



**TRAFFORD**  
**COUNCIL**

**AGENDA PAPERS FOR  
EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

**Date: Tuesday, 8 September 2020**

**Time: 4.00 p.m.**

**Place: Virtual Meeting**

**The Meeting will be streamed live at**

**<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjwbIOW5x0NSe38sgFU8bKg>**

<b>A G E N D A</b>	<b>PART I</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1. ATTENDANCES</b>		
To note attendances, including Officers and any apologies for absence.		
<b>2. MINUTES</b>		<b>1 - 4</b>
To receive and if so determined, to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2020.		
<b>3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC</b>		
A maximum of 15 minutes will be allocated to public questions submitted in writing to Democratic Services (democratic.services@trafford.gov.uk) by 4 p.m. on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must be relevant to items appearing on the agenda and will be submitted in the order in which they were received.		
<b>4. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)</b>		
Any other item or items which, by reason of special circumstances (to be specified), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.		
<b>5. EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE</b>		<b>5 - 18</b>
To receive an update from the Corporate Director of People.		

6. **AGENCY SPEND 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT AND 2020/21 Q1 REPORT** 19 - 38

To receive two reports from the Corporate Director of People.

7. **NEW UNSOCIAL HOURS ALLOWANCE POLICY** 39 - 44

To receive a report from the Corporate Director of People.

8. **QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY** Verbal Report

To consider a verbal report from the Corporate Director of People.

9. **EXCLUSION RESOLUTION**

Motion (Which may be amended as Members think fit):

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, because of the likelihood of disclosure of "exempt information" which falls within one or more descriptive category or categories of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and specified on the agenda item or report relating to each such item respectively.

## **PART II**

10. **EMPLOYMENT UPDATE**

To receive an update.

To Be  
Tabled

Note the content of this update is expected to contain exempt information as defined by Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 4 as amended by The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, and is therefore not for publication.

**SARA TODD**  
Chief Executive

### **Membership of the Committee**

Councillors J. Bennett (Chair), A.M. Whyte (Vice-Chair), D. Acton, A. Akinola, C. Boyes, M. Cordingley, J. Holden, B. Rigby and R. Thompson.

### **Further Information**

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact:

Alexander Murray, Governance Officer  
Tel: 0161 912 4250

## Employment Committee - Tuesday, 8 September 2020

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Email: [alexander.murray@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:alexander.murray@trafford.gov.uk)

This agenda was issued on **Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020** by the Legal and Democratic Services Section, Trafford Council, Trafford Town Hall; Talbot Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 0TH.

### WEBCASTING

This meeting will be filmed for live and / or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website and / or YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjwblOW5x0NSe38sqFU8bKq>. The whole of the meeting will be filmed, except where there are confidential or exempt items.

If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed. If you do not wish to have your image captured or if you have any queries regarding webcasting of meetings, please contact the Democratic Services Officer on the above contact number or email [democratic.services@trafford.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@trafford.gov.uk)

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## EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

29 JUNE 2020

### PRESENT

Councillors A.M. Whyte (Vice-Chair in the Chair), D. Acton, A. Akinola, M. Cordingley, J. Holden, B. Rigby and R. Thompson.

#### In attendance

Sara Saleh	Corporate Director of People
Kate Sturman	Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence
Alexander Murray	Governance Officer

### APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bennett

#### 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.

#### 2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None were received.

#### 3. HR SERVICE - WORKFORCE UPDATE

The Corporate Director of People introduced the report to the Committee. The Committee were informed that the response to the COVID 19 pandemic by staff had been exceptional. The Corporate Director drew the Committee's attention to a number of areas of the report including sickness absences during the pandemic, the new approach to training, the new approach to recruitment including virtual interviews and the resource hub, and the health and safety approach to the Council's buildings and working from home.

Communications had included regular COVID 19 updates to the whole workforce, manager webinars, and there were plans to roll out virtual Let's Talk meetings. The Council were looking to develop a strategy that would cover communications with staff for the foreseeable future. The Council were also looking to develop staff awards with cheers for peers being a way for staff to thank each other for the support they had received. Meetings had been held with the Chairs of the Council's staff support groups and these were to be continued going forward.

Following the update the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions. Cllr Akinola asked whether there had been any pattern of increased issues among BAME staff in response to COVID 19. The Corporate Director of People responded that no trends had been identified although as BAME men had been

identified as at risk this had been factored into the guidance and risk assessment for staff returning to the workplace.

Councillor Rigby asked whether trade unions had been consulted during the lockdown. The Corporate Director of People answered that there had been consistent communications between the Council and trade unions.

Councillor Thompson asked how the Council would get accurate sickness data. The Corporate Director of People responded that the Council had been asking people to report if they were not feeling well. The Corporate Director of People added that the Council had expected to see a reduction in sickness due to the nature of agile working and the benefits that it offered. There are also many other factors affecting sickness rates.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

#### **4. WORKFORCE UPDATE COVID-19 RELATED ABSENCE**

The Corporate Director of People introduced the report to the Committee which set out an approach to managing and supporting staff unable or unwilling to work due to the COVID 19 pandemic. The Committee were informed that the Council had shared information and benchmarked their approach with other local authorities and partners such as North West Employers. The resulting recommended approach was contained within the report and the Corporate Director asked the Committee if they had any questions and to support the approach outlined within the report.

Councillor Acton thanked the Corporate Director of People for the comprehensive report and stated that he felt that the Council was taking every precaution and voiced his support for the recommendations within the report. The Chair asked the Committee if they supported the approach within the report and the Committee unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee support the approach outlined within the report.

#### **5. PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

The Strategic HR Lead Policy, Reward and Intelligence introduced the report. The Committee were informed that the government had passed a piece of legislation which provided parental bereavement leave but at statutory pay levels. Trafford's policy was to increase this to full pay. The Committee were told that this would be eligible to all staff as soon as they started working. The Committee were informed that the policy was in addition to the Special Leave for bereavement policy which was already in place.

Following the introduction Councillors Rigby, Akinola, and Acton all voiced their support for the policy and the Committee approved the policy.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Committee approve the Parental Bereavement Policy.

## **6. OVERPAYMENTS POLICY**

The Strategic HR Lead for Policy, Reward and Intelligence introduced the report stating that overpayments did occasionally occur despite the Council's best efforts and that the policy formalised the Council's approach for when they did occur. The Committee were informed of the process for reclaiming the overpayment from staff. It was hoped that this would be done quickly but fairly to minimise disruption but if an overpayment happened over a number of months the Council would normally look to reclaim the money over the same number of months.

Councillor Cordingley asked what would happen in a case where it happened to a new starter and the large impact the correction could have. The Strategic HR Lead for Policy, Reward and Intelligence stated that the policy was the general approach but the process was flexible in areas where a member of staff would be impacted particularly badly by repaying the overpayments.

Following the Committee's questions the report was noted and the recommendations agreed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and recommendations be agreed by the Committee.

## **7. RECOVERY PLAN**

The Corporate Director of People introduced the presentation and updated the Committee about the continuation of the modernisation work programme that had started prior to COVID 19. The Committee were informed that the recovery strategy would look to deliver according to the modernisation plans and would feed into those plans. A sub group had been created to aid with staff member reintegration into the workforce.

