

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Employment Committee  
**Date:** 5 September 2022  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Angela Beadsworth, Interim Director of Human Resources

### Report Title

**Agency and Consultant Spend for Q1 Period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022**

### Summary

**This report details the quarterly spend for the Council on agency workers and also on consultants who are engaged. Spend is broken down by quarter and also by Directorate with an overview of the reasons agency and consultants are required to supplement the Council's workforce to meet temporary resource needs.**

### Recommendations

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

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	This report aligns with the council's Corporate Priorities in respect to 'Thriving places'.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	None
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
Carbon Reduction	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

Summary of key stakeholders involved in report production:

Name: Tracey Sefton, Interim HR Strategic Resource Lead

Extension: x 4131

## **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 the interim HR of and Director of Finance approving all requests for internal and external recruitment. The aim is to recruit to posts as quickly as possible, however ensuring that we follow the process and firstly consider employees on notice from redundancy (redeployees), "at risk" staff (those employees where there is a real risk of redundancy) and apprentices before advertising openly.
- 1.2 It is however recognised that 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. There are also roles for which we have recruitment and retention difficulties. For these reasons, access to temporary agency support is essential to meet critical gaps in service provision. In some cases, due to the specialist nature of the work, consultants are required.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 details the spend breakdown for quarter 1 – 2022/2023.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of assignments that were still active on 30 June 2022.
- 1.5 The agency costs for the quarter have been met from within existing staffing budgets to support services whilst they have been restructuring, reshaping and recruiting to vacant posts, thus ensuring that statutory obligations are met on a day-to-day basis.

## **Directorate Overview**

### 2.1 Children's Services

- 2.1.1 In Q1 2022/2023 agency spend in Children's Services totalled £986,202.77 (includes REED Agency: £700,466.44 and the Social Worker Agency Framework: £285,736.33) and as at 30 June 2022 there were a total of 92 active assignments across the Directorate.

- 2.1.2 Children's agency spend in Q1 2022/2023 has reduced by £144,331.12 when compared with Q4 2021/2022 which was £1,130,533.89. When comparing Q1 2022/2023 agency spend with the corresponding period in Q1 2021/2022 which was £812,278.88 it is higher.
- 2.1.3 The largest proportion of the Q1 2022/2023 agency spend is on all interim qualified Social Worker roles which has increased slightly from 91.39%% in Q4 2021/2022 to 92.67% in Q1 2022/2023. The largest spend in Q1 2022/2023 is on Level 3 Qualified Social Workers at 66.97% which is an increase on Q4 2021/2022 which was 63.5%. The next biggest spend is on Service Managers at £78,300.12 followed by Team Leaders at £77,574.36.
- 2.1.4 We still have a reliance on agency workers from other providers which we engaged via the Councils Social Worker Agency Framework (SWAF) in addition to Reed, our umbrella agency. This is because we haven't been able to meet our staffing requirements through Reed alone. Directorate spend via SWAF in Q1 2022/2023 was £285,736.33 which has decreased when compared to Q4 2021/2022 which was £362,525.20. The largest spend via SWAF for Q1 2022/2023 was spent on Level 3 Social Workers which was £264,109 which is a reduction when compared to Q4 2021/2022 which was £314,292.85. The remaining spend was on a Head of Service and Team Leader. The service will continue to monitor this situation and ending assignments as soon as permanent workers have commenced in post.
- 2.1.5 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.
- 2.1.6 There are varying reasons for high agency spend which, in part, are linked to the national challenges around recruiting and retaining experienced front line social workers. Work is already underway to help combat some of the challenges and to support a more stable workforce e.g.: Investing in our people steering group. HR are also continuing to support the service in several of areas: -
- Service redesign and work is progressing on the recruitment and retention strategy required in the service.
  - working with the service in support of their training programme with Strengthening Practice and sharing EPIC Manager programme

content, to ensure that there was a commonality of language and approach.

- Attending their EPIC Leadership Masterclasses the first of which was on resilience and supporting leaders and managers put the learning into practice with themselves and their teams.

