

For the Record – Press Statement

Publication and reporter	Express & Star, Heather Large
Date of article	24/09/15
Headline	Hospital spent £6m on temps as 250 jobs cut
First paragraph/s of article	A HOSPITAL trust spent more than £6 million on agency staff at the same time as axing 250 posts in a bid to cut costs, it has been revealed.
Trust response	
<p>COMMENT FROM PAULA CLARK, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE DUDLEY GROUP NHS FOUNDATION TRUST</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring all our patients receive the best possible care and so patient safety is always an absolute priority. We always try and cover vacant shifts first from our own staff bank before employing agency staff, and have reduced our agency costs from £7.135m in 2013/14 to £6.326m in 2014/15, but we make no apologies for making sure our services are safe.</p> <p>Because there is a national shortage of qualified nurses, specialist doctors and other health professionals, Trusts across the country are struggling to recruit permanently to some posts. Despite this, we still have to ensure our services have the staff and expertise they need and that we adhere to the Safer Staffing guidelines we are required to meet.</p> <p>To make sure patients are safe and cared for by appropriately skilled staff at all times, we sometimes use agency staff to cover staff shortages. These shortages can come about due to unplanned sickness, short-term vacancies, the need to open extra beds to cope with peaks in demand, or because a person with a very specialised skill set is required.</p> <p>Most of the posts removed from our budget were already vacant and the posts removed were mainly non-clinical. Ward based and community nursing, and midwifery posts bands 2, 5 and 6 were not included in the process to remove posts.</p> <p>We have very stringent processes for all our workforce agency requirements. For example, in order to fill a nursing shift with an agency nurse, the following steps will</p>	

have taken place:

1. Ward rotas reviewed to see if changes or swaps can be made to cover the shortage whilst continuing to provide safe care.
2. A discussion with the matron for the area to look across other wards to establish whether the shortage can be filled from another area.
3. Well established Trust staff bank used to attempt to fill the shortage.

We then have a robust risk assessment where the shift will be assessed by the matron to establish whether or not cover via agency is needed.

If it is agreed that the shortage must be filled by agency, this request will be passed onto the Chief Nurse or director on call for approval.

No nursing agency shifts will be booked without approval in this way.

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For further information please contact the communications team for The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust via (01384 456111) or email communications@dgh.nhs.uk

Press enquiry

The Express & Star contact the Trust following a Freedom of Information response about agency staff.

Questions:

- Why are agency staff needed?
- What is being done to reduce the amount spent in 2015/16?
- Why can the Trust afford to spend £6m on agency staff but still need to delete 250 posts to save £7.5m?