Staff members were to continue to work from home where possible with the two meter social distance rules being maintained within Council buildings. The Council were looking at buildings operating with a maximum of 20% occupancy for the foreseeable future. A survey had been sent out to staff members, which included gathering their opinions on working from home. 41% of staff who had responded to the survey wanted to work from home full time and 76% wanted to work from home for some of the time. Following the Corporate Director's introduction the Committee were asked if they had any questions.

Councillor Acton welcomed the work and the lessons that had been learnt from going through this crisis around working patterns. When looking at remote working and remote meetings there had been some excellent work within the Council and the Councillor stated that they would like to see Member involvement in this work. The Councillor asked that Members be considered in terms of how the Council's

**Employment Committee**  
**29 June 2020**

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business would continue and that they could be involved in talking to the community. The Corporate Director of People responded that so far consultation had been conducted with Executive Members but this would be developed with a wider base of Councillors. Community engagement had also been done working with the Trafford Partnership.

Councillor Rigby asked that it be captured within the minutes that COVID 19 had been a life changing experience for many and that it would continue to impact people for a long time. The Councillor welcomed the report and the work which was being done.

Councillor Thompson asked whether there had been a drill down on the responses to the survey on working from home as to why 41% wanted to continue full time and 76% part time working from home. The Corporate Director responded that the Council had received over 700 responses which they were working through and more information would be provided once that work was completed.

Councillor Cordingley asked what was being done to monitor the Health and Safety of staff moving forward in the new ways of working, such as the impact on stress from working from home. The Corporate Director of People responded that the Council were looking at the impact of working from home, for example the amount and length of meetings staff were having, and how this was affecting individuals.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted.
- 2) That additional information on responses to the working from home survey be shared with the Committee when available.

**8. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXEMPTIONS TO THE SICKNESS POLICY**

The Strategic HR Lead for Policy, Reward and Intelligence gave a verbal update to the Committee. There had been a total of six requests for extensions to the sickness policy in the previous quarter. Of those six five had been agreed and one had not required agreement as the staff member's ill health application for retirement had been agreed. The Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions but none were raised.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 4.05 pm and finished at 4.45 pm





