



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Officeholders – Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Contingency Fund Application

9 September 2021

Reference: SPCB(2021)Paper 47

Executive summary

1. The SPCB is invited to approve, in principle, contingency funding for the SPSO for temporary staff to cover maternity and sick leave absences.
2. The SPSO is seeking funding of £123,867 in 2021/22 for the equivalent of five temporary Complaint Reviewers. Given the length of time to train Complaints Reviewers and anticipated maternity leave and cover for sick leave, the SPSO is seeking contingency approval for a period of 12 months (2021/22 October to March and 2022/23 April to September).
3. A copy of the SPSO's contingency fund application is attached at Annex A.

Governance

4. Employees of the SPSO are entitled to statutory maternity and sick leave.

Resource implications

5. The SPCB has established a central contingency fund for the officeholders that it supports. Individual officeholders' budgets do not contain any contingency funding.
6. The Officeholders' Contingency Fund is used to fund the costs of defending legal actions, one-off projects, temporary staff cover for maternity absences etc which cannot be met from an officeholder's approved budget for any given year.
7. Requests for contingency funding can be made at any time of the year but officeholders should not draw down the funding until it is clear that they are unable to meet the costs, in full or part, from savings identified in their approved budget.

8. The officeholders contingency fund can increase if for example legal costs are recovered or an officeholder surrenders part of their budget if they are anticipating an underspend.
9. The Officeholder Contingency Fund for 2021/22 is £400k. £380,718 has been committed as can be seen in the table below leaving £22,174 available although we have been notified that the SHRC may need up to £64k for maternity cover.

Officeholder	Purpose	Amount Approved	£402,892	Notes
SPSO	SWF Reviewer	£49,000		part of budget process
SIC	Website	£70,000		part of budget process
SCS	Staffing	£28,217		part of budget process
SHRC	Projects	£136,601		part of budget process
ESC	new function	24,000		part of budget process
ESC	Temp staff	72,900		June 2021
Total		380,718		
Balance			£22,174	

10. Although the Contingency Fund is almost fully committed, we have always managed to balance the requests received for contingency funding from savings and as a result of our policy of requiring the officeholders not to draw down any approved contingency funding until later in the financial year when it is clear that they cannot meet in full or part the additional costs from their approved budget.
11. Should the officeholders all seek contingency funding as outlined above and there is a shortfall, we would look to the SPCB's contingency subject to funding availability.

Publication Scheme

12. This paper may be published.

Decision

13. The SPCB is invited to approve in principle the SPSO's request for contingency funding of £123,867 in 2021/22 and to also, as part of the 2022/23 budget process, approve contingency funding for a further 6 months in 2022/23 for cover for ongoing statutory maternity and sick leave.

Officeholder Services
September 2021