2.1.7 HR are continuing to work in partnership with the Strategic Lead - Practice and Improvement, to implement the resourcing strategy to robustly reduce the agency resource requirements by, fully understanding the resistance to consider a permanent contract with Trafford, and, highlighting the total reward package and development opportunities available to agency workers who wish to move into permanent employment status. This is being done via focus groups for current agency workers and will be a continuous engagement, communication and information sharing session which will aid Trafford to understand current market / labour trends and thinking.

2.1.8 Recently there have been calls for a national policy response to tackle the issues of recruitment and retention within the Children's Social Care Sector, which propose the need for national early career requirements, standardised pay and conditions, alongside a national communications strategy.

2.1.9 We have in place 1 FTE Senior Learning and Development Officer, to support staff with their professional development across children and adult services, as well as, coordinating students and mentoring the practice educators of social work students on placements. This role is supported in each service by senior practitioners who provide additional support to newly qualified social workers (NQSWS) undergoing the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). Currently there are 13 NQSWS in Children's.

2.1.10 We have facilitated 9 social work placements this academic year and some students have completed their placement and have now gained employment with the Council.

2.1.11 We have a successful social worker apprenticeship programme and are currently planning the recruitment of our fourth cohort of 7 staff (inc 3 from Adults) to support on the 30 months degree programme to start in September 2022.

2.1.12 We are part of the Greater Manchester Step Up partnership, which is a 15 month post graduate fast track route into social work. We are supporting three Step Up students, who have all successfully completed their first 70 days placement in adult services. They will start their final 100 days placement in children's services in September and qualify in February 2023. We have 2 units of 4 students each, following the Frontline programme. These students

are guaranteed a job on successful completion of their course in September 2022, starting in January 2022. For several years we have supported two Frontline units, this is a 12 month post graduate route into Children's social care.

## 2.2 Adult Services

2.2.1 In Q1 2022/2023 spend in Adult Services totalled £286,115.56 (includes REED Agency: £282,912.44 and the Agency Social Worker Framework: £3,203.12 and as at 30 June 2022 there were a total of 45 active assignments across the Directorate.

2.2.2 This is a slight increase of £4,348.52 when compared with Q4 2021/2022 which was £281,767.04. Spend decreased by £39,470.64 when compared with the previous corresponding Q1 2021/2022 which was £325,586.20.

2.2.3 73.09% (£202,447.25) of spend in Q1 2021/2022 was on interim qualified Social Worker roles compared with 74.22% in Q4 2021/2022. The next biggest spend is on Support Workers at £29,223.46 which has reduced when compared to Q4 2021/2022 which was £42,657.57, followed by a Service Manager at £25,595.15. The internal Resourcing service have been supporting Supported Living to recruit Support Workers via a social media campaign which has helped reduce the reliance on agency workers.

2.2.4 The Directorate still has a reliance on agency workers from other providers which we also engaged via the Councils Social Worker Agency Framework (SWAF) in addition to REED our umbrella agency. This is because, like Children's Services, we haven't been able to meet our staffing requirements through Reed alone. Adults spend via SWAF in Q1 2022/2023 is £3,203.12 which has decreased when compared with the previous Q4 2021/2022 which was £19,986.77. The agency spend via SWAF for Q1 2022/2023 was spent on Level 3 Social Workers. The service will continue to monitor this situation and ending assignments as soon as permanent workers have commenced in post.

2.2.5 Our new Trafford Learning Academy seeks to provide an innovative approach to recruiting, growing and retaining our adult social care workforce and can be found at the following link <https://www.traffordlearningacademy.co.uk/>. The academy will provide a mechanism for a rolling recruitment programme stemming from an engagement programme with schools and colleges to promote and inspire adult social care as a rewarding career choice. The school and engagement project is becoming more established within schools, and offers initial myth busting sessions to young people about what a career in adult social care is really like. Trafford Learning Academy is building strong

connections with schools offering Health and Social Care GCSE; currently there are 4 schools offering this qualification and this will increase to 5 in September 2022 and 6 in September 2023. Trafford Learning Academy is now School Enterprise Advisor for Altrincham College and Flixton Girls School.