# Employment Committee Update Report

HR Service

8<sup>th</sup> September 2020

# Sickness absence Jan – Aug 2020

Trafford Council - staffing

141

members of staff absent

100

full time equivalents absent

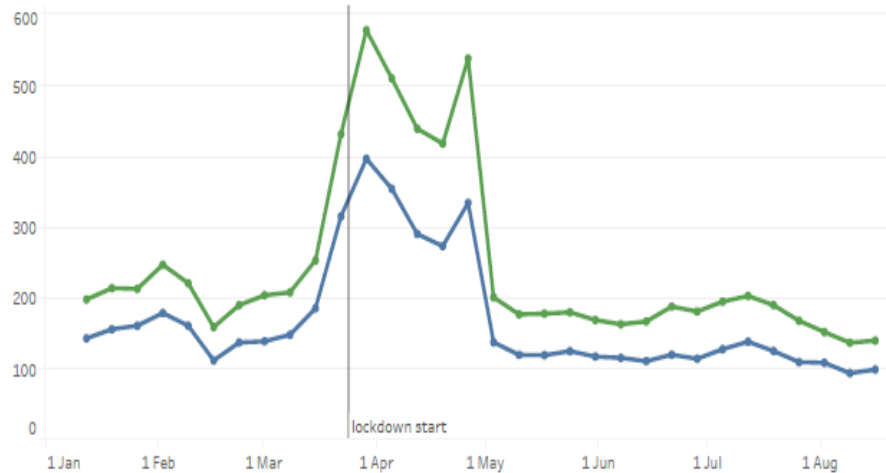
96.6%

of headcount available to work

96.8%

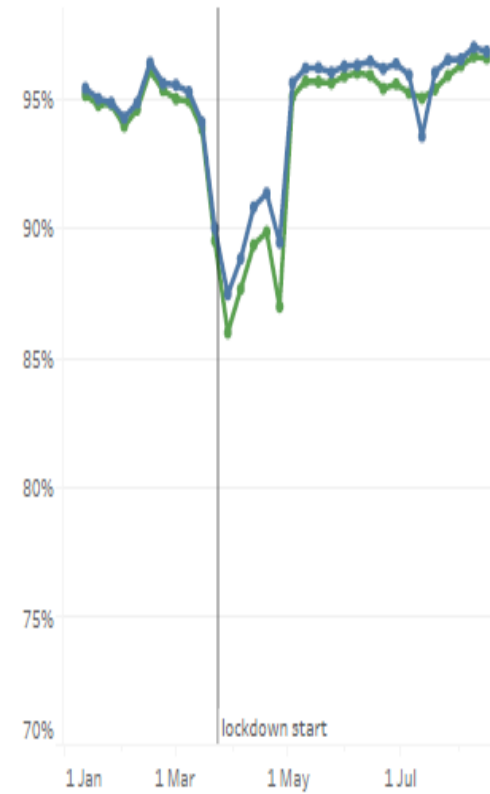
of whole time equivalents

Absence by week



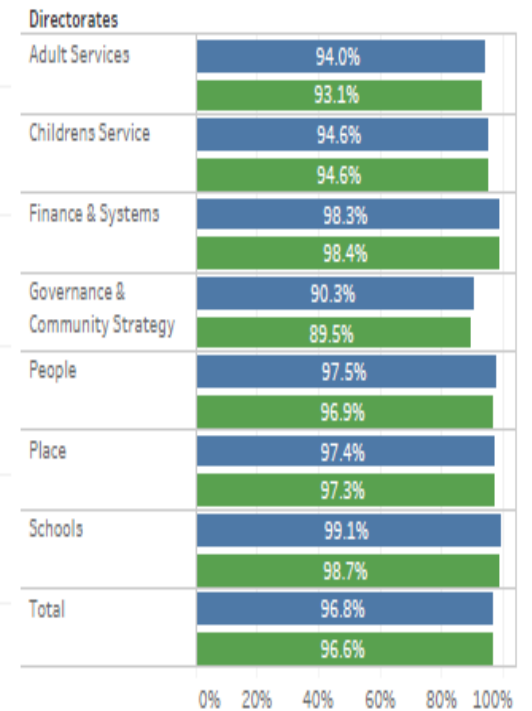
■ Absence FTE  
■ Absence Headcount

Availability by week



■ Absence FTE  
■ Absence Headcount

Current availability by directorate



Availability rates are for all staff within the directorate

# Health, Safety & Well Being

People Workstream Area	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p><b>Covid-19: Distribution of PPE to Key Workers</b></p>	<p>The Trafford and Manchester Mutual Aid Hub is an emergency service based on the urgent supply of PPE equipment to ensure key workers have the protection they need to provide essential services and includes our Trafford Core and Commissioned Services.</p>	<p>The Hub continues to provide a contingency supply of PPE where services are unable to access stock through their usual supply routes or national supply lines. The hub project team consisting of Trafford and Manchester colleagues now has defined systems in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Analyse and track demand</b> for PPE based on need and Government guidance.</li> <li>• <b>Procure mutual aid stock levels.</b></li> <li>• <b>Manage the ordering and distribution</b> of required PPE where it is needed on a <b>next day delivery basis and weekend collection arrangement.</b></li> <li>• <b>Provide guidance</b> on the process and appropriate use of PPE</li> </ul> <p>PPE where needed, continues to be pushed out to our Trafford Core Services. As the lockdown measures ease, close liaison with services/teams ensures that any PPE needs are met as services reopen within the community and to the public.</p> <p>Millions of pieces of PPE have now been distributed via the Mutual Aid Hub since the start of the operation in March. These have gone to a wide variety of healthcare settings, care homes, and domiciliary care within Trafford.</p>
<p><b>Covid-19 / BAU: Moving and Handling of People – Temporary Additional Online Training Resource</b></p>	<p>Moving and Handling training is an essential part of induction and mandatory training requirements within some of our Health and Social Care Services. This is particularly important as staff are recruited or redeployed to support these services during the COVID-19 outbreak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Health and Safety Team continue to support this increased training need with the <b>delivery of the online Moving and Handling Training and Support Package.</b></li> <li>• The system is now being used by staff in Ascot House, Care at Home and Supported Living Services providing effective additional training for existing and new staff. It includes <b>online videos, safe systems of work and training tools</b>. All staff are receiving tailored training records to monitor their competence in moving and handling tasks.</li> <li>• Socially distanced face to face <b>moving and handling training</b> continues to be delivered for new staff at Ascot House and Care at Home. A total of 43 new staff have now been trained to provide them with the additional support they require in their new roles.</li> <li>• TTCU are in the process of recruiting additional Personal Assistants. The online <b>Moving and Handling Training and Support Package</b> will be used for existing and new staff. The Moving and Handling Lead is in the process of planning socially distanced face to face <b>moving and handling training</b> with approximately 16 new staff.</li> </ul>

# Health, Safety & Well Being

People Workstream Area	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p><b>Covid-19: Making our Trafford Buildings COVID Secure</b></p>	<p>In line with Government Guidance, we ensure that those colleagues who can work from home continue to do so. Some key services will still need to operate from our office buildings and other settings.</p> <p>We therefore, have adopted a number of practical measures to ensure our buildings and other settings are and remain COVID secure.</p>	<p>A Workforce Re-integration Group provides a cross functional team to develop a safe process for return of staff. Health, Safety and Wellbeing underpins that process in line with Health and Safety Legislation and Government Guidelines.</p> <p>Sale Waterside and Trafford Town Hall have been subject to a <b>COVID19 Buildings Risk Assessment</b> to minimise the risk of infection and transmission of COVID 19. Practical measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Management of the occupancy levels</b> of our main buildings to <b>20%</b> of our normal capacity.</li> <li>• <b>Social distancing arrangements</b> in place through one way systems, restrictions on desk use and managing occupancy in kitchens, toilets and meeting rooms.</li> <li>• <b>Increased cleaning regimes</b> and hand hygiene arrangements.</li> <li>• <b>Screens being installed</b> at public facing areas.</li> </ul> <p>Guidance has been produced for managers and staff to inform of these arrangements and the messages are continually being reinforced.</p> <p>The COVID19 Building Risk Assessments for Trafford Town Hall and Sale Waterside have been updated following a monitoring review of the COVID-secure arrangements in July. The next review is planned for September.</p> <p>A template COVID19 Building Risk Assessment has also been developed for Premises Managers to put into place arrangements at other buildings. The Health and Safety Team has supported managers in completing the assessment at Ascot House, Registrars Service, Libraries, Music Service, Flixton House and the Arts Centre. Where staff are based in Health-owned buildings the Health and Safety Team have liaised with the Tlco Health and Safety Adviser who has completed the COVID19 Risk Assessment for those buildings.</p>

# Health, Safety and Wellbeing

People Workstream Area	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<p><b>COVID-19: Schools Support</b></p>	<p>Supporting the reopening of schools to further year groups in line with Government Guidance</p>	<p>School settings including our community schools have been supported in putting into place the arrangements for the safe return of staff and children to the classroom. Measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of a <b>Schools overarching COVID19 risk assessment</b> to identify and put into place the arrangements to protect staff and pupils from COVID19 related risks.</li> <li>• Participation in a multi-disciplinary <b>Schools Panel</b> consisting of representatives from HR, Health and Safety, Education, Public Health, and cleaning services to have oversight of the risk assessments being produced and offer any further support or guidance.</li> <li>• The provision of <b>Schools Guidance and individual risk assessment of persons at greater risk</b> from COVID19 in line with government guidance evidenced based data.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COVID-19: Test and Trace</b></p>	<p>In support of the NHS Test and Trace Guidance, local arrangements are also being implemented to support our workforce in responding effectively to potential COVID19 symptoms to minimise the risk of transmission within the work environment.</p>	<p>Local arrangements in conjunction with Public Health have been implemented to support a swift response and assessment where employees may potentially be COVID symptomatic. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self isolation and a referral for a test is followed.</li> <li>• An assessment will be made of the working arrangements and any potential contacts in line with the building and service risk assessments.</li> <li>• Communication to any close contacts to ensure strict social distancing and hygiene arrangements are adhered to.</li> <li>• Identify any further steps to minimise the risk of transmission within the workplace setting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COVID-19: Manager Support and Guidance</b></p>	<p>A framework of guidance has been developed to support Service Leads and Line Managers in putting into place the arrangements to mitigate the risks of COVID19 to their teams.</p>	<p>Managers and Heads of Service have a vital role in making sure that colleagues can <b>work safely and their health and wellbeing is supported. #StayEPIC support</b> has been developed including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Supporting working from home</b> where possible and guidance to ensure this can be done comfortably.</li> <li>• <b>Risk Assessment templates</b> and guidance in place for our buildings, delivery of our services and the individual assessments for staff at greater risk.</li> <li>• <b>Wellbeing support</b> including returning conversations, 'check in' and a range of wellbeing guidance for managing change, resilience and mental health and wellness.</li> </ul> <p>Information is being provided through dedicated Managers Guidance and intranet pages.</p>

# Organisation Development

People Workstream Area	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
BAU: EPIC Manager Virtual Programme	Supporting Managers to be EPIC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have redesigned our delivery method for our <b>EPIC Manager Programme</b> to support managers in our new virtual setting: The virtual programme was launched in June and covers key modules to support managers to be the best they can be. Modules include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Being the Best</li> <li>- Health &amp; Wellbeing</li> <li>- Values Based Recruitment</li> <li>- Vital Conversations</li> <li>- Team Engagement</li> <li>- Leading Equality &amp; Diversity</li> <li>- Disciplinary Investigation Skills</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We will continue to evolve the programme to ensure we are supporting managers to support their teams in the current context. We have also moved our session evaluation onto citizen space so we can capture feedback more routinely and ensure we continue to develop and grow the programme.</li> </ul>
Covid-19: Virtual EPIC Check-in Training	Continue to support managers with their check-in conversations .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We <b>continue to deliver our suite of training</b> to support managers and colleagues to engage in productive conversations and make the most out of their Check-ins. Training is now scheduled and delivered monthly.</li> <li>• We have also developed a range of tools alongside our training modules to support managers and colleagues to start to have “<b>returning conversations</b>”. These guides are available to all colleagues on our EPIC Check-in Pages.</li> <li>• Alongside supporting managers and colleagues at the Council we have also worked with the <b>CCG to refine</b> and refresh their appraisal paperwork and process. The new process will launch in September 2020 and in the meantime we have adapted the paperwork and provided managers and colleagues with tools to also have wellbeing conversations in the meantime, until the new documentation, paperwork and training has been delivered.</li> </ul>

