



<b>Title:</b>	Procedure for Use of Agency Workers		
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<b>Ownership:</b>	Director of HR & Corporate Services		
<b>Date of SMT Approval:</b>	3 March 2020	<b>Date of Trust Board Approval:</b>	N/A
<b>Operational Date:</b>	3 March 2020	<b>Review Date:</b>	March 2022
<b>Version No:</b>	1.0	<b>Supercedes:</b>	Protocols for the Use of Agency Staff within the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Health and Social Care Staff
<b>Key words:</b>	recruitment; temporary vacancies; staffing cover;		
<b>Other Relevant Policies:</b>	HSC Regional Recruitment & Selection Framework; HSC Regional Framework for the Supply of Non-Medical Agency Workers		



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## **1.0 Introduction & Objectives**

### **1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health and Social Care Trust's vision is to provide excellent quality of care, experience and outcomes for the patients we serve. NIAS recognises the challenges faced by Managers in addressing temporary staff shortages to ensure continued service delivery within financial constraints. In this context, NIAS accepts that there may be occasions when it is necessary to engage agency workers to provide essential staffing cover. However, the use of agency workers should be kept to a minimum and should not be considered as a substitute for recruiting directly employed staff through standard recruitment and selection procedures.

### **1.2 Objectives**

This procedure aims to:

- outline the key principles under which agency workers should be engaged and managed;
- outline the procedure for engaging and managing agency workers;
- clarify the respective responsibilities of Managers and the HR Department;
- ensure compliance with the HSC Regional Framework for the Supply of Non-Medical Agency Workers (the Framework);
- ensure compliance with the Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011.



## 2.0 Key Principles

- 2.1 Agency workers should normally only be engaged to provide immediate, short-term staffing cover in order to ensure continued service delivery. For example, to cover sick leave or pending completion of a recruitment exercise.
- 2.2 Engagement of an agency worker for a longer-term assignment, for example, to cover a planned absence ie secondment, career break etc or specific, time-bound project with temporary funding stream, may be considered appropriate when all alternative means of providing staffing cover have been exhausted.
- 2.3 In all cases, engagement of an agency worker should only be considered once all alternative means of providing staffing cover have been exhausted and/or assessed as not being viable due to, for example, the immediate/short-term nature of the cover and any associated risk to continued service delivery.
- 2.4 Alternative means of providing staffing cover includes: engaging existing staff who require short-term alternative duties or longer-term temporary redeployment; offering existing part-time staff additional hours; recruiting from current recruitment waiting lists; initiating a recruitment exercise for temporary staff, via external recruitment, internal trawl or expression of interest as appropriate.
- 2.5. Engagement of agency workers must be in accordance with the Framework; Managers should not contact any agency directly without seeking advice from the HR Department regarding the appropriate agency to contact under the Framework.
- 2.6 Requests to engage agency workers outwith the Framework must be referred to the HR Department and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.7 Engagement and management of agency workers must comply with the Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011, other relevant legislation and best practice. The HR Department can provide further advice in this regard.



### **3.0 Procedure for Engaging an Agency Worker**

- 3.1 Once the need for an agency worker has been identified, the Manager should complete a Request for Agency Worker form (Appendix 1), including ensuring the relevant managerial/budgetary approvals are completed. Incomplete forms will not be actioned and will be returned to the Manager.
- 3.2 The Manager should submit the fully completed Request for Agency Worker form, together with the relevant, agreed job description/personnel specification including AfC pay banding, to the HR Department. In the exceptional circumstance of no job description/personnel specification being available, the Manager should contact the Human Resources Department for advice.
- 3.3 The HR Department will submit the assignment requirements to the relevant agency in accordance with the Framework within 1 working day of receipt of a fully completed Request for Agency Worker form
- 3.4 The relevant agency will forward CV(s) which meet the assignment requirements to the HR Department.
- 3.5 The HR Department will forward CV(s) received within 1 working day of receipt to the Manager for their consideration.
- 3.6 The Manager should assess the CV(s) against the requirements of the assignment to ensure that minimum requirements are met.
- 3.7 The Manager should confirm whether the CV(s) are suitable with the HR Department and confirm the preferred start date. In the event of more than one CV being suitable, the assignment will be offered to the **first suitable CV** received from the **highest ranking agency**. Please note, Managers should **not** conduct a selection process (for example, an interview) when engaging an agency worker.
- 3.8 The Trust is under no obligation to recognise previous HSC or other experience for payment purposes and rates paid will normally be in line with the Framework. Managers should seek advice from the HR Department in relation to any request by the candidate to negotiate an alternative rate of pay.
- 3.8 The HR Department will liaise with the relevant agency to offer the assignment, agree a start date and confirm the rate of pay.
- 3.9 The HR Department will confirm the final arrangements with the Manager.
- 3.10 The Manager should advise the HR Department once the agency worker has commenced.
- 3.11 The HR Department will scan the completed Request for Agency Worker form to the Finance Department.