- 2.2.6 Trafford Learning Academy provides a range of support to aid staff retention, such as, social work forum, confidential support around career aspirations or frustrations, 1:1/ group learning support where required around specific areas of learning, and mentorship for apprentices.
- 2.2.7 A database is currently being developed by the Learning Academy, identifying schools and social care services by locality, and linking students seeking work experience with local social care providers.
- 2.2.8 The Adults Workforce Development Group continues to assist and oversee workforce development across Adults Directorate and will align closely with the GM DASS and Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership sub-boards to enable shared working wherever there is shared priorities.
- 2.2.9 There was a recent paper on this committee that set out a response to the challenges faced recruiting to and retaining qualified social workers. The paper sets out options which included increasing the rate of pay by paying a market supplement which has been agreed, development opportunities and incentives, and bespoke recruitment campaigns.
- 2.2.10 The Senior Workforce Development Practitioner and HR Business Partner attended a GM integrated workforce planning training session in November. The intention is to test and apply the methodology to assist the workforce planning process and we have secured funding via GM to support this work.
- 2.2.11 We continue to support the directorate with action planning following feedback received from a staff survey and have subsequently established a staff group with an action plan to focus on areas of feedback. HR/OD colleagues are working closely with the senior leadership team in supporting the delivery of action plan themes with allocated owners and staff representatives' involvement.
- 2.2.12 We are also continuing with a senior leadership development plan which takes into account the people skills required in leading the change as they begin work with Skills for Care and the Care Quality Commission and put their quality strategy into action.
- 2.2.13 Funding has been secured from GM Health and Social Care partnership for a school leaver apprenticeship pilot, offering 2 x level 2 Social Care

apprenticeships whilst working at Ascot House. Interviews are scheduled for 12 September 2022.

### 2.3 Governance and Community Strategy

2.3.1 In Q1 2022/2023 the total agency spend in Governance and Community Strategy totalled £190,219.76 and as at 30 June 2022 there were 13 active assignments. Spend has increased as compared to Q4 2021/2022 which was £122,450.31 and when compared to the corresponding Q1 2021/2022 period, it has increased from £66,883.91.

2.3.3 The largest spend is on legal roles at 79.88% compared to 93.27% in Q4 2021/22. There has been a continued difficulty with attracting solicitors with the skills and experience that the service requires. The main reason for this is the competitiveness of their reward package as compared with the private sector. The next biggest spend is on an Information Governance Manager and Assistant Head of Legal. A review is underway to identify a solution to the recruitment and retention of these staff, includes looking at options to develop a pipe-line in-house for example through apprenticeships and the development of career pathways to support succession planning and career progression.

### 2.4 Finance and Systems

2.4.1 In Q1 2022/2023 the total agency spend in Finance and Systems totalled £8,908.81 and as at 30 June 2022 there was 1 active assignment. Spend has decreased slightly when compared to Q4 2021/22 which was £9,455.70. In the corresponding Q1 2021/212period, there was no agency spend or active assignments.

2.4.2 The service engaged an additional agency worker to support the roll out of Windows 365.

### 2.5 Place

2.5.1 In Q1 2022/2023 agency spend in Place totalled £11,658.36 and as at 30 June 2022, there were 7 active assignments.

2.5.2 Agency spend has decreased compared to spend in Q4 2021/22 which was £27,661.77. Spend has decreased when compared to the corresponding Q1 2021/22 period, which was £42,545.05.

2.5.3 The majority of spend is on a Tenancy Support Officers at £8,455 due to difficulties in recruiting to this role which includes £2,401.86 funded from the Ukrainian Refugee Fund. Some of the salary for the ESOL assessors is also being funded from the Ukrainian Refugee Fund.

## 2.6 Strategy and Resources

2.6.1 In Q1 2022/23, the total agency spend in Strategy and Resources totalled £21,635.09 and as at 30 June 2022, there were 4 active assignments.

2.6.2 Agency spend has increased slightly when compared with Q4 2021/22 which was £21,278.09. It has decreased compared to the corresponding Q1 2021/22 period which was £59,566.31.

2.6.3 Strategy and Resources has seen a number of changes with the transfer of a number of services into the Directorate including the recent transfer of STAR Procurement and Libraries and Contact Centre. The biggest spend was on a HR Consultant role at £12,177.99. The remainder of spend is on an Applications Support Officer, Customer Service Advisor and Procurement Officer.