# Organisation Development

People Workstream Area	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
BAU: Colleague Support	Creation of a variety of "How To Guides" and training to support colleagues to remain healthy and productive in this new environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Designed and launched a new intranet page "#Stay EPIC"</b> that hosts a number of bespoke resources that have been designed by the team to support colleagues and managers to stay healthy, happy and productive during lockdown and as we continue on our Journey. The pages bring together all the sources of support available to colleagues and managers, and includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Useful links to support colleagues to look after their mental health</li> <li>- Buildings and Service risk assessments</li> <li>- Returning to Trafford Town Hall and Sale Waterside guidance</li> <li>- Working from Home Guidance</li> <li>- Guidance and tools for managers to support colleagues at greater risk of Covid-19</li> <li>- Latest information, updates and FAQ pages.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Following on from the feedback at the All Colleague Let's Talk Session where we delivered a short micro learning session on wellbeing/resilience, we have delivered this content via a lunch and learn session open to all colleagues. These sessions focus on "managing stress and building resilience" and also provide a forum for colleagues to come together to support each other. The sessions were launched in July and further sessions are booked through August and September.</li> </ul>
Covid-19: Induction	Creation of a more streamlined induction to support and ease the pressure on managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We continue to support with the "virtual induction" of colleagues joining us at Ascot House. This includes issuing of a <b>welcome guide for all new starters</b>, to introduce them to Trafford and their new role. The welcome guide also outlines the key e-learning and policies they are required to complete virtually before joining us at Ascot House. Alongside the welcome guide we have refreshed the <b>Managers induction</b> and <b>New starter induction checklist</b>.</li> <li>• <b>We are now also working</b> with leads from Adults and Children's Services to design a local induction toolkit for managers and new starters to ensure that they are supported to get off to the very best start possible when joining us.</li> </ul>

# Organisation Development

People Workstream Area	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
BAU: Let's Talk All Colleagues	Designed and delivered virtual All Colleague Let's Talk Take 5 Session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Let's Talk – All Colleagues</b>- We supported the design and delivery of our first All Colleague "Let's Talk Event". The virtual events took place on the 13 and 14 July. Again the participant numbers were capped at 25 attendees to support us to facilitate a more interactive session. The event format was tweaked slightly, and alongside key updates from our CEX, Leader of the Council and Director of Strategy and Resources ,we delivered a 45 minute wellbeing session. These Wellbeing sessions were rolled out to the wider workforce as part of a Lunch and Learn series. The first session was delivered on the 29 July. Further dates are booked in August and September.</li> <li>• <b>Let's Talk Leaders and Colleague Events</b> -further Let's Talk Events for Colleagues took place in August (24,&amp; 25) and Senior Leaders in September.</li> </ul>
BAU: Engagement Survey	Sharing the Corporate Results b- Heard and Pulse Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We analysed and shared</b> the results of the covid-19 pulse survey and shared the corporate results with CLT. We have also distributed Directorate level results to Heads of Services.</li> <li>• Alongside sharing the results of our Pulse Survey we also shared the corporate results from the b-heard engagement survey that was undertaken in October/November last year. The sharing and action planning for the b-Heard results was paused in March due to Covid-19. A high level overview of both sets of results was shared with all colleagues, alongside a summary of some great work done to date to improve employees experience of working for Trafford. The communication also outlined our corporate engagement action plan and next steps.</li> <li>• We have also created an "Engagement" intranet page which houses the full b-heard and pulse survey results for colleagues to review should they want further details in addition to the corporate high level overview.</li> <li>• Heads of Service will now work with their teams to share, discuss and outline actions at a local level that will drive and build engagement. We have created a facilitator pack for Heads of Service to support them to deliver this piece of work which is planned to take place throughout September 2020.</li> </ul>



# Policy, Reward and Workforce Intelligence

People Workstream Area	Work Summary	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
Updating COVID-19 FAQs and dealing with policy queries	At the early stage of the pandemic a comprehensive set of FAQs was developed. These have been updated as different issues have become more pertinent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An initial set of FAQs was created for staff and managers in the Council and schools, informed by the HR COVID-19 mailbox.</li> <li>• These have been periodically updated.</li> <li>• There was a full review of all FAQs and they were reorganised to make them more user friendly.</li> <li>• COVID-19 related policy queries being answered for the Council and schools.</li> </ul>
Workforce returns	Information provision regarding the impact that COVID-19 is having on staff availability both internally and also for external returns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several reports being provided for different audiences - all are either on a weekly basis or more frequently.</li> <li>• Reports are informing national public sector workforce impact of COVID-19.</li> <li>• Supporting the Resourcing Hub regarding staff available to be deployed.</li> <li>• Supporting with the identification of staff to be tested.</li> <li>• Understanding of which services most impacted by COVID-19 related absence.</li> <li>• Production of a now monthly workforce availability/resourcing report for CLT.</li> </ul>
Guidance on balancing work and care commitments during the pandemic	The pandemic has led to many staff not having their normal childcare or other care provision available. Guidance was required to support managers and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the key issues staff were facing, which varied over time, i.e. Term time, school holidays and as furloughed partners returned to work, staff started working in a work setting again.</li> <li>• Policy position regarding the expectation that staff will work with their manager to agree a flexible approach to the benefit of everyone. However in some cases staff will be given paid carer's leave when they are unable to work their contracted hours.</li> <li>• Consideration of the different options that staff and managers should consider.</li> <li>• Guidance produced.</li> </ul>

# Policy, Reward and Workforce Intelligence

People Workstream Area	Work Summary	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<b>Payment for Casuals</b>	The council has a range of casual pools, particularly in services that are subject to fluctuating and seasonal demands. As these workers don't have a regular monthly salary, where the service has been affected by the pandemic their pay may be affected. Solution explored to support these staff and also agree how this is phased out at an appropriate time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach agreed for the payment of 'regular casuals' for whom work has ceased due to COVID-19, or where they are unable to work for related reasons.</li> <li>• If 'regular casuals' are unable to work due to having to shield or they have childcare issues they will also be paid on this basis.</li> <li>• Casuals who don't work on a regular basis signposted to the Resourcing Hub where they could register for work and signposting to government support mechanisms.</li> <li>• Approach agreed to phasing casuals off the payments over the school holiday period when they wouldn't normally be required to work. From September most services which use casuals will be back to normal operation and casuals will be paid based on the work that they undertake again.</li> </ul>
<b>Approach for 'at risk' groups returning to the workplace including those formerly being shielded</b>	For certain groups of staff, they or their families, or those for whom they care, are at more risk if they contract the virus. Agreed approach to supporting and reducing the risk for these staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of 'at risk' groups which includes those officially mentioned by the government (clinically vulnerable), however also other groups which may be at a higher risk. Informed by evidence the NHS are using.</li> <li>• Agreed individual risk assessments - mandatory for some groups and optional for others (see H&amp;S section).</li> <li>• Guidance for managers produced on the at risk groups, approach to having conversations with staff and undertaking risk assessments and measures to reduce risk.</li> <li>• Guidance revised further to the government's policy decision to pause shielding.</li> <li>• Supporting services with higher risk work settings and staff with health issues to ensure they can resource the service.</li> </ul>
<b>Agreed approach to managing employees unable or unwilling to return to the workplace</b>	With more staff returning to the workplace we needed a policy position regarding staff who might have concerns about returning. A supportive approach but balanced against a need to maximise our available resources with continuing pressures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement regarding the difference between 'unable' and 'unwilling' to return to the workplace with details of which scenarios meet the two definitions.</li> <li>• Guidance created to ensure that managers have a clear process to follow for both groups so they can be treated fairly and consistently.</li> <li>• Limited number of issues arising to date and managers working with staff to reach a solution, with the support of HR where required.</li> </ul>

