

26th February 2013**Agenda Item:8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE AND
PUBLIC PROTECTION****PROPOSED TEMPORARY INCREASE TO THE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT
FOR REGISTRATION AND CELEBRATORY SERVICES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to increase the establishment of the Registration Service, on a temporary basis, to create capacity for further service development, to improve customer service and to become financially self-sufficient.

Information and Advice

2. The Registration Service has the statutory function of registering births and deaths, taking notices of marriage and civil partnerships, and delivery of the associated ceremonies. The service is responsible for Citizenship Ceremonies, and also offers a range of non-statutory ceremonies such as baby naming, renewal of vows and civil funerals. At the same time, various new services have been introduced including the national 'Tell Us Once' service.
3. The total number of ceremonies delivered by the service in Nottinghamshire has increased by nearly 10% in the last year alone. This is expected to increase further (particularly for the non-statutory ceremonies) as publicity and marketing increases, and based on the recommendations of customers who have been delighted with the service they have received. Further ceremony work is expected to arise with the anticipated enactment of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill, which is currently passing through parliament.
4. The current Registration Service staffing structure was introduced in March 2012 to implement delegated decisions AH/2012/00007 and AH/2012/00026. This established a current structure of 40 full time equivalent posts. The Service is currently on track to achieve its' objective of becoming financially self-sufficient in 2014- 2015.

The 'Tell us once' service

5. The 'Tell Us Once' (TUO) service is a national initiative for the Department for Work and Pensions that enables a citizen, when registering a birth or death, to inform a number of central and local government departments through a single registration appointment. The service was launched in Nottinghamshire on 3rd November 2011. Feedback to date indicates that the service is highly valued and appreciated by the public, particularly in respect of death registrations.

6. TUO provides significant financial savings for central and local government departments, but there is no funding for the local delivery of the service by registrars. Local authorities had been given to understand that it would be possible to absorb the service within normal registration appointments. However, this has not been the case. Standard registration appointment times were 20 minutes for a birth, and 30 minutes for a death. This has been increased to 30 and 45 minutes respectively to accommodate the TUO service.
7. In addition, TUO is expected to expand due to its success and its popularity, and due to:
- Increased public knowledge and trust in the service.
 - Verification of Child Benefit forms can be added to the TUO process for births.
 - New workstreams may be added, as central and local government departments appreciate the benefits and associated cost savings.
 - Possible future access to the service by commercial organisations, such as utility companies, who would benefit from notification of births and deaths.
8. The cost of TUO to the Nottinghamshire Registration Service has been calculated as shown below, based on the number of birth and death notifications in the County from 3rd May 2011 to 2nd May 2012, and assuming only a modest take-up rate of 50%.

Death registrations = 5,661
2830 x 15 minutes full TUO = 707 hours
2831 x 5 minutes capture only = 236 hours

Birth registrations = 8,071
8071 x 10 minutes = 1345 hours

Thus the estimated total time required to provide TUO over a full year is 2,288 hours.

Registrar (Grade 4, SCP 19 – 23, £17,802 – £20,198)
37 hours per week = 1924 hours per year
Salary costs (max.) = £20,198
Superannuation (max.) = £3,696
Total cost (max) = £23,894

Therefore, cost of 2,288 hours for TUO = **£28,414 per year.**

The intended introduction of a Nationality Checking Service

9. The Nationality Checking Service (NCS) is an advice service for prospective British Citizenship applicants. It aims to help applicants to make good quality and complete applications, which the Home Office Nationality Group will be able to process quickly. It had been intended to introduce this service in Nottinghamshire, however the capacity to plan for this, to train staff and to launch the service has been utilised in the introduction and delivery of TUO. Political approval for introduction of the service was gained through a Cabinet meeting on 6th April 2011.
10. The approximate income from NCS, based on one registrar working 3 days a week and a fee of £50 per adult and £30 per child is calculated as follows:

Per day:

5 x Adult x £50 = £250

2 x Child x £30 = £60

Total = £310

Multiply by 3 Days = £930 per wk

Multiply by 50 weeks = **£46,000 income** per year

Proposed temporary increase in establishment

11. Following the recent restructuring of the service, and population of the staffing structure by enabling and recruitment to vacancies, managers have been able to assess the staffing increase required. It is proposed that in order to expand the availability of the service in local areas, to increase the cost effectiveness of the offices and to maintain customer satisfaction, it will be beneficial to increase staffing by four FTE posts; one based in the North of the County, two in the centre, and one in the South. It is suggested that these posts are created on a 12 month temporary basis, with the opportunity at the end of this period to consider if there is merit in establishing these as permanent positions.
12. In addition to creating capacity to enable the smooth introduction of NCS, the proposed expansion will contribute to ability of the service to develop other income generation initiatives. For example, to promote the Civil Funeral service for the benefit of families who do not want a religious ceremony. Also, registration managers are working with local businesses in promotional events including our own Wedding Fayres. On the basis of current income from ceremonies, and the realistic prospect of being able to develop this further, it is anticipated that the cost of the additional posts will be met by increased income.
13. In summary, the temporary increase will enable the service to:
 - sustain the TUO service without detriment to statutory birth and death registrations;
 - offer the benefit of a local NCS service;
 - respond fully to increased public demand for statutory and non-statutory ceremonies

Other options considered

14. Options for the future of TUO in Nottinghamshire include continuing to provide the full service, or reducing the service offer only the basic 'capture' aspect of the service. Another option is to continue to provide TUO for death registrations where there is most benefit to the customer, but to discontinue TUO for birth registrations. If this were done it would be possible to develop an in-house system of notification to interested Nottinghamshire County Council departments such as Libraries, Schools, Social Care and Blue Badges, although this would negate savings made within the registration service.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service.

Financial implications

16. The cost of four Registrars is as follows (Grade 4, SCP 19 – 23):

For each post (maximum cost, based on SCP 23):

Salary costs (max)	£ 20,198	
National Insurance	£1,322	
Superannuation	£3,696	
Authorised car user	£1,350	(based on 3000 miles)
Total per officer	£26,566	

Total for four registrars **£106,264**

17. It is intended that this cost will be recovered by additional income, including that from the introduction of NCS. The service has already successfully reduced its running costs from a budget of approaching £½ million in 2009 - 2010, to £67,000 for the current year.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that:

- 1) the staffing establishment of the Registration Service is increased by four FTE (148 hours) temporary Registrars, Grade 4, SCP 19-23 (£17,802 – £20,198) to be established for a period of 12 months with effect from 1st April 2013 until 31st March 2014, and the posts be allocated authorised car user status;
- 2) this increase is reviewed after 12 months with consideration being given to making the posts permanent on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis.

PAUL MCKAY

Service Director, Promoting Independence and Public Protection
Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Robert Fisher

Email: robert.fisher@nottsccl.gov.uk

Tel. (0115) 977 3681

Constitutional Comments (KK 04.02.13)

18. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Community Safety Committee.

Financial Comments (KAS 07.02.13)

19. The financial implications are contained in paragraphs 16 and 17 within the report.

Background Papers

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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