

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Employment Committee  
**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Sara Saleh, Corporate Director of People

### Report Title

**Agency and Consultant Spend for Q2 - Period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

### Recommendations

**That the content of this report is noted.**

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	This report aligns with the council's Corporate Priorities in respect to 'Thriving places'.
Financial	The cost of using agency workers is carefully managed and monitored through existing budgets and budget management frameworks.
Legal Implications:	Agency assignments are carefully monitored to ensure that they are legally compliant and any employment liability is mitigated.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None
Sustainability Implications	None
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	The use of agency workers supports critical resourcing gaps.
Risk Management Implications	See Legal Implications section.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None
Health and Safety Implications	None

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 A robust vacancy clearance process is in place that ensures that posts are only filled where there is a compelling case to do so - vacancies are subject to approval by the relevant Corporate Director with HR and Finance supporting information. This process has recently been streamlined to reduce timescales for the full recruitment process and to reduce the need for agency pending the permanent recruitment solution. Where a post is filled, the aim is to match to the vacancy in the first instance in a priority sequence; employees on notice from redundancy (redeployees), "at risk" staff (those employees where there is a real risk of redundancy) and apprentices.

- 1.2 There will be circumstances whereby there are immediate resourcing needs that are predominantly short term in nature and require access to time limited and/or specialist skills that cannot be found within the organisation, or where cover is required for day-to-day absences. For these reasons, access to temporary agency support is essential to meet critical gaps in service provision as outlined below. In some cases due to the specialist nature of the work, consultants are required.
- 1.3 The breakdown of agency spend over Q2 of 2019/20 (July to September 2019) is attached at Appendix I. It should be noted that the agency costs for the quarter have been met from within existing staffing budgets, whilst services have been restructuring, reshaping and recruiting to resultant vacant posts and ensuring that statutory obligations are met on a day-to-day basis.
- 1.4 Appendix II provides information on the assignments that were still active as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and the average length of tenure.
- 1.5 From August 2019 the Commissioning and Adult Services directorates merged and so for this report, agency spend relating to Commissioning will be included with Adult Services. This is also the case for historical spend so fair comparisons can be made.

## **2. Directorate Overview**

### **2.1 Children and Families**

- 2.1.1 In Q2 2019/20, spend in Children and Families totalled £343,673 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 there were a total of 27 active assignments across the Directorate. Spend through the Reed agency framework was £199,750 and off contract spend was £143,923. The spend has increased significantly as compared with Q1 2019/20 which was £216,823 and also with the corresponding period in 2018/19 (£134,626).
- 2.1.2 The majority of agency spend is due to the service discharging its statutory responsibilities for providing social care services for vulnerable children. The interim staffing need is primarily required to cover staffing resource gaps, created as a result of short-term staff absences or whilst recruitment to permanent posts is underway and cover is critical to ensure that service users receive the appropriate level of care and support.
- 2.1.3 88% of the spend is on interim qualified Social Worker roles and is split fairly evenly between our agency framework provider and off contract.
- 2.1.4 There continues to be a national shortage of suitably qualified and experienced children's social workers on the market and councils across Greater Manchester are all experiencing difficulties in recruiting. This issue has been

raised at GM level and work is underway to try to improve this position. In order to bolster the service, following the Ofsted inspection, additional Team Leader posts were added to the establishment and there is currently work being undertaken to review the position. The service is finalising a 3 year plan, which may result in additional posts being created in order to future-proof children's services. As well as this a recruitment and retention action plan has been developed looking into remuneration packages, recruitment campaign, on-boarding and other relevant areas to ensure that our offer is competitive.

2.1.5 We have met with our framework agency provider, Reed to discuss the difficulties they have encountered in meeting the high level of demand for social workers in Greater Manchester. As they have continued to be unable to meet our ongoing requirements we are still engaging social workers through other agencies in line with procurement rules. We need to do this to ensure that we meet our statutory requirements in order to keep children safe and that the service successfully delivers the Ofsted Improvement plan. The usage continues to be monitored.

2.1.6 We have in place different routes to 'grow our own' social workers which should help with resourcing in this area. We are supporting 3 Social Work apprentices who are undertaking the Social Work degree while working in substantive posts. They will qualify in June 2021. We also have the 'Frontline' initiative in place which means that we have 2 units of 4 postgraduate students who will qualify within 12 months.

## 2.2 Adult Services

2.2.1 In Q2 2019/20, spend in Adult Services totalled £246,621 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 there were a total of 51 active assignments across the Directorate. This spend includes all commissioning agency staffing. This is a significant decrease as compared with Q2 2018/19 which was £305,908. However spend is a little higher than it was in the previous quarter (Q1, 2019/20) which was £226,422.

2.2.2 The majority of agency spend is due to the service discharging its statutory responsibilities for providing social care services for vulnerable adults. The interim staffing need is primarily required to cover staffing resource gaps, created as a result of short-term staff absences or whilst recruitment to permanent posts is underway and cover is critical to ensure that service users receive the appropriate level of care and support.

2.2.3 64% of the spend is on interim qualified Social Worker roles. The next biggest spend is on Care Assistants at 32% where there is a high demand to cover the rotas at Ascot House. The service has been setting up a staff bank and the spend has reduced as compared to the previous quarter.