# Policy, Reward and Workforce Intelligence

People Workstream Area	Work Summary	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
Pay solutions for Adult Services staff during the pandemic	With the pressure on social care services caused by the pandemic, some staff groups had additional work commitments and we need to ensure that they are appropriately recompensed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services identified staff groups which had been working extra hours/in unsocial periods.</li> <li>• Worked within existing pay and reward framework to propose fair solutions.</li> <li>• Supporting services to make appropriate payments.</li> <li>• Looking at our on-call payments across the Council to ensure they are fair and equitable for different rotas with varying levels of commitment.</li> </ul>
Guidance on returning from travel abroad	Government policy on the requirement to self-isolate for at least 14 days on returning from abroad has necessitated a Council policy position regarding how the time will be covered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance produced which follows the NJC model.</li> <li>• Where staff can work from home, or can be moved into such a role they will be. Where they can't then the period should be covered by annual leave, TOIL, flexi or unpaid leave. Managers should be having early conversations with staff when they are considering travel abroad so they can agree how the period will be covered. There will be some consideration to paid leave where the employee has little choice in the travel due to finances, lost holidays, family funerals etc.</li> <li>• The guidance was updated further to the government introducing the travel corridor exemption list.</li> <li>• This approach is fair and transparent for employees considering travel abroad and for those that are affected by the country's change of status whilst abroad.</li> </ul>
Policy Development	New policies implemented - Parental Bereavement Leave and Reclaiming of Overpayments Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies signed off and live</li> <li>• Supporting processes in place through GMSS.</li> <li>• Communications have gone out to managers and staff.</li> </ul>

# HR Business Partner Team

People Workstream Area	Work Summary	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<b>Staff Testing</b>	Supported the development of the people process that supports the COVID testing programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked closely with colleagues across public health and commissioning to ensure that a robust programme is in place that identifies those staff that meet the COVID testing criteria of symptomatic between 1-3 days.</li> <li>• Developed manager guidance to support the testing process that expedites a quick and safe return to work if the test is negative.</li> </ul>
<b>BAU: ER Casework</b>	Response to, and progression of, employee relations casework to support employees and managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responding to new, emerging casework.</li> <li>• Supporting and advising managers to progress.</li> <li>• Liaison with external authorities, as applicable.</li> </ul>
<b>COVID19 : ER Casework</b>	Review of all employee relations casework and consideration of how best to progress those business critical cases utilising alternative, appropriate IT/media platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified and categorised employment matters to ensure that those business critical cases continue.</li> <li>• Liaison with the trade unions to agree a mutual position.</li> <li>• 44 cases progressing.</li> </ul>
<b>BAU: Service Level Agreements</b>	Review of current SLA's for 20/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, development and communication of SLA's for schools and traded services for Teacher Unions and UNISON with effect from 01 April 2020.</li> <li>• Ongoing review and development of SLA offer for schools and traded services for HR Consultancy, with effect from 01 September 2020.</li> <li>• Review and delivery of CCG SLA</li> </ul>
<b>BAU: Training</b>	Breakfast Briefings for Senior Leaders in School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of briefing sessions prior to lockdown period on a variety of subjects including employment law updates and employment procedures.</li> <li>• Development of 'virtual' briefings during COVID19 period.</li> </ul>

# GM Resource Hub

People Workstream Area	Work Overview	Key Outcomes / Deliverables
<b>Creation of GM Resource Hub</b>	To provide a temporary solution to an immediate staffing crisis as a result of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and roll out of mandatory employee online skills survey for all staff.</li> <li>• Analysis of available staff through the skills survey and workforce data to identify to match staff for deployment into critical roles ensuring safeguarding and statutory requirements are met.</li> <li>• Liaison with line managers to identify staff shortages / future demand and skill set required.</li> <li>• To identify availability of people and deploy into roles as appropriate (taking into account any safeguarding / statutory requirements etc).</li> <li>• Clear process map relating to all roles, passing of data, communication and actions to ensure all parties clear on responsibilities and hand offs across the work streams.</li> <li>• Development of templates for communications to employee and line/recruiting managers confirming revised temporary working arrangements.</li> <li>• Create and maintain a list of casual and volunteers and link in with voluntary sector as appropriate.</li> <li>• Dedicated phone line and email address facility for managers and employees.</li> <li>• Agree and implement appropriate pay principles and process for payment.</li> <li>• Use of business intelligence and existing relationships to proactively explore possible deployments.</li> <li>• Demand much lower however Hub still in operation.</li> </ul>
<b>BAU: Recruitment</b>	<b>To ensure continuity of recruitment activity across the Council, and traded services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of an updated vacancy authorisation process to ensure all vacancies are filled internally whenever possible.</li> <li>• Development of guides to assist managers when recruiting virtually.</li> <li>• All interviews and assessments are now carried out via Teams. This is working well as managers become more confident with this way of working.</li> <li>• Successfully administered assessment centres with large panels for director level roles.</li> <li>• Content of GreaterJobs Trafford pages updated to show applicants what it's like to work at Trafford.</li> </ul>

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## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Employment Committee  
**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Sara Saleh Director of Strategy and Resources

### Report Title

<b>Annual Agency Spend for Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020</b>
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### Recommendations

<b>That the content of this report is noted.</b>
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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 was 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 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. 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 This report is the end of year report which includes the spend breakdown for quarter 4 and this is detailed at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 provides information on the length of tenure for those assignments that were still active as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.
- 1.5 The agency costs for the year 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.

## 2. Summary Agency Spend Position

- 2.1 The total agency spend in 2019/20 is £2,717,933. This is a significant increase, equating to £636,621 from the previous year's total of £2,081,312. The position for the 4 most recent years can be seen below, which shows both increases and decreases over the period.

2016/17 Total	2017/18 Total	2018/19 Total	2019/20 Total
£2,020,069	£1,901,088	£2,081,312	£2,717,933

- 2.2 There have been different patterns of expenditure within the directorates across the year, however many have seen overall increases through the year. Overall Council spend increases each quarter with a significant increase in quarter 4 of around a third. See table below which details spend each quarter by directorate.

