

LYMINGTON RECREATION CENTRE - REVIEW OF CURRENT STAFFING STRUCTURE**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to examine the current staffing structure at Lymington Recreation Centre, identify some key operational and service issues which are affecting customer service and consider how to best deal with them.
- 1.2 There has been significant income growth at Lymington Recreation Centre over the past three years. This inevitably places increased pressure on the workforce. It is the general agreement of all the employees at the centre that there is a need to review the current structure in order to improve standards of customer service.
- 1.3 As a result of the proposals it is anticipated that employees will be able to work more effectively and this will have a beneficial effect on customer service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Lymington Recreation Centre opened in 1989. This has led to a Management Team Structure as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Manager, Deputy Manager and Administration Manager share their time between New Milton and Lymington Recreation Centres. Four full-time Duty Managers work on a three week duty rota covering the opening hours of the Centre. The Duty Manager on the fourth week works a “flexi” week and is available to cover sickness and holiday leave.
- 2.3 In addition to their operational duties the four Duty Managers have a wide range of administrative, programming and promotional responsibilities.
- 2.4 Current New Forest District Council operating procedures stipulate that there must always be a minimum of two employees on duty to respond to any emergency. At all other New Forest District Council Centres the Duty Managers are supported by Duty Officers. At Lymington Recreation Centre Duty Managers are supported by Senior Leisure Attendants (SLA). These employees work part-time predominantly at evenings and weekends. The duties of Senior Leisure Attendant replicate those of a Leisure Attendant but with a specific role in emergency situations.
- 2.5 The key difference between the Duty Officers and SLA's is that the former being full time provide a much more regular and consistent level of shift cover that the SLA's who work predominantly evenings and weekends.

2.6 The Centre has experienced a significant growth in income in recent years. Overall growth in three years has been £74,792 (29%) broken down as follows.

1997/98	£260,111	
1998/99	£278,638	(+7%)
1999/00	£319,655	(+15%)
2000/01	£334,903	(+5%)
2001/02	£342,980	(target)

2.7 The significant financial growth of the Centre has been mainly as a result of employees increasing the scope of the programme. The impact of this has been an extended workload for the employees. Pressure has been intensified because of the numerous problems in recruiting Senior Leisure Attendants and Attendants at the Centre. This inevitably leads to regular vacant shifts on the staffing rota.

2.8 It has fallen to the Duty Managers initially, and then the Centre Deputy and Administration Manager and finally the Centre Manager to cover these Leisure Attendant shifts. This can have a major effect on their ability to fulfil workloads and achieve deadlines. Despite the commitment of the management team, the Centre periodically has had fewer staff on duty than was considered necessary to provide the customer service everybody strives for. This lack of staff impacts on existing staff with additional pressures. This has had an impact on morale. This pressure can “work its way up” through the structure with Duty Managers unable to achieve their tasks, which results in the Manager, or the Deputy Manager having to take on some of their workload.

2.9 The Duty Managers have all, on various occurrences, spoken of the “isolation” they feel with no regular colleague to discuss issues or “bounce off” ideas. The dual role nature of both the Manager and Deputy can compound this feeling.

2.10 As a result the Duty Manager, working in isolation, will be called upon to assist with numerous duties of a routine nature including:

1. Covering reception breaks/busy periods
2. Co-ordinating the Leisure Attendant's when on shift
3. Cover poolside breaks
4. Ensure cleanliness of building
5. Cover absences due to sickness
6. Set Up/set down equipment
7. Answer the telephone
8. During quiet periods, assist DM's with routine administration tasks

9. Perform Cash-ups

This leads to regular interruptions of their administration and promotional responsibilities.

3. PROPOSED CHANGES TO EXISTING STRUCTURE

- 3.1 In order to deal with these operational difficulties it is proposed to appoint three full time Recreation Centre Attendants (RCA's) working a 37 hour week over a three week rota.
- 3.2 The RCA's would totally replace the SLA's although nominated LA's would be asked to "act up" to RCA during holiday periods and to cover sickness.
- 3.3 The existing positions of Senior Leisure Attendant would be made redundant.
- 3.4 These changes would have significant benefits in the following areas:
 - 3.4.1 **Stability in shift cover** - The Senior Leisure Attendants are part-time employees whose contract is reissued approximately three times per annum, dependent upon the School's term-time requirements for the pool. Contracts for S.L.A. hours currently range from 2 to 22.5 hours per week. Some employees supplement this with additional Leisure Attendant or Instructor hours, others with external commitments. This has led to persistent problems of shift cover as employees are less able to be flexible.
 - 3.4.2 **More flexibility at Management level** - The Manager, Deputy and Administration Manager are all programmed to be at the Centre for certain times of the week to act as the essential support or as the Duty Manager. If there is any variance to this for meetings, leave, sickness this has to be covered. For the Manager especially this can be a persistent problem with other employees being constantly asked to change their plans to accommodate.
 - 3.4.3 **Improved management effectiveness and general standards** - Such constant calls on their time reduce the effectiveness of their ability to complete the programming and administration duties they are assigned. It is the Duty Managers who are responsible for the wet/dry courses, aerobics programme, duty rotas, building maintenance, holiday programmes, junior sessions, birthday parties etc. Inevitably things get missed. Changing rooms are not as clean as they should be; queues at Reception are longer than they could or should be.
- 3.5 The proposal to utilise the RCA as an additional staff member during the evenings and weekends will also improve customer service in terms of:

