

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet
2.	Date:	18th January, 2012
3.	Title:	Out of Hours Service
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5 **Summary**

This report outlines the approach that has been taken to ensure that customers receive a safe and effective service on a 24/7 basis. Following the successful development of an Out of Hours service using newly recruited staff on amended contracts and volunteers from within the existing staff team it has been decided to extend this to all social work staff.

Consultation has been thorough, with the intention of encouraging as many staff as possible to accept the change to their work practice on a voluntary basis. This has been successful with 88 staff accepting the change. For the remaining 17 it is necessary to undertake a more formal process.

Our intention to issue notice on 30th January 2012 with potential dismissal and re-engagement taking effect on 30th April 2012.

6 **Recommendations**

- **The Cabinet approves the recommended changes to Terms and Conditions and the process necessary to implement such changes.**

7 Proposals and Details

In 2007 it was identified that Rotherham Social Care Service was putting customers at risk by having no Out of Hours Service in place. Immediate steps were taken to address this by amending the social worker job description and recruiting all new workers to work on a rota to support the new Out of Hours service.

This has resulted in a service which ensures an effective response to customer need between 8.30am and 10.00pm, with a crisis/emergency response provided by the Mental Health Services in RDASH between 10.00pm and 8.30am.

The recent restructure of Assessment and Care Management Services, following an End to End Review, provided an opportunity to review the Out of Hours service. It was found to be working well, but to be having an adverse impact on those service areas which had recruited the most new social work staff since 2008. This was predominantly in the Intake and Hospital Teams, with less significant impact on the Learning Disability Service and the Safeguarding Team. It was agreed to consult with all staff on the following:-

- All social workers and SSO's to participate on the Out of Hours rota, resulting in staff working approximately ten Out of Hours "shifts" per year. This would bring the most experienced social workers onto the rota, as most of the newly recruited social workers are also newly qualified. It would also spread the impact of being on the rota across all teams, and effectively minimise that impact.
- All managers to participate in the on-call rota which supports the Out of Hours service.

Consultation was launched formally on 18th February 2011 on the whole of the restructure proposal and Out of Hours working attracted considerable feedback. Following this feedback a document which summarised the feedback and gave a response was circulated to all concerned. The formal consultation came to a conclusion and recruitment to the new structure commenced. Once in place, all of the newly appointed managers took their place on the on-call rota. This is now fully staffed and working well.

On 13th September 2011 a letter was issued to all social work and SSO staff, informing them of the conclusion of the consultation process and asking them to confirm their participation on the rota. A number of social work staff communicated their intention to decline to participate and following this, a series of actions were implemented:-

- The Principle Social Worker with responsibility for Out of Hours working attended all social work teams to provide them with full information regarding the service.

- 1:1 meetings to be established with all staff refusing to participate to establish their reasons, offer reasonable adjustments, support and information.

This process has resulted in a total of 17 staff continuing to refuse to accept the change to their Terms and Conditions on a voluntary basis and it is concluded that there is no option but to seek to 'dismiss' and 're-engage' these staff.

The Trade Unions have been consulted both formally and informally and are aware of the actions that are being taken.

8 Finance

There are no financial implications of this report. The Out of Hours service has been implemented within existing budget and represents good value for money.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to bring all staff in line with consistent practice will cause inequity between staff in the same role.

11 Background Papers and Consultation

Consultation with Trade Unions held.

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