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Children's Services	£216,823	£343,673	£439,088	£639,134	£1,638,718
Adult Services	£226,422	£246,621	£170,766	£174,246	£818,055
Governance & Community Strategy	£46,166	£40,451	£30,160	£73,396	£190,173
Finance & Systems	£10,486	£0	£24,350	£13,198	£48,034
People	£0	£312	£2,503	£5,835	£8,650
Place	£0	£4,547	£4,456	£5,300	£14,303
<b>Total</b>	£499,897	£635,604	£671,326	£911,109	£2,717,933

- 2.3 The spend for each Directorate for this year and the previous year is summarised below, with a detailed explanation of activity and trends in the following section.



<b>Directorate</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
Children's Services	£444,109	£1,638,718
Adult Services	£993,559	£818,055
Governance & Community Strategy	£224,824	£190,173
Finance & Systems	£65,979	£48,034
People	£91,356	£8,650
Place	£64,000	£14,303
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,081,312</b>	<b>£2,717,933</b>

### 3. Directorate Overview

#### 3.1 Children's Services

- 3.1.1 The 2019/20 agency spend for Children's Services was £1,638,718, which was a very significant increase from the figure in 2018/19 of £444,109.
- 3.1.2 Part of this increase will be due to the fact that in 2018/19 some services which are now in this directorate were under the Adult Services directorate. So if we applied the current structure in 2018/19 the figure for that year would be higher and the gap between the two years would not be as stark.
- 3.1.3 The spend is predominantly on qualified health and social care staffing, which was 95% of the total, with only 1% on unqualified health and social care staffing (17k) and around 4% on admin and clerical support (59k).
- 3.1.4 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. In addition there has been an increase in caseloads across the area teams, which has resulted in the need for additional resources. It is critical that these resource requirements are met to ensure that service users receive the appropriate level of care and support and are kept safe.
- 3.1.5 Our framework agency provider Reed had encountered difficulties in meeting the demand for Social Workers in Greater Manchester, and due to this we have engaged staff through other agencies in line with procurement rules. Unfortunately this has meant accepting increased rates for these workers. Spend through these agencies has been significant at £661,215. It has increased as we have moved through the year: Q1 is £33,952; Q2 is £143,922; Q3 is £191,690, and; Q4 is £291,651.
- 3.1.6 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. Following the Ofsted inspection, additional Team Leader posts were

added to the establishment and there is currently work being undertaken to review the position as part of the 3 year improvement 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 strategy has been developed and a recruitment campaign has recently been launched. It is therefore anticipated that the agency levels will reduce over the coming months.

- 3.1.7 Where possible agency staff have been encouraged to take up permanent positions and to date 3 agency workers have taken up this option.
- 3.1.8 The social worker apprenticeship programme continues with 3 current members of staff due to qualify in October 2021. There are 3 due to start the 30 month programme in September 2020.
- 3.1.9 The Frontline social work training programme now has 2 units in Trafford. These students train in small units and are guaranteed a permanent role on completion. As a result of this scheme there will be 7 newly qualified social workers starting their AYSE year in September.
- 3.1.10 Students who have undertaken their placements with Trafford are encouraged to apply for positions and we have recently had four applications which have successfully been shortlisted and will be interviewed shortly.

## 3.2 Adult Services

- 3.2.1 The 2019/20 agency spend for Adult Services was £818,055 which was a decrease of £175,544 as compared with spend of £993,599 in 2018/19.
- 3.2.2 The large majority of spend relates to qualified health and social care staffing, which was 62% of the total, with 37% on unqualified health and social care staffing and the remaining 1% is admin and clerical support and cleaning and cook roles.
- 3.2.3 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.
- 3.2.4 As detailed in the section on Children's Services, due to some services moving between Adults and Children's between the 2 years, the actual spend in Adults would have been higher if the revised structure had been in place in 2018/19.
- 3.2.5 In previous years there had been usage of Support Worker agency staff in the Supported Living Service, however they now have in place successful casual provision and had no need for agency at all.

- 3.2.6 There is an ongoing restructure within the directorate to enable new and improved ways of working, primarily in the screening and assessment teams. The change was originally anticipated to come into effect in April 2020 however implementation was paused due to the coronavirus pandemic. The position will now be assessed via a view to progressing over the coming weeks. It is expected 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.
- 3.2.7 The Trafford Academy is underway and the first cohort of 3 Social Worker apprentices commenced this year and will qualify in October 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. A second cohort of 3 will commence in September 2020. The course runs for 30 months.

### 3.4 Governance and Community Strategy

- 3.4.1 The total agency spend in 2019/20 was £190,173 which is a decrease of £34,651 on spend in 2018/19, which was £224,824.
- 3.4.2 The majority of spend is on roles in Legal Services (82%), with 14% on Community Safety Officers and remaining 4% on Information Governance, Performance and Business Support. The requirement for Community Safety Officers was linked to a restructure and has been resolved and one was made a permanent employee. There have been continuing difficulties in retaining and attracting solicitors with the skills that the service requires. The main reason for this is the competitiveness of their reward package as compared with the private sector. A review is to be undertaken to identify a solution to the recruitment and retention of these staff, which will include looking at options to develop a pipe-line in-house for example through apprenticeships. In quarter 4 spend only related to Legal Service as the issues in the other services had been resolved.

### 3.5 Finance and Systems

- 3.5.1 In 2019/20 total spend for Finance and Systems was £48,034 which is a decrease of £17,945 on the figure of £65,979 in 2018/19. Agency spend in this Directorate is due to the need to bring in professional and specialist skills.
- 3.5.2 The agency usage relates to: Procurement at 60%; Finance at 22%, and; Business Change Analyst in Transformation at 18%. Procurement have recruited an agency worker into a permanent role. In Finance a Senior Accountant had been needed temporarily pending a service restructure, however the need for this ceased after quarter 1.

### 3.6 People

3.6.1 The 2019/20 agency spend for People was £8,650, which was a very significant decrease of over £111,802 as compared with spend of £120,452 in 2018/19.

3.6.2 Spend relates mostly to Business Support in Operational Services for Education and a Personal Assistant in Leadership Support as there was a risk to service provision, particularly with OSfE being a Traded Service.

### 3.7 Place

3.7.1 The total agency spend for 2019/20 was £14,303; this represented a decrease of 77% from spend of £64,000 in 2018/19. Spend in this area relates to Regulatory Services roles (Pest Control, Licensing and a Personal Assistant) which saw 78% of spend. The other spend relates to Business Support in Strategic Growth.

3.7.2 Previously there had been a reasonable spend on Building Control roles, however the service has now ceased their reliance on agency staffing due to the high costs. They continue to explore strategies to attract staff on a permanent basis.

## 4. **Consultant Spend**

4.1 Sometimes we need to bring in specialist skills that we don't have within the workforce and which can't be obtained through agency resourcing. This is often for project work for a time limited period or to cover a key role.

4.2 The total spend in 2019/20 was £602,008. This is an increase as compared to 2018/19 when spend was £410,619. The quarterly spend for the year is detailed below.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
£47,380	£177,146	£279,545	£97,937	£602,008

4.3 Spend over the year related to the following: One Trafford Response; interim Corporate Director for Children's Services; interim Director of Development, and; a legal role.

