sup>th</sup> July, 2010
3.	Title:-	Registration Service – Annual Review 2009/10
4.	Directorate:-	RBT

### 5. Summary

To provide a summary of the activities undertaken by the Registration Service during 2009/10.

### 6. Recommendations

**Cabinet Member to note the work undertaken by the service during the period.**

## **7. Proposals and Details**

Unless otherwise stated the following statistics cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2009-31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010.

### **7.1 Registrations**

#### **7.1.1 Births Registration**

The service registered 3047 births. Of these 141 were re-registrations to either include the natural father's details in the birth entry or to record that the parents have married at some point after the child's birth. Approximately 24% of all birth registrations took place at Rotherham General Hospital.

#### **7.1.2 Death Registration**

The service registered 2337 deaths; approximately 40% of all deaths registrations took place at Rotherham General Hospital.

#### **7.1.3 Still-birth Registrations**

The service registered 15 still-births.

### **7.2 Certified Copies of Certificate**

5258 certified copies of certificates were produced; these are made up of birth, death marriage and civil partnership and are requested by customers for a variety of reasons, the main ones being job and passport applications, along with family history.

### **7.3 Notice of Marriage and Civil Partnership**

1599 Notices of intention to marry were taken along with 32 notices of intention to form a civil partnership.

### **7.4 Marriage and Civil Partnership**

426 Marriages and 11 civil partnerships took place, of these 272 took place in the Bailey House Ceremony Room, the remainder being conducted at approved venues across the borough.

### **7.5 Registrar General Licence**

3 Marriages by Registrar Generals (RG) licence (where one of the couple is not expected to live for the statutory 15 day notice period) took place. An addition RG licence was attended but the nature of the illness was so grave the marriage could not take place.

### **7.6 Celebratory Services**

6 naming ceremonies were conducted, 2 in the Ceremony Room at Bailey House and 4 at approved venues.

8 renewals of vows ceremonies were conducted, 4 in the Ceremony Room at Bailey House and 4 at approved venues.

### **7.7 Citizenship Ceremonies**

The register office now regularly holds two group citizenship ceremonies per month. This dignified celebration is the final step in becoming a British Citizen and is an excellent way of welcoming citizens into the British family and the community of Rotherham. 394 new citizens have attended group ceremonies; in addition 22 private citizenship ceremonies were conducted.

At his final ceremony as Mayor, Councillor Shaukat Ali presented the Registration Service with a Mayor's Certificate of Acknowledgement and thanked the team for inviting him and the Mayoress to attend ceremonies.

### **7.8 Nationality Checking Service**

The valuable service provided by the team at Swinton Customer Service Centre continues with excellent take up levels, a total of 1143 applications were taken.

### **7.9 Tell Us Once (TUO)**

The Tell Us Once Service has gone from strength to strength. Despite several resource challenges the Service is now being mainstreamed with Registrars delivering the end to end process. Take up levels remain consistently high, in quarter 4, 87% of all citizens registering a birth and 71% of all citizens registering a death accessed the TUO Service. Rotherham has continued to play a key role in post-pathfinder activities

Louise Sennitt gave a presentation about TUO implementation at the national roadshow. Following on from this she was a speaker at the IDeA national Front Office Shared Services (FOSS) event in London and facilitated workshops at the same event. A representative of The Local Government Chronicle was present at the event and requested a telephone interview, which took place the following week.

TUO was shortlisted for an APSE award in the Partnership Working Category and was the winner of the Guardian newspaper award for Best Partnership Working Project.

Inspectors for the ISO9001 and Customer Service excellence awards demonstrated particular interest in the TUO, commending a service that is able to directly respond to the needs of all sectors of the community and link service provision to major life events.

### **7.10 Training**

First Training Group, made up primarily of members from registrations services across South and West Yorkshire, has been commended by the inspector of the Registrar General for joint working initiatives with Le Henry Training Group, made up primarily of members from registration Services across East Yorkshire and Humber. Rotherham Registration Service worked with Sheffield Registration Service and General Register Office to deliver a training event that was attended by registration staff from across

Yorkshire and Humber. The success of this initiative has led to joint meetings of the two groups and further pooling of resources to deliver additional courses.

### **7.11 New Legislation**

Changes to the service resulting from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act, which came into force in April 2009 were successfully implemented. The main impact being same sex parentage, three such registrations have taken place.

The notice of marriage module of the Registration ON line core system went live in November 2009. Legal preliminaries to marriage are now captured via a web based system. Training and implementation were delivered on target.

### **7.12 New Coroner**

Mr Stanley Hooper, coroner for South Yorkshire East District retired; Rotherham Registration Service had an excellent working relationship with him, so, with a view to maintaining this situation arranged an evening meeting at the register office to introduce everyone to the new Coroner.

### **7.13 New Governance**

Preparations were made in March 2010 for a formal application for New Governance status, which gives Local Authorities more flexibility in service delivery and is based on meeting good practice standards and key performance indicators. This brings Registration governance more in line with other council services and is a move away from the previous, outmoded, inspection regime. Application was mainly via a service delivery report, from which there were no additional recommendations. New Governance status was granted and will take effect in Rotherham from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010.

### **7.14 Business Continuity**

The threat of a swine flu pandemic has subsided but the service has been recognised as a major player in the event of any civil emergency and remains involved in business continuity issues on a corporate level. A service risk has been identified in the use of a manual diary and options for an electronic solution are being explored. It is hoped that a supplier can be found, funding be secured and a system installed before the end of the calendar year.

### **7.15 Health and Safety**

There have been threats to staff from members of the public and issues around lone working. The service has worked with the Council's Health and Safety Team to deliver personal safety training and panic alarms have been installed. Further work is ongoing around response in the event of the alarm being sounded.

The service is experiencing quite serious nuisance behaviour outside the Ceremony Room entrance. There has been police involvement following vandalism, disruption to

marriage parties, graffiti and obscene behaviour. The situation has been discussed with the client for Customer Services who is going to contact the Safer Neighbourhood Team about any help they may be able to provide.

Additionally, the Bailey House Building Manager has made a capital bid for fencing around the ceremony room area. Whilst this is not an ideal situation, in that the building will become very enclosed, it should add significantly to staff and public safety.

### **7.16 Resource**

The service continues to face significant resource challenges; there has been an unusually high level of sickness, two instances long term that have put pressure on core delivery and the work life balance of team members. With only 10.75 FTE, delivering over two sites 7 days per week, resource has been stretched. In recognising the potentially devastating impact on the public and the reputation of RBT, additional resource has been allocated to release trained registration staff for statutory duties. Additional funding has also been provided to temporarily upgrade a deputy registration officer to cover the duties of the absent registration officer and training is also underway for another Casual Celebrant which will also help with weekend working. The positive effects of these actions are already evident.

### **8. Finance**

The Registration Service is part of RBT, the Joint Venture Strategic Partnership between RMBC and BT.

Revenue is collected through via customer fees for the different services provided. A review of the fees is currently under review.

### **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

Risks are managed internally and jointly with the Transformation and Strategic Partnerships Team as part of Client Reporting and Portfolio Review Board Meetings which are held monthly.

### **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

The service has now signed up for 'New Governance' arrangements and therefore has a number of key performance measures to monitor and report.

### **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

None

#### **Contact Name:-**

Louise Sennitt,  
Superintendent Registrar,  
Extension x2896,  
[louise.sennitt@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:louise.sennitt@rotherham.gov.uk)

Anne Hawke  
Performance and Improvement Manager  
Extension x3246  
[anne.hawke@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:anne.hawke@rotherham.gov.uk)