

Report of the Head of Adult Services
Safeguarding Policy Development & Delivery Committee

20 September 2017

Zero Hour/Relief Contracts

Purpose:	To agree the best approach to collecting staff perceptions on the use of zero hour/relief contracts, in time for the scheduled agenda item at the December PDDC meeting.
Corporate Priorities:	Safeguarding Vulnerable People
Consultation:	Not applicable
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The PDDC approve the proposals set out in paragraph 3 of the report.
Report Author:	Alex Williams
Finance Officer:	Chris Davies
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	Sherill Hopkins

1. Background

- 1.1 At its December meeting, the PDDC has identified on its forward work plan that Members would like a 'Discussion with staff regarding zero-hour contracts/relief contracts'.
- 1.2 Officers have therefore sought advice from HR about the best approach to ensuring that not only does the PDDC have the information that it requires, but also staff are effectively safeguarded.

2. Officer Advice

- 2.1 The PDDC is a public meeting. As such any member of the Press or public could decide to attend.
- 2.2 Social Services does not employ anyone on a zero hour contract. However, some individuals are employed on a relief contract by RST. RST is effectively Adult Services's in-house agency which allows the service to appropriately cover annual leave and sickness in front-line direct service provision much more cheaply than via an external agency.

- 2.3 In the main, the majority of staff are used to cover front-line relatively junior Grade 5 and 6 posts, which are essential to cover during substantive staff absence.
- 2.4 HR have therefore advised that it would not be appropriate to have a discussion with staff at this level in a public forum, as personally identifiable information may be disclosed and some staff may feel intimidated by such a discussion in a large open forum.

3 Options

- 3.1 Officers of course want to support the PDDC in obtaining the information that they require, but it is important that the staff discussions are handled sensitively.
- 3.2 It is therefore advised that the PDDC consider undertaking the discussion in a smaller, closed session.
- 3.3 It would be possible for example for the PDDC as a whole to collectively agree the questions that they would like to ask in advance of the closed meeting, and then nominate 2 Members to have the discussion with the staff identified.
- 3.4 Adult Services would then provide an open invitation to staff employed by RST to attend the session, giving them the questions in advance so they were able to prepare and any anxieties minimised.
- 3.5 HR would also attend the session to ensure that staff felt supported, and help navigate any technical employment issues.
- 3.6 The nominated Members could then feedback to the wider PDDC at their next scheduled meeting.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5 Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implication with regards to this report. However there are a number of legal issues surrounding zero hours/relief contracts and legal advice should be sought by the PDDC if required.

6 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 6.1 Taking an approach, as suggested above would be the most appropriate means for the PDDC to gather the information they require, in a constructive and supportive way that effectively safeguards staff.

Background Papers: PDDC Forward Work Plan

Appendices: None