## 5. **Conclusion**

5.1 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.

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

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

## Appendix 1

**Trafford Council Agency Spend By Directorate Q4 - 2019/2020**

Directorates	Job Title	Number of Active Assignments	Total Cost
Children's Services	Childcare Worker	7	£4,167.82
	Customer Service Advisor - Libraries and Contact Centre	1	£927.86
	Customer Service Advisor (MARAT)	1	£3,373.39
	Early Help Intervention Worker	4	£25,226.14
	Independent Reviewing Officer	1	£5,176.11
	Personal Advisor	1	£8,509.28
	Project Support Officer	1	£7,452.20
	Residential Childcare Officer	4	£1,282.61
	Senior Business Support Officer	1	£7,333.13
	Senior Practitioner	1	£6,206.27
	Service Manager	1	£22,447.51
	Social Worker Level 2	4	£48,564.02
	Social Worker Level 3	33	£399,557.10
	Social Worker level 3a	1	£10,682.12
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	1	£34,075.82
	Strategic Lead - Quality and Improvement	1	£18,858.35
	Team Leader	2	£35,294.36
Adults Services	Business Support Officer level 2	1	£285.07
	Care Assistant - Residential Homes & Day Centres	17	£38,255.12
	Cook Manager	4	£572.78
	Customer Engagement Support Officer	2	£6,504.68
	Customer Service Advisor (MARAT)	1	£1,805.10

	Independent Reviewing Officer	1	£5,446.68
	Social Worker Level 3	11	£73,899.28
	Social Worker level 3a	4	£47,477.78
	Business Change Analyst - level 1	1	£1,943.38
	Procurement Officer	2	£7,589.07
Finance & Systems	Trainee Procurement Officer	1	£3,665.32
	Information Governance Officer (Corporate)	2	£3,474.66
	Legal Executive	1	£8,486.47
	Litigation Solicitor - Corporate & Commercial	2	£26,501.72
Governance & Community Strategy	Solicitor	4	£34,933.32
	Business Support Officer Level 2	2	1309.16
People	Events Co-Ordinator	1	1004.44
	Senior Personal Assistant	1	3521.66
	Business Support Officer level 2	1	1372.7
Place	General Labourer	1	2624.36
	Personal Assistant - Level 1	1	1303.41
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>126</b>	<b>£911,110.25</b>

Appendix 2

**Trafford Council Agency Tenure by Directorate**

Breakdown by Directorate showing average tenure of active assignments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

Directorate	Job Title	Average Tenure	No. of active assignments
<b>Children's Services</b>	Childcare Worker	1year 4months	1
	Early Help Intervention Worker	3months 28days	1
	Independent Reviewing Officer	2months 4days	1
	Personal Advisor	3months 22days	1
	Project Support Officer	2months 25days	1
	Senior Business Support Officer	9months 21days	1
	Senior Practitioner	5months 3days	1
	Service Manager	3months 28days	1
	Social Worker Level 2	3months 15days	1
	Social Worker Level 3	4months 26days	27
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	5months 24days	1
	Strategic Lead - Quality and Improvement	1month 19days	1
	Team Leader	4months 14days	2
<b>Adults Services</b>	Care Assistant - Residential Homes & Day Centres*	1years 1month	8
	Cook Manager	9 days	2
	Customer Engagement Support Officer	1month 5days	1
	Social Worker Level 3	3months 13days	7
	Social Worker level 3a	9months 1day	3

<b>Governance &amp; Community Strategy</b>	Legal Executive [Trafford]	5months 24days	1
	Litigation Solicitor - Corporate & Commercial	1month 19days	2
	Solicitor	7months 12days	3
<b>Finance &amp; Systems</b>	Procurement Officer	5months 1day	1
	Information Governance Officer (Corporate)	20days	2
<b>People</b>	Events Co-Ordinator	19days	1
	Senior Personal Assistant	1month 3days	1

\*These agency staff are used akin to a bank, so they have an assignment start and end date however they aren't working continuously, instead on an ad hoc basis.



## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Employment Committee  
**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
**Report for:** Information  
**Report of:** Sara Saleh, Corporate Director of Strategy & Resources

### Report Title

**Agency and Consultant Spend for Q1 - Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

### 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. 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 role 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.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 provides information on the length of tenure for those assignments that were still active as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.
- 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.

## **2. Directorate Overview**

### **2.1 Children's Services**

- 2.1.1 In Q1 2020/21, spend in Children's Services totalled £644,050 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 there were a total of 50 active assignments across the Directorate. 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.
- 2.1.2 The spend has increased slightly compared with Q4 2019/20 which was £639,134. However when comparing the spend with the corresponding period in 2019/20 (£216,823) it is substantially higher. As detailed in the annual report, this is in part due to some services which are now in the this directorate being under Adult Services last year. Although the spend isn't going in the right direction, given the fact that the pandemic was at its height during this period, a modest increase in spend might be expected, given the pressures.
- 2.1.3 The proportion of the quarterly spend that is on interim qualified Social Worker roles has increased from 82% in quarter 4 to 92% in quarter 1. The next biggest spend is on Residential Childcare Officers with £19k. This demonstrates that resourcing for this workforce, with the exception of Social Workers is stable.

2.1.4 Following the Ofsted inspection outcome which highlighted high caseload numbers, additional resources were put in place. However due to the volume of agency workers required, our umbrella agency, Reed, have been unable to meet our requirements in terms of number and quality of assignees.

The issues in relation to recruiting suitably qualified and experienced social workers is being considered at a GM level together with concerns regarding the Reed contract.

It is vital that the assignments are filled to ensure the service meets its statutory requirements in order to keep children safe and that the service successfully delivers the Ofsted Improvement plan. There is on average a need for 32 agency workers which has resulted in a need to go off framework and 17 agency workers have been sourced in this way which has resulted in higher costs. The service is monitoring this situation very closely and ending assignments as soon as permanent workers have commenced in post.

2.1.5 The Families Matter team is now in place, and the new Family Practitioners are case managing a number of low level child in need cases under the supervision of a qualified Social Worker. This model will provide a career pathway for social care staff to develop and progress to become qualified. It will also help reduce the workloads of Social Workers by taking open low level Child in Need cases and preventing cases escalating to child protection cases. The team are currently holding a caseload of 69.

2.1.6 We still have in place 1.5 FTE Social Work Development Officers to support staff with their professional development as this is a crucial aspect of looking after our Social Workers. In particular, they are providing additional support for newly qualified Social Workers undergoing the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment and for children's Social Workers and practice supervisors who have volunteered for the National Assessment and Accreditation system. This pathway has also been added as an option for staff under-going career progression from social worker (level 2) to Experienced Social Worker (Level 3).

2.1.7 The new Corporate Director for Children's Services is taking a holistic view of Social Worker resourcing so we can take actions to improve recruitment and retention.

## 2.2 Adult Services

2.2.1 In Q1 2020/21, spend in Adult Services totalled £124,800 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020 there were a total of 13 active assignments across the Directorate. 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.

