

# Finance and Resources Committee

10:00am, Thursday, 26 January 2023

## Use of H1 Agency staff to support Care Homes

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine All
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee notes the contract extension awarded to H1 Healthcare, via a waiver of Contract Standing Orders (CSOs), for the continuing provision of care staff to Council Care Homes, undertaken as an urgent decision in accordance with section 4.1 of the Council's Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership, in consultation with the Convenor of Finance and Resources Committee.

#### Judith Proctor

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## Provision of Agency Care Staff to support 7 Care Homes

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 It is recommended that the Finance and Resources Committee notes the contract extension awarded to H1 Healthcare, via a waiver of Contract Standing Orders (CSOs), for the continuing provision of care staff to Council Care Homes, undertaken as an urgent decision in accordance with section 4.1 of the Council's Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Functions by the Chief Officer, Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership, in consultation with the Convenor of Finance and Resources Committee. The value of this waiver will be a maximum of £300,000 for an expected four month period.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 Care Homes have been subject to a process of significant change following COVID pandemic and the impact that this has had on the staffing markets.
- 3.2 Due to the pandemic, recruitment was put on hold, with no active recruitment taking place from March 2020 until October 2021, which has had an impact on the staffing numbers in the Care Homes.
- 3.3 Regular recruitment has taken place since this date, but the numbers of staff applying is poor (average of 12 applicants per advert), around 50% being interviewed and the subsequent numbers of staff successful is around 25% of those interviewed.
- 3.4 H1 Healthcare were initially engaged to provide additional agency staff support to ensure adequate cover in place within Council Care Homes as the current Agency providers on the Scotland Excel (SXL) Framework are unable to fulfil the current requirements.
- 3.5 This report notes the requirement to extend this provision to ensure continuity of care to residents while the current staff vacancies are recruited to. While several appointments have been made, there is still a large number of vacancies within the Care Homes.

- 3.6 The extension was also required as the current SXL Framework, due to be updated at end of July 2022, which was delayed and projected to start on 1 November 2022. A new projected start date of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 has now been given but may be subject to further delays. The current Recruitment Agencies on the contract are unable to supply staff to the cover the level of staff vacancies within the Homes.

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 On 23 May 2022 a Waiver of Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) was agreed to the value of £100,000 and a further Waiver to CSOs was agreed to the value of £150,000 on 23 August 2022, both of which have now been exhausted.
- 4.2 There is an active recruitment programme which has been ongoing since October 2021 which has provided a small number of staff for the Care Homes.
- 4.3 Whilst Care Homes have recruited a Business Staff member to process all adverts/successful applicants the recruitment process entails many timely delays which in turn impact upon the start dates for successful candidates. Each process means contact with HR and being placed on a waiting list, taking up to 14 days for a reply. Furthermore, these roles are now not on a pre-approved list which means that they now have to go through the approval process further delaying the adverts going live.
- 4.4 We have been actively involved in Recruitment Fairs across the city to promote the benefits of working with the Council Care Homes and are supporting attendees to apply to these roles.
- 4.5 A recruitment drive for Casual staff took place in December 2021 to provide support. Although there were a number of applicants, 33, across Care Homes and Home Care, with 6 staff now working within Homes, providing adhoc shift cover when they are available.
- 4.6 Regular meetings are being held with ASA Recruitment the main provider of Care Staff to Care Homes to try to improve their job fill rates (they are currently sitting at around a 72% fill rate).
- 4.7 There is current recruitment for staff via the NHS Staff Bank that would be recruited to work solely in Care Homes, this recruitment is ongoing, with 51 staff now recruited and another 25 successful for interview, going through recruitment checks. Further adverts are being placed at two weekly intervals to increase the availability of staff, which will reduce our reliance on Agencies.
- 4.8 Had the support from H1 staff been withdrawn there is was a risk that:
- 4.8.1 Continuity on staff providing personal care and support to residents would be compromised.
- 4.8.2 Care Home staffing levels would be compromised.

4.8.3 The high level of care provision to residents within the Homes would be affected and, potentially, put residents at risk from harm.

4.8.4 The wellbeing of current staff members, who have already worked tirelessly through the pandemic, would be affected.

4.8 In the circumstances, it was necessary to seek approval to extend this contract via a waiver of CSOs under Urgency Provision to the end of January 2023 at a cost of up to £800,000 (this was requested under 2 amounts £300,000 on 10/11/22 and a further £500,00 on 25/11/22).

## **5. Next Steps**

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5.1 The contract with H1 Healthcare will be extended to end of January 2023 to support the delivery care to residents within the Council Care Homes.

5.2 This will enable a transition stage of three months to allow the implementation of the next SXL Framework and for Homes to build relationships with these Agencies and their staff members

5.3 Working with colleagues in Commercial and Procurement Services we will seek to fully identify forward staffing needs and review options for compliant sourcing were there to be an ongoing shortfall once the new SXL Framework is in place, which remains a possibility but cannot be fully ascertained at this stage until the new Framework is live.

## **6. Financial impact**

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6.1. The total cost of this contract extension is up to £800,000 and will be met from each Care Home Staffing budgets for financial year 2022/23.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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7.1 There are no equalities impacts arising from this contract extension.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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8.1 None.

## **9. Appendices**

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9.1 Appendix 1 – Hourly charge rates for each of the Agencies used to provide Care staff to Care Homes.

## 10. Appendix 1 – Hourly Pay Rates for Agencies

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**Detailed below are the Hourly Pay Rates for the Agencies currently supplying Care staff to Care Homes**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Current Hourly Pay Rate</b>
ASA **	Mon-Fri (Days) - £14.68 Mon-Fri (Nights) - £19.05 to £20.96 Weekend (Days) - £18.04 Weekend (Nights) - £22.39 to £26.07
Reed	Days - £15.64 Nights - £17.96
Randstad	£17.44
TSCCP	Days - £17.55 Nights - £18.51
Newcross	£24.30 - £28.84
Scottish Nursing Guild	Days - £35.76 (plus mileage) Nights - £49.50 (plus mileage)
H1	£21.30

\*\* - ASA charge different rates of pay overnight dependent on what time it is.

All Planned Shifts for Agency Care Staff are sent to ASA initially, up to 6 weeks before they are required, and cover staff who are off on Long Term Sick, on Annual Leave, on Maternity Leave or Vacant posts. 5 days before the shifts are due to commence for the following week a check is made on what ASA has filled on the Planned shifts and if any are unfilled, contact is then made with other Agencies to fill these, starting with the contracted suppliers. Contact is made with uncontracted suppliers when the other Agencies cannot fill the required shifts.