

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERSONNEL BOARD
HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 7.45 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Rachel Bishop-Firth (Chair), Prue Bray (Vice-Chair), Stephen Conway, Pauline Jorgensen and Lindsay Ferris

Officers Present

Madeleine Shopland, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Louise Livingston, Assistant Director OD and HR
Matt Pope, Executive Director for Children, Adults and Health (item 50)
Sally Watkins, Chief Operating Officer

41. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Pauline Helliard Symons and Stuart Munro.

42. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 20 September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

43. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

45. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

46. QUARTER 1 AGENCY REPORT

The Board considered the Agency Worker report Q1 and Q2.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The report covered 1 April to 30 September 2023.
- HR continued to work with the Finance team on the Council's agency spend. It was recognised that there were times when the use of agency workers was appropriate.
- Year on year spend on agency workers was down by approximately £142,000. There was a commitment to reducing this spend further. Members commented that this could go up and down and was largely impacted by circumstance such as the completion of a specialist project. Officers highlighted that HR was working with the recruitment managers on recruitment. The use of Matrix was also helping to reduce agency spend.
- The headcount for agency workers at the end of Q1 was 72. At the end of Q2 it was 86. Over the summer, figures tended to increase as adequate cover was required. Members asked whether data existed for previous years which would enable comparison. Louise Livingston, Assistant Director OD and HR, indicated that data from a year ago could be used for comparison. However, there were questions around the integrity of earlier data, which may not provide an accurate comparison.

- Future reports would highlight any emerging trends and patterns. It was thought that this would provide Members with a more informed picture of the situation regarding agency staffing. This would likely be from the new year.
- Louise Livingston referred to recruitment campaigns around social work, and the award of funds from the Department of Education for Children's Services apprenticeships.
- Benchmarking with the other Berkshire local authorities continued to be carried out. Wokingham often spent less in comparison. Members questioned what impact Bracknell receiving the London weighting allowance had. Louise Livingston commented that it was something to keep a watching brief on.
- Members asked that Q1 and Q2 be split to give a clearer picture of the direction of travel.
- Councillor Bray indicated that in Children's Services some social workers and managers had left, being able to command a higher salary elsewhere in Berkshire. This was being reviewed. She went on to comment that several specialist consultants in Children's Services were helping to make changes which would ensure that the service was even more cost effective going forwards.
- Officers would bring a report to a future Board meeting on apprenticeships.
- In response to a Member question regarding how much more agency staff cost as a percentage per post, Louise Livingston indicated that this varied according to the post and skills in question. She agreed to feed back to the Board.
- Councillor Jorgensen commented that the fully loaded cost of a permanent member of staff versus an agency member of staff should be considered e.g. pension costs, annual leave, sickness. Agency workers were not always the more expensive option in all cases.
- Louise Livingston emphasised that particularly with some of the more challenging to recruit to roles, efforts were made to move the worker to a permanent role, where possible.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

47. QUARTER 2 AGENCY REPORT

The Quarter 2 agency spend information was considered with the Quarter 1 agency spend information.

48. PAY AWARD 2023

The Board received an update on the national Pay Award.

During the discussion of this item, the following points were made:

- The national Pay Award by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services was for the period from 1 April 2023. Notification had been received on 1 November 2023 that agreement had been made with the Unions on this.
- Louise Livingston agreed to circulate the paper from the National Joint Council to the Board.
- Under the award all employees up to spinal column point 43 would receive a pay rise of £1,925 on each of the spinal column points. Those on spinal column point 44 and above would receive a pay rise of 3.88%. The percentage rise in the lower spinal column points was at least 3.88% or more.
- The Board discussed increments in some detail.

- Members asked what types of role were on spinal column point 43 and were informed that this was a Grade 10 and equated to an HR Business Partner for example.
- Members asked for information about the number of staff at the top of their pay scale in the lower spinal column points.
- The Board asked about the impact on the pension fund payments. Officers agreed to look into this and feed back.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Pay Award be noted.

49. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

50. TARGET OPERATING MODEL ADULT SOCIAL CARE

The Board considered a report regarding the target operating model for Adult Social Care.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations contained within the report be agreed.