

Item 9 - Question Time

To the Chair of the Education, Children & Adult Services Committee

“Could you detail and explain - in reference to the projected underspend in 2016/17 on the following areas – the staff numbers as a full time equivalent, the post title, the reason why the post has not been filled (e.g. hard to recruit to, vacancy management, etc), the geographic spread of the underspend, the annual number of client cases normally carried by a full time worker if applicable and the impact upon our service users (adults and children) of not filling the position including any detriment to care plans or service users outcomes. If the projected underspend does not relate to salaries, please detail the reason for the underspend –

Education Services – Primary Schools - £198k
 Adult Services – Other Leisure Services - £58k
 Children’s Services – Family Teams - £643k
 Children’s Services – Other Services for Children - £150k

(These figures cover the period from 1 April 2016 to 30 June 2016)

In 2015/16, the budget line ‘Children’s Services – Childcare and Early Learning’ showed an underspend of £1,391k. In 2016/17, it is being projected as fully spent, even with an increase of budget of £330k to a total budget of £15,363k. What factors indicate that this will be the case and not an underspend as in the previous year?”

Response to Mr Christie

The projected underspend on primary schools relates to a projected underspend against the class contact reduction (CCR) budget. This underspend is forecast not as a result of vacant posts but as a result of a review of how CCR is provided during 2015/16, ensuring capacity is available to meet any local staffing shortages.

The ‘other leisure services’ underspend reflects a 1FTE vacant post for a Community Learning & Leisure Manager. It has been possible for the Service to manage without this post for some time, and it is now intended to recycle this funding to ensure the necessary monitoring of various service contracts following the voluntary redundancy exercise.

Current vacancies in Family Teams are listed below. The forecast underspend reflects an estimated position for the impact of vacancies throughout the year, with current vacancies being filled and new vacancies arising.

This list of current vacancies is therefore just a snapshot at this particular point in time. The underspend forecast is the saving from vacant posts in excess of the budgeted £797k vacancy management saving target within the Family Teams.

Family Team	Post	FTE
South FT - Inv Central, B&S	Community Children's Worker	0.09
South FT - Inv Central, B&S	Children’s Services Worker	0.20
South FT - Inv Central, B&S	Health Visitor	0.60

South	FT - Inv Central, B&S	Community Practitioner	Early Years	0.60
South	FT - Inv Central, B&S	Community Practitioner	Early Years	0.09
South	FT - Inv West	Practice Lead –	Early Years	0.40
South	FT - Inv West	Social Worker		1.00
South	FT - Inv West	Children's Services Worker		0.14
South	FT - Inv West	Health Visitor		0.60
South	FT - Inv West	Health Visitor		0.40
South	FT - Inv West	School Nurse		0.80
South	FT - Inv West	School Nurse		0.26
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	Social Worker		0.20
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	Social Worker		1.00
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	Community Children's Worker		0.20
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	Children's Services Worker		1.00
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	Children's Services Worker		0.26
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	School Nurse		1.00
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	School Nurse		1.00
South	FT - Inv East & Nairnshire	Community Practitioner	Early Years	0.10
South	FT - Health & Disability	Senior Community Worker	Children's	0.50
South	FT - Health & Disability	Children's Services Worker		1.00
South	FT - Health & Disability	Children's Services Worker		0.50
South	INBS C&F Support Workers	Care & Protection Worker	Support	1.00
South	INBS C&F Support Workers	Care & Protection Worker	Support	2.65
Mid	FT - Mid Ross	Social Worker		0.50
Mid	FT - Mid Ross	Health Visitor		0.80
Mid	FT - Mid Ross	School Nurse		0.64
Mid	FT - Mid Ross	Children's Services Worker		0.20
Mid	FT - East Ross	Practice Lead –	Early Years	1.00
Mid	FT - East Ross	Social Worker		0.50
Mid	FT - East Ross	Social Worker		1.00
Mid	FT - East Ross	Social Worker		0.50
Mid	FT - East Ross	School Nurse		0.90
Mid	FT - East Ross	Staff Nurse		0.50
Mid	FT - East Ross	Community Practitioner	Early Years	0.50
Mid	FT - East Ross	Community Practitioner	Early Years	0.50
Mid	Children's Disability Team N&W	Disability Support Worker		0.11
Mid	Children's Disability Team N&W	Disability Support Worker		
West	FT - Skye & West Ross	Social Worker		0.40
West	FT - Skye & West Ross	Health Visitor		0.50
West	FT - Skye & West Ross	School Nurse		0.28
West	FT - Skye & West Ross	Community Practitioner	Early Years	0.70
West	FT - Skye & West Ross	Children's Services Worker		0.10
West	FT - Skye & West Ross	Children's Services Worker		0.30
West	FT - Lochaber	Health Visitor		0.50