1. Assisting at reception during busy times thus reducing queuing times
 2. Assisting and supervising changeovers ensuring customers get value for money
 3. Regularly patrolling the building and improving the cleanliness and security of key areas such as changing rooms
- 3.6 In addition, if the RCA is appropriately qualified, there is the opportunity of covering for instructors and reducing the likelihood of cancelling instructional sessions.
- 3.7 The RCA's would work on a straight three week rota, whilst the Duty Manager would continue with a four week rota. This would ensure all employees would meet and work with everybody, which could facilitate general communication.

4. EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

- 4.1 In order to discuss the matter in depth the Management Team met on an "Away Day" to discuss the key issues and how best to resolve them.
- 4.2 The Management team felt that the introduction of a new tier of staff reporting to Duty Managers would offer the most cost effective way of resolving all the identified problems.
- 4.3 The Centre Manager has also met with a number of the part-time employees, Leisure Attendants (LA's), and Senior Leisure Attendants (SLA's), at an open meeting in order to discuss the key issues. At this meeting all employees were encouraged to come forward at any time in the future to offer any further feedback and advice.
- 4.4 Leisure Attendants and Senior Leisure Attendants recognised the need for a new team of full time employees to assist with the general operation of the building.
- 4.5 Concerns were expressed by Leisure Attendants and Senior Leisure Attendants about the possible change of hourly rate, which would mean a reduction in their earning capacity for some of their shifts. It was recognised that this would affect certain employees for specified shifts.
- 4.6 The Recruitment Officer for Community Services has expressed her support for such a move as this generic role fits in well with the move to Single Status and a flexible workforce. It would also replicate roles at Ringwood and Applemore Recreation Centres.

5. IMPACT ON EXISTING STAFF

- 5.1 There would be full consultation with the existing SLA's regarding the proposals and their views including any suggested alternatives would be fully taken account of.

- 5.2 If the decision was to proceed with the proposal then the employees would be “at risk” and the Council’s procedure in that respect would apply.
- 5.3 All opportunities for suitable redeployment would be considered but if none were appropriate or available each employee would be compensated via a redundancy payment, which can be met from existing centre budgets.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Overall the proposed charges will have an additional cost of £10,338 details of which are shown in Appendix 2. These can be funded from existing budgets although it should be noted:
 - a) That the savings available from the Creche closure may be the subject of a revenue bid at a future date should suitably qualified staff become available and the crèche reopens.
 - b) The savings from the marketing budget would not normally be seen as advisable, however such is the importance operationally of the restructure it is felt in balance that it is acceptable on this occasion.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The management team and Duty Managers are responsible for developing and delivering programmes which include activities for young people. These programmes may be curtailed if the pressure to cover shifts is not addressed.
- 8.2 The Council is planning to implement a major Youth Project in partnership with the Police this year. The management restructure will help release services to deliver the project.

9. EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENT

- 9.1 The employee side are pleased to see that the Lymington Recreation Centre has achieved the high rate of growth indicated in this report. This highlights the dedication shown by the Centre employees. It is unfortunate that to achieve the aims of this report four part time posts of Senior Leisure Attendant are having to be deleted from the establishment. However, the employee side are happy that there are to be created three full time posts of Recreation Attendants to replace the deleted posts.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the restructuring of staffing at Lymington Recreation Centre by the deletion of the 5 part

time SLA Posts and the creation of 3 full time RCA's as detailed in this report with immediate effect.

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Background Papers:

None

APPENDIX 2

DLA Rate	=	(including on costs) £6.26
LA Rate	=	(including on costs) £5.45
SLA Rate	=	(including on costs) £6.54

Costs

Additional LA Hours:-

Monday to Friday	5pm-10.45pm (5pm-10.30pm Monday+Thursdays)	= 28.25 hours
Saturday	7.15am-7.30pm	= 12.25 hours
Sunday	7.15am-9.30pm	= 14.25 hours
Sub Total		= 54.75 hours x 52 weeks x £5.45 = £15,516

New RCA Post:

37 hours x 3 posts x £6.26 x 52 weeks = £36,132

Additional LA Hours	£15,516
RCA Posts	<u>£36,132</u>
Total	<u>£51,648</u>

Savings

Full-time SLA Budget	=	£30,310
Part-time LA Budget	=	£ 8,000
Instructors	=	£ 3,000
H+C	=	£ 3,000
Crèche	=	£ 4,424
Marketing	=	£ 2,914
		<u>£51,648</u>