## 3. **Summary Agency Spend Position**

3.1 The total agency spend in Q1 2022/23 was £1,504,740.35. This is a decrease of £88,406.45 when compared to the previous period of Q4 2021/22 which was £1,593,146.80. Most of the agency spend was through Reed, our umbrella agency which was £1,215,800.9 and was a slight increase on Q4 2021/2022 spend which was £1,210,634.83. The remaining spend via the Social Worker Agency Framework was £288,939.45 which has decreased when compared to Q4 2021/2022 spend which was £382,511.97. Much of pressure continues to be the difficulties recruiting qualified Social Workers.

3.2 Agency spend is higher than the corresponding Q1 2021/2022 period which was £1,306,860.36. Around 76.04% of the total spend in Q1 2022/2023 is on interim qualified social worker roles which has increased when compared with the previous Q4 2021/2022 which was 66.11%. Although agency spend has reduced this quarter in Children's Services, they are still experiencing considerable issues with recruiting and retaining social workers. Work continues to try to mitigate this and move to a more stable resourcing position. Agency spend in Adult's has increased slightly this quarter. Spend has increased in Governance and Community Strategy due to difficulties recruiting to legal positions. Spend has decreased slightly in Place and one of the Tenancy Support Officer and two of the ESOL Assessors are being funded from the Ukrainian Refugee grant. Strategy and Resources agency spend has increased slightly. We will continue to monitor agency spend and provide reports for visibility.

## 4. **Annual Agency Spend across GM**

The table (1) below highlights the annual agency spend to June 2022 with REED, our umbrella agency provider. Table (2) details the annual spend and



out of the 10 local authority neighbours in GM and GMP that use REED, we are the 6<sup>th</sup> lowest spend authority. This highlights that there is a wider regional reliance on temporary staff across the GM footprint.

Table (1)

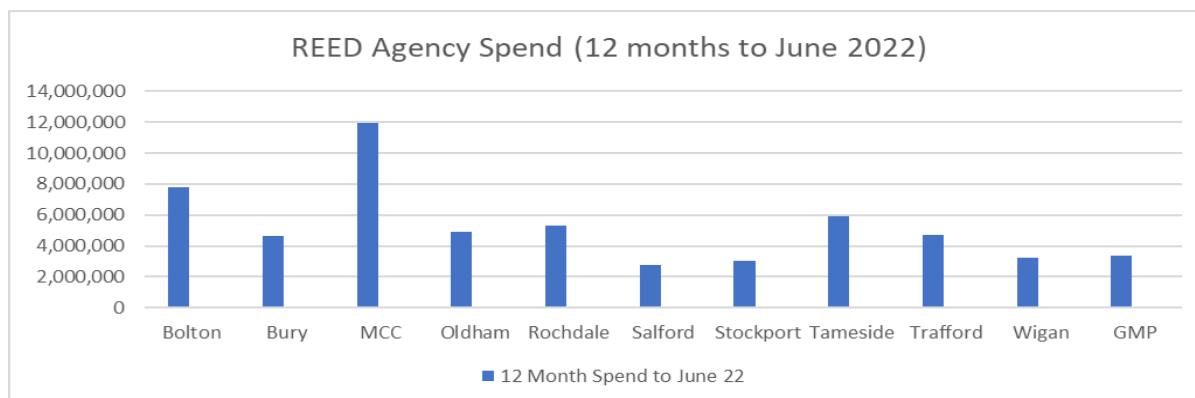


Table (2)

Organisation	12 Month Spend to June 22	Spend by Division (1 = Lowest)
Bolton	7,768,123	10
Bury	4,628,503	5
MCC	11,932,001	11
Oldham	4,915,753	7
Rochdale	5,324,439	8
Salford	2,792,744	1
Stockport	3,064,701	2
Tameside	5,882,140	9
Trafford	4,711,324	6
Wigan	3,255,483	3
GMP	3,339,567	4

## 5. Consultant Spend

5.1 The total spend in Q1 2022/2023 was £52,578. The spend breaks down as follows.

Children's	Adult & Well-being Services	Governance and Community Strategy	Finance and Systems	Place	Strategy & Resources
£8,378	£	£0	£0	£	£44,200

5.2 Consultancy spend in Q1 2022/2023 has decreased when compared to Q4 2021/2022 which was £117,644.25. When comparing consultancy spend with the corresponding period Q1 2021/2022 which was £79,167 consultancy spend has reduced.