West	FT - Lochaber	Health Visitor	0.30
West	FT - Lochaber	Community Practitioner	0.06
West	FT - Lochaber	Support Worker - disability	0.50
West	FT - Lochaber	Care & Protection Support Worker	0.09
North	FT - Caithness	Practice Lead – Care & Protection	1.00
North	FT - Caithness	Social Worker	0.04
North	FT - Caithness	Social Worker	0.50
North	FT - Caithness	Children's Services Worker	0.80
North	FT - Caithness	Children's Services Worker	0.07
North	FT - Caithness	School Nurse	0.02
North	FT - Caithness	Health Visitor	1.00
North	FT - Caithness	Care & Protection Support Worker	0.47
North	FT - Caithness	Support Worker	0.30
North	FT - Sutherland	Social Worker	1.00
North	FT - Sutherland	Support Worker - Disability	0.50
North	FT - Sutherland	Care & Protection Support Worker	0.50

It is not possible to provide a detailed analysis of why these various posts are vacant at a certain point, albeit this can be discussed with the relevant Area Manager at any time. It may be due to the time taken for recruitment processes, or a post may be advertised more than once, if not filled on the first occasion.

All of these vacancies are likely to impact on the capacity to meet needs, as the staffing level of the Family Teams was agreed by Committee in 2014 on the basis of demand in each Area. These difficulties can be exacerbated where there are other factors - e.g. significant numbers of inexperienced staff, long-term sickness and management gaps.

Where it is assessed that vacancies are contributing to unreasonable risk, actions can be taken to redeploy staff, provide additional support or appoint temporary staff, including agency workers.

All vacancies are screened by the Service management team, prior to approval for advertising. This screening takes account of the staffing situation in the relevant team.

Current average caseloads for social workers are shown below. It should be noted that these caseloads have reduced significantly, following implementation of GIRFEC.

Area	Average caseload	
Mid	12 to 16	26 Looked After children, 1 permanence and 8 child protection cases
East Ross	12 to 16	65 Looked After children, 4 permanence and 17 child protection cases.
Sutherland	19	Only 1 child protection case and no permanence cases
Caithness	16	13 child protection cases and 18 permanence cases
Skye	10 to 20	30 Looked After children, 3 permanence, 8 others
Lochaber	12 to 18 (lower for newly qualified)	38 Looked After children, 9 child protection
South	10 to 14	Mainly statutory Looked After (204 looked after) or child protection cases (34)

The 'other services for children' underspend reflects vacancies in the youth action teams - currently 3FTE social workers and 2.2 FTE substance misuse workers in the north team and 1FTE social worker and 1.5FTE substance misuse workers in the south team.

As with the family teams underspend, the figure reflects an estimated amount for the impact of vacancies throughout the year, with current vacancies being filled at some point and new ones arising. The underspend forecast is in excess of the budgeted £40k vacancy management saving target within these teams.

At this stage in 2016-17 a balanced position is being forecast for the childcare and early learning budget. The main operational change that has changed this position substantially from the 2015-16 outturn position is the introduction of more flexible method of early years provision across a number of settings from August 2016. The 2016-17 outturn position will be reviewed again at period 6, once the new staffing arrangements are established and costs for the August and September payrolls have been evaluated.