## **4.0 Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Manager's Responsibilities**

- 4.1.1 Ensure that alternative means of providing staff cover are exhausted and/or assessed as not being viable in the specific circumstances before making a request for an agency worker.
- 4.1.2 Ensure that all requests for agency workers are fully completed on the appropriate form (see Appendix 1), including supporting documentation and necessary managerial/budgetary approvals, prior to submission to the HR Department.
- 4.1.3 Review supplied CV(s) to confirm that prospective workers meet the minimum requirements of the assignment; for example, qualifications, skills, driving licence, professional registration. Seek advice from the HR Department in relation to any issues/concerns arising from CV review.
- 4.1.4 Notify the HR Department of the date an agency worker commences/ceases working in an assignment.
- 4.1.5 Arrange appropriate local induction for the agency worker, including: meet and greet; check photographic ID; arrange job-related IT systems access; arrange any mandatory training; arrange attendance at Corporate Induction..
- 4.1.6 If any issues/concerns regarding the agency worker arise, for example, in relation to attendance, performance, working relationships etc, seek advice from the HR Department and take prompt action as appropriate.
- 4.1.7 Verify and sign agency worker timesheets, flexi-time sheets (if appropriate), annual leave requests (if appropriate) and mileage/expense claims (if appropriate) in a timely manner and nominate an appropriate, alternative manager to do so in their absence.
- 4.1.8 Respond to any queries from the Finance Department in relation to invoices for agency workers.
- 4.1.9 Regularly monitor and review the use of agency workers within their remit, particularly in longer-term assignments and when circumstances change, to ensure continued adherence to the principles of this procedure, with particular reference to paragraph 2.4.



## **4.2 HR Department's Responsibilities**

- 4.2.1 Provide professional HR advice to Managers on the engagement and management of agency workers, with particular reference to the Framework; the Agency Workers Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011; other relevant legislation and best practice.
- 4.2.2 On receipt of an appropriately completed request for an agency worker, contact the relevant agency(ies) in accordance with the Framework to request CV(s).
- 4.2.3 Liaise between the relevant agency and the Manager in relation to the identification of a suitable candidate, agreement of a start date and confirmation of rate of pay.
- 4.2.4 Maintain an up-to-date register of agency workers engaged within NIAS, including full name, assignment, start and finish dates.
- 4.2.5 Maintain oversight of the use of agency workers across the Trust and provide reports for Senior Management Team on a quarterly basis.
- 4.2.6 Monitor the implementation of this procedure and notify any requests to act outwith this procedure to the Assistant Director of HR in the first instance.



## 5.0 Monitoring & Review

This implementation of this procedure will be monitored and will be subject to formal review in no less than 2 years.



**REQUEST FOR AGENCY WORKER**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY REQUESTING MANAGER**

MANAGER NAME	
MANAGER JOB TITLE	
MANAGER EMAIL	
MANAGER CONTACT NO	
REQUEST DATE	
POSITION TITLE	
PAY BAND	
LOCATION	
DEPARTMENT	
DIRECTORATE	
COST CENTRE	
ACCOUNT CODE	
HOURS PER WEEK / WTE	
WORKING PATTERN	
UNSOCIAL HOURS RATE	
ESTABLISHED POSITION?	YES / NO <sup>1</sup>
IF YES, NAME OF LEAVER / EMPLOYEE REQUIRING COVER	
IF NO, REASON FOR ASSIGNMENT	
ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED	
PREFERRED START DATE	
ANTICIPATED DURATION / END DATE	
JOB DESCRIPTION/PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION ATTACHED?	YES / NO <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Please delete as appropriate



<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS</b>	
FUNDING APPROVED BY	
RECURRING/NON-RECURRING FUNDS <sup>2</sup>	
APPROVAL DATE	

<sup>2</sup> Please specify

<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY RELEVANT DIRECTOR</b>	
REQUEST APPROVED BY	
APPROVAL DATE	

<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY HR DEPARTMENT</b>	
DATE REQUEST RECEIVED	
DATE 1 <sup>ST</sup> AGENCY CONTACTED	
DATE ASSIGNMENT FILLED	
AGENCY NAME	
DATE MANAGER ADVISED	
DATE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS ADVISED	
AGENCY WORKER NAME	
STARTING RATE OF PAY	
COMMENCEMENT DATE	
DATE OF LEAVING	

**TO BE RETAINED BY THE HR DEPARTMENT  
& AND UPDATED ON AGENCY REGISTER**