

Report

Report to:	Finance and Corporate Resources Committee
Date:	16 November 2022
Prepared by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	24-Hour Control Centre – Additional Staffing
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ request approval to make 2 FTE existing temporary Call Services Assistants posts permanent, increasing the establishment of the 24-Hour Control Centre accordingly

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the 2 FTE existing temporary Call Services Assistant posts, as detailed in section 5.1 of the report, be made permanent and added to the establishment of the 24-Hour Control Centre within Finance and Corporate.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council's 24-Hour control centre based at Pollock Avenue, Hamilton provides two key services to residents; the Alarm Receiving service and Out of Hours Emergency service.
- 3.2. The Alarm Receiving service receives calls or activations from Social Work service users in need of assistance through the community alarm system. The need for assistance could be because of a fall, due to the activation of a smoke alarm or to help with personal care needs. These employees assess the nature of the call or activation and then take the appropriate action in response to ensure assistance is provided. With personal care for example this requires the Social Work Responder service to visit the service user's home.
- 3.3. The Council's Out of Hours Emergency service receives calls in relation to any Council service outwith normal office hours and responds mainly to calls from tenants who may need urgent repairs carried out or from residents making a noise complaint. There is typically one employee that covers the out of hours service.

4. Staffing Position

- 4.1. The current establishment comprises 2 Team Leaders, 21 Call Services Assistants, 1 Administration Assistant and 9 sessional/casual Call Services Assistants (Call handlers). The Team Leaders and administration employees work normal office hours with the remaining covering a pattern of three shifts.

- 4.2. In addition to the above, the Council had a contract in place with Tunstall Healthcare (UK) Ltd for the provision of staffing support for the Alarm Receiving service in the event the service experienced staff shortages. This service was necessary as it is not always possible to obtain cover from the existing employee pool.
- 4.3. In September 2021, Tunstall Healthcare (UK) provided notice to the Council they would be withdrawing the service from 1 January 2022 due to difficulties they were experiencing in recruitment and retention.
- 4.4. As a direct result of the withdrawal of staffing support by Tunstall, in November 2021 two additional full-time employees within the Alarm Receiving service were recruited. This was for a temporary period of 12 months from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 to provide additional staffing cover. The additional staffing provided a more consistent level of cover that offset the impact of the withdrawal of the support from Tunstall and reduced the need for overtime.
- 4.5. The introduction of a more flexible approach to working with the option to work in a hybrid manner has been established for the Out of Hours service and this provides greater flexibility when seeking cover for this service at short notice. The option to allow for home working relating to the Alarm Receiving service is not currently possible due to the IT arrangement in place at Pollock Avenue, however the implementation of a new cloud-based system for the Alarm Receiving service in 2023 is expected to offer remote access and therefore this should increase the ability of the service to secure staffing cover at short notice.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. The proposed posts would be added to the establishment of the 24-hour control centre on a permanent basis as detailed below:-

Position	FTE	Grade/SCP Range	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary	Total costs including on-costs
Call Services Assistant	2	Grade 2, level 1 plus 4, SCP 39 - 40	£14.14 - £14.43	£25,822 - £26,150	£67,938 - £68,802

The posts have been graded using the Council's job evaluation scheme.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. The costs associated with employing two additional employees can be met from existing revenue budgets within Finance Transactions. The additional costs for the two temporary members are already being met by the service.
- 6.2. The employment of 2 additional temporary employees has reduced the need for overtime. Overtime in 2020/2021 was £0.143 million with the forecast for 2022/2023 being £0.104 million, a reduction of £0.039 million. In addition, the Council no longer pays Tunstall Healthcare (UK) for external support at a cost of £0.025 million for 2020/2021.

7. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 7.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. The key risk is a failure to fully resource the service could result in delays in responding to customer requests or calls being unanswered, with the latter only for the out of hours emergencies as incoming calls from the community alarm system cannot be ended without operator involvement.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. There is no requirement to equality impact assess the content of this briefing paper.

Paul Manning

Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

28 October 2022

Link(s) to Council Values/Priorities/Outcomes

- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Craig Fergusson, Head of Finance (Transactions)

Ext: 4951 (Tel: 01698 454951)

E-mail: craig.fergusson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk