

Audit and Governance Committee
20 March 2015**5. USE OF AGENCY WORKERS****Recommendation**

- 1. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development recommends that the updated approval mechanisms to ensure appropriate governance arrangements are in place in the use of agency workers within the Council as set out in the report be noted.**

Background Information

2. The engagement of agency workers is managed via the Matrix System. This system was procured and the current contract for service is due to expire in November 2015 with an option to extend for two further years.
3. Matrix is a Managed Service Provider and it acts as a 'middle man' and manages the supply chain on the Council's behalf. Matrix is not an agency in its own right.
4. Prior to the contract for service being tendered, managers looking to engage agency workers contacted agencies directly. This resulted in a large volume of agencies being used with little or no control regarding the use and cost of agency workers and there were no standardised roles or pay rates.
5. The introduction of Matrix provides an on on-line end-to-end process of engagement of agency workers in order to achieve maximum cost savings and process efficiencies.
6. Following the publication of an audit report, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development has reviewed and updated the guidance ensuring that recruiting managers are fully aware of their responsibilities for both the process of engagement and managing agency workers on site.
7. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development has also strengthened the approval mechanisms for:
 - the setting up of users in the system,
 - seeking extensions to a placement and
 - requests for increasing pay rates.

All of which now require the approval of the appropriate Director or Head of Service.

8. There are 2 levels of Matrix Users:

Client Owner – authorises placements and approves any extensions to placements

Client Manager – approves agency worker timesheets

9. The Council normally expects the Client Owner and Client Manager to be two different people i.e. the line manager of the agency worker would be the Client Manager and expected to manage the agency worker on a day-to-day basis and approve weekly timesheets. The line manager's manager would be the Client Owner. It is accepted that there may be occasions where the Client Owner and Client Manager may be one and the same person. The Director or Head of Service would need to confirm the need for this in their approval when the user is initially set up.

10. As the Council works more in partnership with other organisations e.g. NHS and uses agency workers at all levels including senior positions it is accepted that not all users will be employees of the Council. However all users need to have a WCC email account to be able to use the system. The list of users will be updated quarterly to remove leavers. Please note that a leaver no longer has access to their work email account and therefore no order could be processed.

11. The Matrix system will only allow the user to initially book a placement for a maximum period of 12 weeks. Extensions beyond the original placement will require further approval from the Director or Head of Service.

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points

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List of Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Commercial and Change) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda papers and Minutes for the Committee meeting on 12 December 2014