

## Detailed update of agency worker usage by directorate

## Children and Young People's Services

Data from April 2013 – January 2014	Hours	FTE (per week)	Agency hourly rate	RMBC hourly rate (includes 21% on costs)	Cost difference per hour	Total cost difference
Support workers	13,367	8.4	£16.00	£9.95	£6.05	£80,870
Contact workers	4,864	3.0	£11.59	£10.86	£0.73	£3,550
Social workers (based on Band I)	6,455	4.0	£31.93	£18.13	£13.80	£89,079
Team Manager	1,578	0.9	£45.26	£24.67	£20.59	£32,491
Case Conference Chair	164	0.1	£45	-	-	-
Interim Director	136.5 (days) 1023 hours	0.6	£90	£50.85	£39.15	£40,050 (see note below)
Panel Adviser	75	0.05	£53	-	-	-
Admin Assistants	1,216	0.7	£10.37	£9.95	£0.42	£510

Statutory responsibilities and performance and inspection regimes in children's social care mean that posts can only be left unfilled for short periods.

**Support workers** – mainly used in residential homes that regularly experience a high level of absence. Ofsted have requested that this situation be reviewed as consistency in workers is key element for the well-being of the young people. There are currently several workers on long term sick across the homes. There are a range of illnesses cited with stress being one of the most common and also muscular skeletal problems. There is also a lot of short term absence, many relating to physical injuries caused by the clients, but underlying all this there is a 'culture' of sickness in the residential homes. Some managers are better at dealing with the sickness than others but HR and senior managers in CYPS have intervened and are working closely with the managers to reduce the high levels. For example, arrangements are being made for an occupational health professional to visit two of the homes to undertake a workplace assessment and see if anything can be identified which if improved could assist in preventing the levels of sickness. There have also been several vacancies across the homes which have added to the high agency worker usage but generally these vacancies are dealt with swiftly. Agency workers are used rather than existing staff to cover these shortfalls. This is because we no longer have additional staff on 'flexible' shifts. Managers will try to use a part time staff to cover but each time part time staff work more than their core hours, they gradually build up their average which we then need to honour with an improved contract. As a consequence we have fewer staff on low hours

**Contact workers** – In December 2013 the Contact and Family Support Worker functions were reviewed and amalgamated to ensure appropriate resource was

available within the staffing resource/establishment to respond to Court directed contact. Exit planning is in place for remaining agency workers, to ensure that the needs of children and families are not marginalised. Any additional requirements will be sourced from an internally run bank which is being set up to reduce reliance on agency workers.

**Social workers** – There have been several vacancies in Child Protection Services which have now been recruited to. There is an on-going advert for social workers with recruitment exercises taking place on a monthly basis so vacancies are filled promptly. Two vacancies were filled in January and three were made in February. Other eligible candidates are held on file and then contacted when another vacancy arises. This approach started last year and has reduced the time period from the vacancy arising to when the new starter can commence. Due to \*\*differing notice periods compared to other local authorities, agency workers are sometimes needed to cover until new starters commence in post. Due to the small number of posts this affects the cost for this cover is minimal when compared to the cost implications for amending our notice periods.

Two peripatetic workers have also been employed to cover any periods of sickness, maternity leave etc. therefore reducing the need for agency cover. These have been funded from vacant post budget slippage, and CYPS are currently looking to recruit additional supernumerary staff funded via the same means. Where funding is no longer available from staff slippage (i.e. due to a reduction in either sickness absence or instances of maternity leave), these will be funded from emergent vacancies.

\*\* (notice periods Band A- J one month – two for other LAs and Band K- L two months against three months for other LAs).

**Team manager** – There have been two vacant team manager posts where cover has been provided by agency workers - Looked after Children and Fostering.. Both these posts have since been filled and new starters began work with us in January and March.

**Interim Director** – the agency worker came into post to oversee the change management process following a period of significant organisational trauma and change. It was agreed by the Strategic Director and Chief Executive – in conjunction with elected members - for the assignment be allowed to run so as to ensure a period of consistency to deliver the required improvements. The cost is being met from the existing staffing budget with an agreed (by the CEX) overspend to allow for the additional agency costs. The cost difference of using an agency worker compared against the cost of directly employing someone is high (£40k). However, if we had recruited a permanent employee to this post they would have worked on a full time basis, therefore the cost for the 10 month period would have been £81,098 (including 21% on costs). The agency worker was only used on a part time basis i.e. 0.6 FTE with the overall cost being £92,070. Therefore the over spend on the staffing budget will be approximately £10,972.

**Admin assistant** – There has been a backlog of work for which agency workers have been drafted in to assist with, funded from staff slippage on a short term basis. This is related to the recovery work being undertaken to address poor performance on the timelines of social care assessments.

## Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

Data from April 2013 – January 2014	Hours	FTE (per week)	Agency hourly rate	RMBC hourly rate (includes 21% on costs)	Cost difference per hour	Total cost difference
Support workers	707	0.4	£16.00	£9.95	£6.05	£4,277
Social workers (based on Band I)	4035	2.5	£31.93	£18.13	£13.80	£55,683
Chef	109	0.06	£14.30	£9.95	£4.35	£474
Housing Income Officers	1842	1.1	£13.92	£12.42	£1.50	£2,763
Rehabilitation Officer	274	0.2	£20.99	£16.12	£4.87	1,334

**Support workers** – the small amount of usage has been to cover short term absence

**Social Workers** – there was higher usage at the beginning of the year was to cover vacant posts which have now been recruited to. There are currently only two long term agency social workers being used who are backfilling for two RMBC social workers currently involved in the Long Term Conditions GP pilot which is due to continue until the end of March 2014. Both agency worker posts are funded by Health.

