

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

17th October 2016

Report of the Head of the Interim Head of Adult Services – Andrew Jarrett

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards.

Appointment of Two Temporary Best Interest Assessor's in the Safeguarding and Quality Team

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to establish two additional Best Interest Assessor posts (temporary for 18 months) in the Safeguarding and Quality Team of the Social Services Health and Housing Directorate.

Executive Summary

2. The Authority acts as the Supervisory Body for the authorisation of Deprivation of Liberty Assessments (DoLS). The responsibility for all DoLS related activity lies with the Safeguarding and Quality Team.

Legislative changes in 2014 led to a significant increase in workload around DoLS. The number of applications received by the team has risen from 7 in 2013/14 to a total of over 800 in 2015/16. This pattern is similar across all Local Authorities who have also experienced exponential growth in applications.

The fundamental problem facing the team is a lack of capacity due to the increase in the number of DoLS applications received with no corresponding increase in resources to deal with the increase. As a

result of this DoLS applications are being risk assessed to determine which ones are processed and which ones are placed onto a significant waiting list.

The department are currently employing two agency workers to help reduce the demands on the team. However 2 additional long term temporary posts will help to stabilise the team and prevent the waiting list from becoming unmanageable.

Background

3. There are two agency workers currently within the team working as Best Interest Assessors, which cost substantially more than two internal grade 9 workers, the proposal is to recruit two additional Best Interest Assessors (temporary for 18 months) to replace 2 agency workers. This will help to reduce current agency usage costs and offer stability to the team.

When a DoLS is awarded conditions can be placed on its award which the Supervisory Body must monitor. The required monitoring is only happening in a small number of cases, which could result in the DoLS being no longer applicable.

The problems currently being experienced by the team increase the risk of persons being unlawfully deprived of their liberty and the Authority facing legal challenges and ultimately having to pay compensation.

The outlook is that the workload will not decrease over the next 18 months. A recent Internal Audit report has identified in the short term consideration should be given to increasing resources to address the back log of applications awaiting consideration. The Audit report stated that the potential risks both financial and reputational together with those to the persons who could have unlawfully been denied their liberty should be at the forefront of the decision making process when considering the resource issues.

Proposal

4. Having two temporary workers (rather than agency workers) will increase stability within the team and they are less likely to leave at short notice.

Two additional Best Interest Assessors will allow the backlog of work to be disseminated more proportionately within the team and support the team in reducing the waiting list.

Financial Impact

5. As the table below demonstrates, recruiting two temporary workers rather than agency workers will save the Service approximately £47,205 over 18 months, please also see financial appraisal in Appendix 1.

Cost of 2 agency workers at £1184 per week for a 18 months	Cost of 2 Temporary Best Interest Assessor's Grade9 for 18 months
£185,211	£138,006
Saving	£47,205

Equality Impact Assessment

6. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening form has been completed and a full EIA is not required.

Workforce Impacts

7. This will increase headcount and will have a positive impact on the workforce by reducing the number of agency workers and increasing stability within the team.

Legal Impacts

8. There are no legal impacts.

Risk Management

9. There are no significant risks associated with this proposal.

Consultation

10. There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that Members APPROVE the establishment of two additional Best Interest Assessor Posts (temporary for 18 months) in the Safeguarding and Quality Team of the Social Services, Health and Housing Directorate.

FOR DECISION

Reasons for Proposed Decision

Having two long term temporary workers (rather than agency workers) will increase stability within the team and will have a positive impact on morale and motivation within the team as a whole.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Financial Appraisal

List of Background Papers

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

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