- 2.2.4 For the second quarter, there was no use of agency Support Workers which is further to Supported Living filling gaps in provision with casual staff. In October / November there have been 20 casual Support Assistants recruited between Ascot House and Care at Home.
- 2.2.5 The Adult Social Care team is currently undergoing a restructure to enable new and improved ways of working, primarily in the screening and assessment teams. The changes will likely have a positive impact on retention of social workers in Adult Social Care and enable more effective distribution of cases which will reduce the need for reliance on agency staff.
- 2.2.6 The Trafford Academy is underway and the first cohort of 3 Social Worker apprentices commenced this year and will qualify in June 2021. The aim is that every year a new cohort will commence and progress through the scheme. This means that we can train our own staff to this level, giving unqualified social care staff a pathway to grow and develop into qualified roles and remain in Trafford.
- 2.2.7 As part of the Trafford Academy work, staff are also being given development support which should improve retention.

### 2.3 Governance and Community Strategy

- 2.3.1 In Q2 2019/20, the total agency spend in Governance and Community Strategy equated to £40,451 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019, there were 6 active assignments. The spend has reduced both compared to Q2 2018/19 which was £54,552 and the previous period, Q1 2019/20 which was £46,166.
- 2.3.2 Agency spend in this Directorate is due to the need to bring in specialist skills. In the most recent quarter, the spend is predominantly in relation to Legal roles as there are continuing challenges attracting these roles - options continue to be explored.

### 2.4 Finance and Systems

- 2.4.1 In Q2 2019/20, in Finance and Systems there was no agency spend and as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019, there were no active assignments.

### 2.5 People

- 2.5.1 In Q2 2019/20, the total agency spend in People was £312 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019, there was 1 active assignment. This small level of spend was following no spend in Q1 2019/20 and spend in Quarter 2 2018/19 of £40,499. It was to bring in business support.

### 2.6 Place

2.6.1 In Q2 2019/20, the total agency spend in Place was £4,547 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019, there were 2 active assignments. Although there has been an increase on spend in Q1 2019/20 where there was no reliance on agency it is lower than in Q2 2018/19 was £10,090. The spend has been on a Licensing Assistant.

### 3. Summary Agency Spend Position

3.1 The total agency spend in Q2 2019/20 was £635,604. Without the off contract spend on Children’s Social Workers it was £491,681. This is a significant increase on the previous period, Q1 2019/20 when spend was £499,897. It is also higher than the figure for Q2 2018/19 which was £562,971. Agency spend has decreased across all directorates apart from Children’s Services.

### 4. Consultant Spend

4.1 The total spend in Q1 2019/20 was £177,146. The spend breaks down as follows.

Children and Families	Adult Services	Governance and Community Strategy	Finance and Systems	People	Place
£84,633	£0	£10,000	£0	£0	£92,513

4.2 This spend was a significant decrease as compared with Q1 which was £47,380 however it was an increase on Q2 in 2018/19 which was £75,380.

4.3 The spend in Children and Families relates to the interim Corporate Director – this post has now been appointed to so when the substantive post holder commences in January this should reduce. In Governance and Community Strategy it relates to a legal role. In Place it relates to One Trafford Response and the interim Development Director.

### 5. Conclusion

5.1 Agency and consultant spend will continue to be monitored on a regular basis and reports will be presented to Employment Committee, for information.

5.2 Employment Committee is recommended to note the content of this report.

## Appendix 1

**Trafford Council Agency Spend By Directorate Q2 - 2019/2020****Monthly breakdown by Directorate (cost and number of active assignments)**

Directorate	Active Assignments in month	Total Cost
<b>Jul-19</b>		
Children and Families	31	£64,261.33
Adult Services	43	£83,709.55
Governance & Community Strategy	5	£11,213.57
Place	1	£1,774.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>£160,958.61</b>
<b>Aug-19</b>		
Children and Families	29	£60,499.62
Adults Services	41	£77,338.38
Governance & Community Strategy	4	£10,613.16
Place	2	£1,063.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>£149,514.92</b>
<b>Sep-19</b>		
Children and Families	29	£74,989.4
Adults Services	41	£85,572.96
Governance and Community Strategy	6	£18,624.03
People	1	£312.48
Place	2	£1,709.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>£181,208.19</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>£491,681.72</b>

## Appendix 2

**Trafford Council Agency Tenure by Directorate**

Breakdown by Directorate showing full tenure of active assignments as at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Directorate	Job Title	Average tenure of assignment	No. of active assignments
Children and Families	Childcare Worker	11mths 11days	1
	Customer Service Advisor (MARAT)	11mths 23days	1
	Personal Advisor	3mths 1day	1
	Residential Childcare Officer	5mths 19days	9
	Senior Business Support Officer	4mths 16days	1
	Social Worker Level 2	4mths 26days	5
	Social Worker Level 3	6mths 20days	6
	Social Worker level 3a	1yr 8mths 17days	1
	Team Leader	5mths 8days	2
Adults Services	Business Support Officer level 2 [Trafford]	26days	2
	Care Assistant - Residential Homes & Day Centres	1yr 4mths 8days	31
	Cleaner	8mths 10days	1
	Cook Manager	3mths 11days	5
	Customer Engagement Support Officer	1yr 1mth 9days	1
	Social Worker Level 3	9mths 28days	7
	Social Worker level 3a (Hospital/EDT)	7mths 29days	3
	Team Leader	6mths 12days	1
Governance & Community Strategy	Business Support Officer Level 2	2mths 22days	1
	Legal Executive	7mths 30days	1
	Solicitor	11mths 6days	3

	Performance Analyst	1mth 25days	1
People	Business Support Officer Level 2	3mths 21days	1
Place	Business Support Officer Level 2	2mths 4days	1
	Licencing Assistant	2mths 21days	1

*\*It should be noted that in many assignments, the agency worker will be working less hours than the full time equivalent (FTE) hours. 1 assignment does not necessarily equal 1 FTE.*