5.3 During Q1 2022/2023 two consultants were engaged as follows:

- Children's x 1
- Strategy & Resources x 1

5.4 The HR service will facilitate targeted and bespoke interventions to support managers to pro-actively manage temporary resourcing needs to continue to ensure that agency demand is proportionate and appropriate.

5.5 It continues to be challenging for the Council with staffing pressures that we have had to respond to, to ensure that we are discharging our duties and keeping our citizen's safe with the services they require.

## **6. Conclusion**

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

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

## Appendix 1

**Trafford Council Agency Spend By Directorate Q1 - 2022/2023**

Directorates	Job Title	Number of Active Assignments	Total Cost
Children's	Advance Practitioner	1	£9,309.32
	Business Support Officer Level 3	2	£10,595.36
	Early Help Intervention Worker	1	£10,259.49
	Head of Service	2	£36,653.44
	Independent Reviewing Officer	3	£13,708.02
	Practice Manager	2	£17,500.06
	Residential Childcare Officer	19	£21,153.42
	Senior Business Support Officer	1	£6,320.42
	Service Manager	4	£78,300.12
	Social Worker Level 3	40	£600,733.79
	Social Worker Level 3a	7	£59,693.98
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	1	£34,127.11
	Support Worker	3	£10,273.88
	Team Leader	6	£77,574.36
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>£986,202.77</b>
Adults	Advance Practitioner	1	£8,085.06
	Cook Manager	2	£753.93
	Deputy Manager	1	£6,829.04
	Freedom of Information Support Officer	1	£5,533.97
	Service Manager	1	£25,595.15
	Social Care Team Leader	1	£13,527.75
	Social Worker Level 3	20	£191
	Social Worker Level 3a	1	£2,205.01
	Support Worker	17	£29,223.46
	<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>£286,115.56</b>

Finance & Systems	Windows 10 Deployment Lead	1	£8,908.81
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>£8,908.81</b>
Governance & Community Strategy	Assistant Head of Legal	1	£15,310.97
	Information Governance Manager	1	£20,217.99
	Information Governance Officer	1	£2,747.05
	Litigation Solicitor	2	£42,348.07
	Planning Lawyer	1	£3,901.22
	Solicitor	7	£105,694.46
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>£190,219.76</b>
Place	ESOL Assessor	4	£2,788.14
	Housing Options Officer	1	£415.22
	Tenancy Support Officer	2	£8,455
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>£11,658.36</b>
Strategy and Resources	Applications Support Officer	1	£5,697.27
	Customer Services Advisor	1	£3,097.74
	HR Consultant	1	£12,177.99
	Procurement Officer	1	£662.09
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>£21,635.09</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>162</b>	<b>£1,504,740.35</b>

Appendix 2

**Trafford Council Agency Tenure by Directorate**

Breakdown by Directorate showing active assignments as at 30 June 2022

Directorate	Job Title	No. of active assignments
Children's	Advance Practitioner	1
	Business Support Officer Level 3	1
	Early Help Intervention Worker	1
	Head of Service	1
	Independent Reviewing Officer	2
	Practice Manager	2
	Residential Childcare Officer	2
	Senior Business Support Officer	1
	Service Manager	3
	Social Worker Level 3	34
	Social Worker Level 3a	4
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	1
	Support Worker	3
	Team Leader	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	
Adult Services	Advance Practitioner	1
	Cook Manager	2
	Deputy Manager	1
	Freedom of Information Support Officer	1
	Social Care Team Leader	1
	Social Worker Level 3	13
	Social Worker Level 3a	1
	Support Worker	15

	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>
Finance & Systems	Windows 10 Deployment Lead	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>
Governance & Community Strategy	Assistant Head of Legal	1
	Information Governance Officer	1
	Litigation Solicitor	2
	Solicitor	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
Place	ESOL Assessor	1
	Tenancy Support Officer	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
Strategy & Resources	Applications Support Officer	1
	HR Consultant	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>101</b>