**Chef** - the small amount of usage has to cover short term absence

**Housing Income Officers** – Two agency workers are being used (not on a full time basis) to backfill for the 3.5 FTE RMBC employees who are seconded to the IHMS project (New Housing IT system). Agency workers are funded out of the IHMS project costs.

**Rehabilitation Officer** – cover for a vacant post.

## Environment and Development Services

Data from April 2013 – January 2014	Hours	FTE (per week)	Agency hourly rate	RMBC hourly rate (includes 21% on costs)	Cost difference per hour	Total cost difference
Waste Management Operatives	17,472	11.0	***£8.79 & £9.87	£8.78	£1.09	£9,522
Ground workers	10,721	6.7	£10.03	£8.09	£1.94	£20,798
Litter pickers	6,307	3.9	£8.13	£7.68	£0.45	£2,838
Gardeners	11,965	7.5	£9.57	£8.78	£0.79	£9,452
Highway Designer	769	0.5	-	-	-	-
Admin Assistant	915	0.5	£12.41	£8.23	£4.18	£3,824
Technical Design Architect	23 (weeks) 851 hours	0.5	£46.96	£20.11	£26.85	£22,849

\*\*\* basic hourly rate is £8.79 rising to £9.87 after 12 weeks – calculated on 50% of each rate

**Waste management operatives** – the continued high usage has been due to cover arrangements required for sickness and annual leave and is therefore additional to the allocated staffing budget. The service has currently undergone a restructure and introduced various service level agreements (including standard 37 hour working week rather than the previous task and finish approach) plus they have incorporated improved cover arrangements. Going forward annual leave will be more co-ordinated and the requirement to plan in advance will be adhered to plus a limit will be applied to the number of employees allowed to take leave at any one time. Sickness is reviewed on a fortnightly basis by the managers and HR. One of the most common reasons of sickness is muscular skeletal/strains etc. due to the physical nature of the work. In recent weeks the level of agency usage has reduced significantly.

**Ground workers** – Agency workers are commonly used in this area due to the fluidity of the work meaning it is not always possible to cover the workload with existing staff resources during busy times. The flexibility of agency work allows for resources to be deployed only as and when needed. Also due to some of the work being seasonal and having to be undertaken during the warmer summer months there is often a clash with annual leave requirements and therefore additional resources are sometimes needed. The service has recently evaluated the number of staff it requires for the planned future workload and as such has recruited five new people (September 13). However the workload for quarter four of this year might require even more resources (over and above the new recruits) so there will still be a need to use some agency workers during this period. The agency workers time is booked to a particular job, with the cost being picked up by the 'client' for the work carried out, therefore there is no direct cost to the Council.

**Litter pickers** – the service is currently carrying several vacancies which have not been recruited to due to a pending service review. Agency workers have been used to cover the vacant posts and have therefore been funded from existing staffing budgets

**Gardeners** – during the summer months the service usually employs seasonal workers who are employed for a set amount of hours over the summer period. A cost analysis exercise was undertaken looking at different options including the use of agency workers. It was decided to offer the previous year's seasonal workers the opportunity to return if they wanted to with the shortfall being covered by agency workers. This approach enabled not only flexibility but was more cost effective as the agency workers were only called in as and when required. Agency workers cost were funded from existing staffing budgets.

**Highway Designer** - engaged for an externally funded project therefore no cost to RMBC.

**Admin Assistant** – This agency worker has been with RMBC continuously since July 2009 and needs to be either given a Council contract or let go. Due to the length of time they have been here employment rights have been established and there will probably be a cost implication if released.

**Technical Design Architect** – this is a long running recruitment issue as we are not able to pay the current market rate for the skills required plus the structure doesn't 'allow' for a higher grade to be introduced. The managers have been advised by HR they can restructure to accommodate this but they continue to want to maintain their current structure. Junior staff are currently being up skilled to take on some of the work and it was intended to release the agency worker at the end of September 13. However due to the demise of the Digital Region we're now facing a massive network migration project therefore the agency worker will now be retained until August 2014. Some of the costs for the agency worker are being covered from the existing staffing budget but the remainder is an additional cost.

## Resources

Data from April 2013 – January 2014	Hours	FTE (per week)	Agency hourly rate	RMBC hourly rate (includes 21% on costs)	Cost difference per hour	Total cost difference
Admin	255	0.1	£12.41	£8.23	£4.18	£10,659
Desktop Engineer	324	0.2	-	£8.23	-	-
Desktop Support Technician	10 days (370 hours)	0.2	-	-	-	-
Technical Design Architect	56 days (420 hours)	0.2	£46.96	£20.11	£26.85	£11,277

Due to organisational structure changes in May the services using agency workers have from transferred Resources to EDS e.g. ICT. The current agency use in the directorate is minimal with only one admin worker in Democratic Services.