

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	15 September 2015
ACTING DIRECTOR	Angela Scott
TITLE OF REPORT	Agency Update
REPORT NUMBER	CG/15/100
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information regarding agency usage within Aberdeen City Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee is requested to :-

- Instruct Directorates to ensure that the process for authorising Agency Workers is followed, especially ensuring the reason the Agency Worker is required is fully explained on the request form.
- Note that Services should ensure that the reasons for agency staff being used on the agency request forms to assist with reporting accuracy.
- Note the actions being taken to ensure that suitable checks are made of agency worker qualifications.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The spend on agency staff for Aberdeen City Council from July 2014 – April 2015 was £5,795,329.71. These costs are met from within existing Service budgets.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

N/A

5. BACKGROUND

Agency Workers are utilised for a variety of reasons such as :-

- to cover peaks and troughs in workload
- cover short term absence of staff
- look to supplement defined period specialist work
- fill for a defined period a vacant post

Agency workers are engaged for business reasons to ensure we deliver and maintain timely high quality services to the citizens and communities we serve.

Figure 1 : Monthly Agency usage

Month	Agency Workers (FTE)
July 2014	297.9
August 2014	270.9
September 2014	259
October 2014	250.6
November 2014	252
December 2014	300.1
January 2015	304
February 2015	231.62
March 2015	270.9
April 2015	261.87

The total numbers of FTE agency usage fluctuates on a monthly basis. The highest number being used in January (303.9) and the lowest in February (231.62). This information can be further broken down by Service:-

Figure 2 : Agency usage by Service

FTE	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sept-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15
OCE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CG	12	11	10	5	3	2	2
EC&S	10.3	6.2	15.4	4	7	91.79	92
EP&I	25.78	24.74	28.04	24.96	26.1	26.2	29.9
H&E	237.9	218.4	195.01	207.5	207	171	171.1
SC&WB	11.9	10.55	10.59	9.14	8.96	9.11	8.95

FTE	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15
OCE	1	1	1
CG	2	3	2
E&CS	13.11	35.38	36.7
CH&I	207.06	221.3	212.06
H&SCP	8.46	10.21	10.11

The highest numbers of agency usage by service are within the Communities, Housing and Environment. Approximately 50% of the agency usage relates specifically to Trades personnel.

Prior to deciding whether the engagement of agency staff would be appropriate consideration is given by all Services as to how long they would need someone for, how specialised is the particular post and how much will it cost.

The circumstances where a service may engage agency staff would include where they have identified an immediate need to fill a post to maintain the expected level of service. Similarly where the number or level of vacancies within a specific area impinges on a services ability to deliver the minimum level of service over a shorter period of time agency workers may be engaged.

Figure 3 : Agency usage by category

FTE	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sept-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15
Admin/Clerical	46.83	35.62	37.64	31.6	31.54	28.16	25.4	23.4	27.2	25.05
Schools	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Care	1.29	1.17	0.8	1.03	1.19	1.31	1.59	1.71	1.75	1.59
Catering	4.3	3.2	8.4	0	0	251	88	11.67	33.27	32.02
Domestic/Cleaning	0.41	0	0	0	0	0.07	0.19	0.19	0	0
Janitorial	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Technical	2.81	1.81	0.81	1.81	2.81	2.81	4.81	4.81	3.81	5.81
Drivers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gardeners	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Refuse	29	26	21	25	25	26	21	20	20	20

With the exception of Trades (which is shown in the table below) the highest usage of agency staff is within the care sector. Regulated services require staffing ratios to be maintained at the predetermined level.

There are also larger numbers of agency staff being used in Environmental Services and Waste Collection and Disposal. This is to cover sickness absence and one off events like drivers attending necessary training but it also covers vacancies.

