

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Department for People

Director of Adult Services and Housing: Sharon Houlden

📍 Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 6ER

☎ 01702 215000

🌐 www.southend.gov.uk

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Matt Richards

BY EMAIL request-490619-
a034051d@whatdotheyknow.com

Our ref FOI 07238

Your ref

Date 19th July 2018

Dear Matt Richards

Freedom of Information Request – FOI 07238

I am writing regarding your request for information, which was received on 11th June 2018.

In that request you asked us the following questions and I can confirm that the search for the information you requested has been completed and our responses are given below

This request concerns the Council's social work provision for both children and adults for the 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 budget years.

Should the following questions exceed your time and budgetary restrictions, we ask that as per Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act you kindly assist us in formulating our request before the statutory 20 days waiting time. We are available to discuss this over the phone on 07940074548 if more convenient.

First, please provide a basic definition for permanent social workers and a definition for agency workers (i.e. staff who are used temporarily to cover shortfalls in permanent staffing levels).

Definitions as follows.

Permanent Employees: Employed and paid directly by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council with permanent or Fixed-terms contracts

Agency Workers: Workers who are sourced by an agency to provide temporary workers for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. The Agency worker is paid by their agency and the agency invoice the Council for services according to their contractual agreement

Wage:

- a) **The average annual salary for permanent social workers in the team, and the annual salary for the most junior level of permanent social worker you employ.**

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council do not have a junior level social worker grade, all our social workers are employed on the same Grade scale Newly Qualified social workers are less experienced but are paid on the same grade scale as other social workers

Year	Ave Actual Salary
2015/16	£28,756
2016/17	£29,570
2017/18	£30,043

- b) **The hourly equivalent of these annual salaries, based only on working hours and not on allotted annual leave, bank holidays, development days etc. (i.e. annual salary divided by contracted work hours)**

Year	Ave Act Rate
2015/16	£16 32
2016/17	£16 55
2017/18	£16 56

- c) **The average hourly wage for agency staff.**

Year	Ave Hourly Rate
2015/16	£22 22
2016/17	£18 44
2017/18	£22 69

- d) **The agency fee, and how this works, i.e. is it a one off up-front cost or an hourly commission for each agency staff member? If it is the latter, please highlight whether this is included within the hourly agency staff wage or is an additional cost on top.**

Agency fee itself is Commercially Sensitive, but is an Hourly Fixed Pence Margin added on top of the candidate pay rate

Hours:

- a) **The total number of annual contracted hours for permanent social workers. Please divide this into working hours, and non-working hours (i.e. annual leave entitlement, bank holidays, development days etc.).**

Unfortunately the information you have request is not readily available and to extract and prepare the data manually would, we estimate take in excess of 100 hours
The appropriate cost limit for handling a Freedom of Information request is specified in regulations For local government it is set at £450, the equivalent of one member of staff working on a request for 18 hours at a fixed rate of £25 per hour

- b) The actual number of permanent staff hours worked in total across the whole team.

Year	Annual contracted hours
2015/16	156,832
2016/17	164,424
2017/18	172,380

- c) The actual number of agency staff hours worked in total.

Year	Agency Hours Worked
2015/16	77,629
2016/17	77,770
2017/18	82,290

- d) The percentage of total agency hours that covered permanent staff vacancies, rather than maternity or sick leave.

This data is not available

- e) The average timeframe that individual agency staff members worked within the service (i.e. how long do they normally stay?).

Year	Agency booking length (Weeks)
2015/16	29
2016/17	22
2017/18	19

Benefits:

- a) Any additional benefits offered/given to permanent staff members including pension contributions (and the total cost of these), and any additional benefits offered/given to agency staff members, including pension contributions (and the total cost of these).

None

- b) Any costs that permanent staff members can claim back, but which agency staff members have to absorb themselves - for example travel/petrol costs. In such cases, please detail the total cost of these permanent staff claims.

There are no difference between the items and the amounts that Permanent and Agency Worker can claim Agency Workers do however claim through their Agency, and not the Council

- c) Any incentives you offer as part of the recruitment of social workers, either to social workers themselves or recruitment consultants, for example relocation packages (and the cost of these).

A relocation package is available to Social Workers with 2 years experience, up to the value of £8,000

Additional market supplement for Social Workers in Children's Fieldwork Team of £2K per annum

Total Cost:

- a) **The total cost of permanent staff members and the total cost of agency staff members.**

Year	Permanent Staff	Agency Cost
2015/16	£4,872,812	£2,065,439
2016/17	£5,188,850	£2,174,856
2017/18	£5,412,106	£2,565,458

Then, looking at the current situation:

How many permanent full time equivalent staff members are currently employed?

88 FTE's

How many full time equivalent agency staff are currently employed covering permanent positions (not maternity or sick leave)?

This data is not available

What are the names of the agencies used by the council to provide temporary social workers?

Current supplier for Agency Social Workers is Reed

What was the number of applications you had for the last five permanent social worker roles that were advertised (and over what time-period this was)?

This data is not available

If you wish to discuss any of the above, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request a review of our response, you should write to the Group Manager – Policy, Engagement and Communication, Corporate Services Department, PO Box 6, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 6ER

If you are not content with the outcome of your review, you can make a complaint under the Council's complaints process by writing to Corporate Complaints Officer, Corporate Services Department, PO Box 6, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 6ER.

You can also apply directly to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision although generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the Council's complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JP' followed by a stylized name and a comma.

Department for People
Business Support Administration

Tel 01702 215909

Email PeopleBusinessSupportGeneral@Southend.gov.uk