Figure 4: Split of Trades usage by category

TRADES_FTE	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sept-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15
Blacksmith	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Electrician	14.83	13.76	14.6	15.25	14.58	13.35	10.88	12.71	10.71	9.89
Joiner	41.72	44.01	36.21	37.74	38.78	32.21	31	39.05	35.44	30.79
Mason	1.88	1.84	1.29	1.67	0.79	0.5	0.74	0.65	0.86	3.74
Painter	30.52	24.08	21.16	29.04	28.56	18.05	18.79	24.81	21.49	17.31
Plasterer	7.52	8.21	7.34	6.33	8.87	7.08	7.7	12.18	10.58	9.04
Plumber	12.84	11.58	10.29	9.49	8.31	3.67	3.63	4.78	5.65	5.68
Slater	2.9	2.76	2.79	2.1	2.71	1.31	2.5	2.83	2.84	3.87
Glazier	0	0.2	1	1	1	0.75	0.75	0.75	1	3.82
Labourer	9.88	9.59	10.61	6.74	6.36	5.7	5.23	5.64	5.73	12.87
Semi Skilled Labourer	14.89	15.07	8.75	13.77	15.69	12.16	12.89	17.13	19.73	13.86
Gas Safe Engineer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Agency workers are used to cover external contract work that can not be carried out by existing staff numbers.

Figure 5: Agency Spend from 1st July 2014 – 30th April 2015

Service	General services	Trading	Total
OCE	£3,311.22	£0.00	£3,311.22
CH&I	£2,043,185.47	£2,792,883.96	£4,836,069.43
CG	£320,012.81	£0.00	£320,012.81
E&CS	£437,322.59	£0.00	£437,322.59
H&SCP	£198,613.66	£0.00	£198,613.66
Total	£3,002,445.75	£2,792,883.96	£5,795,329.71

48% of all agency spend relates to workers who are used to cover building contracts to ensure that the contracts are delivered within timescales.

The Council's approved method of engaging agency workers is through a range of Framework Agreements tendered by Procurement Scotland on behalf of all Scottish public sector bodies.

Currently there are three frameworks in place which provide agency workers :-

Scottish Procurement for Admin, Catering & Manual, IT, Professional
 Scotland Excel – Social Care
 Collaborative framework – Trades

Discussions have been ongoing regarding the use of umbrella companies for agency workers. At this stage this issue requires to be explored further. This will be done in collaboration with Trade Union colleagues.

As part of the contract terms and condition there is a requirement for the agencies to perform integrity checks on all workers to ensure that they have the correct background, experience or qualifications.

An internal audit report on agency workers in 2014 highlighted the issue of checking of the qualifications of agency workers particularly in relation to trades.

As a result of this a further check is now conducted. This check involves CV's for available workers being considered and suitable candidates identified by Contract Managers. On their first day they must produce their original qualification certificate which is copied and scanned. They are also given a Corporate and site specific induction.

Following the internal audit report, the treatment of agency workers identified by the report has been investigated. On the whole it appears that line managers and staff are aware that there is a distinction between Council employees and agency workers. It is important to ensure that Directorates are following the Using Agency Workers Procedure fully to ensure that the treatment of agency workers is uniform and there is clear distinction between agency workers and permanent staff. In particular, agency staff should only be used for a maximum period of 12 weeks unless there are exceptional circumstances and the relevant authorisation is granted in accordance with the Using Agency Procedure.

6. IMPACT

Agency usage has an impact on the delivery of Council Services.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The risk to the organization of not using agency staff may result in some Services not being delivered.

The impact of not engaging agency workers is the effect this could have on the Council's ability to deliver services if suitable resource is not in place to deliver services.

The risk of using agency workers is that agency workers can be deemed to be permanent employees. This can occur when an agency worker is treated, in the main, by the Council and other employees as if they are another permanent employee rather than an agent. The risk of this occurring increases the longer an agency worker is with the Council. Additionally, after a period of 12 weeks, agency workers become entitled to the same basic employment conditions as if they had been directly employed by the Council.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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