- 2.2.2 This is a significant decrease as compared with Q1 2019/20 which was £226,422. This is likely in part to be due to some services having moved to Children's Services, which has seen an increase in spend. Spend has however increased as compared with the previous quarter (Q4, 2019/20) which was £174,246.
- 2.2.3 76% of the spend was on interim qualified Social Worker roles. The majority of the remainder of the spend is on Care Assistants at 17%. The spend on Care Assistants in Ascot House reduced from £38k in quarter 4 to £21k in quarter 1, which is despite the COVID-19 situation putting pressure on the service. The internal Resourcing Hub that was established supported and additional casuals were recruited to avoid over reliance on agency.
- 2.2.4 The picture of no spend on agency Support Workers continued in this quarter. This was further to the review in Supported Living which saw better establishment of roles and the use of casuals to support where required.
- 2.2.5 In order to improve the recruitment and retention of Social Workers the Service has the Trafford Academy. This will provide a mechanism for a rolling recruitment programme. The Academy has developed an engagement programme with schools and colleges to promote and inspire adult social care as a rewarding career choice. An Insight Event was held at Trafford Town Hall In March 2020 attended by 6 secondary schools across Trafford and Greater Manchester, engaging in interactive sessions facilitated by adult social care workers. A live online Q+A session was also held with students from a school. This gave them the opportunity to submit questions to Adult Social Care workers about their roles and their experience of working during the Covid19 pandemic.
- 2.2.6 Trafford continues to offer the Social Worker apprenticeship degree. This route enables Trafford to grow our own Social Workers.

## 2.4 Governance and Community Strategy

- 2.4.1 In Q1 2020/21, the total agency spend in Governance and Community Strategy equated to £107,654 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there were 7 active assignments. Agency spend in this Directorate is due to the need to bring in specialist skills.

2.4.2 The spend has over double as compared to Q1 2019/20 which was £46,166. When compared to, Q4 2019/20 it has increased from the figure of £73,396.

2.4.3 Around 80% of the spend was to bring in legal support at a very difficult time for the Council. This is an area that is continually difficult to resource and different options are being considered. The remainder of the spend was on Information Governance expertise.

## 2.5 Finance and Systems

2.5.1 In Q1 20/21, the total agency spend in Finance and Systems equated to £5,450 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there was 1 active assignment. Agency spend in this Directorate is due to the need to bring in professional and specialist skills.

2.5.2 The spend has reduced by nearly half as compared with Q1 2019/20 which was £10,486. There has also been a significant reduction as compared to the previous period, Q4 2019/20 which was £48,034.

2.5.3 The spend was for a Procurement specialist for STaR.

## 2.6 People

2.6.1 In Q1 2020/21, the total agency spend in People equated to £9,710 and as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there were no active assignments. Agency spend in this Directorate is due to the need to bring in professional and specialist skills.

2.6.2 The spend has increased as compared with Q1 2019/20 as there was no spend in this period. It has nearly doubled as compared to the previous period, Q4 2019/20 which was £5,835.

2.6.3 The spend was to bring in personal assistant skills at a critical time for the leadership of the Council.

## 2.7 Place

2.7.1 In Q1 20/21 there was no spend on agency in Place and there were no active assignments at the end of the quarter.

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

3.1 The total agency spend in Q1 2020/21 was £891,664. This is an decrease of £20k on the previous period, Q4 2018/19 when spend was £911,109. Give the pressures of the pandemic it is good to see the position hasn't deteriorated. However the spend is at a much higher level than the corresponding period last year when it was £499,897 for Q1 2019/20. Around 76% of the total spend is on social workers. Most notably, agency spend has continued to increase in Children's Services which is still experiencing considerable issues

with recruiting and retaining social workers. Work is ongoing to try to mitigate this and move to a more stable resourcing position. It is really positive that there has been no or minimal agency spend in Place, People and Finance and Systems.

#### 4. Consultant Spend

4.1 The total spend in Q1 2020/21 was £21,495. The spend breaks down as follows.

Children and Families	Adult Services	Governance and Community Strategy	Finance and Systems	People	Place
£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£21,495

4.2 The spend was around a quarter of the level of Q4 2019/20 which was £97,937 and it was also a decrease on Q1 in 2019/20 which was £47,380.

4.3 There was only consultant used in the Place directorate.

#### 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 Q1 - 2020/2021**

Directorates	Job Title	Number of Active Assignments	Total Cost
Children's Services	Childcare Worker	3	£1,117.84
	Early Help Intervention Worker	1	£8,821.18
	Independent Reviewing Officer	1	£14,165.56
	Personal Advisor	1	£8,103.83
	Project Support Officer	1	£7,021.64
	Residential Childcare Officer	18	£18,978.77
	Senior Business Support Officer	1	£6,972.48
	Service Manager	1	£17,946.16
	Social Worker Level 2	2	£24,199.37
	Social Worker Level 3	30	£421,687.97
	Social Worker level 3a	1	£17,663.50
	Team Leader	2	£35,081.98
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	1	£31,577.77
	Strategic Lead - Quality and Improvement	1	£30,712.17
Adult Services	Care Assistant - Residential Homes & Day Centres	8	£21,167.61
	Cook Manager	2	£423.30
	Customer Engagement Support Officer	1	£7,708.43
	Social Worker Level 3	7	£68,993.90
	Social Worker level 3a	3	£26,507.02
Finance & Systems	Procurement Officer	1	£5,450
Governance & Community Strategy	Information Governance Officer (Corporate)	2	£21,499.476
	Legal Executive	1	£3,113.38

	Litigation Solicitor - Corporate & Commercial	2	£40,915.29
	Solicitor	4	£42,125.61
People	Senior Personal Assistant	1	£9,710.11
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>£891,664</b>



Appendix 2

**Trafford Council Agency Tenure by Directorate**

Breakdown by Directorate showing average tenure of active assignments as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Directorate	Job Title	Average Tenure	No. of active assignments
Children's Services	Early Help Intervention Worker	6 months 28 days	1
	Independent Reviewing Officer	2 months 25 days	1
	Personal Advisor	6 months 22 days	1
	Project Support Officer	5 months 24 days	1
	Residential Childcare Officer	3 months 9 days	11
	Service Manager	6 months 28 days	1
	Social Worker Level 2	6 months 15 days	1
	Social Worker Level 3	7 months 5 days	29
	Social Worker Level 3a	8 months 2 days	1
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	8 months 23 days	1
	Team Leader	7 months 13 days	2
Adult Services	Care Assistant - Residential Homes & Day Centres*	1 year 1 month 9 days	5
	Customer Engagement Support Officer	4 months 6 days	1
	Social Worker Level 3	6 months 22 days	6
	Social Worker level 3a	8 months 16 days	1
Governance & Community Strategy	Information Governance Officer	3 months 17 days	2
	Litigation Solicitor - Corporate & Commercial	4 months 20 days	2
	Solicitor	7 months 13 days	3

Finance & Systems	Procurement Officer	7 months 31 days	1
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\*These agency staff are used akin to a bank, so they have an assignment start and end date however they aren't working continuously, instead on an ad hoc basis.

**TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**Report to:** Employment Committee  
**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
**Report for:** Employment Committee  
**Report of:** Sara Saleh, Corporate Director of Strategy and Resources

**Report Title**

**Additions to the unsocial allowances payments structure**

**Summary**

The report is a proposal to introduce 2 new unsocial hours allowances at 1% and 2%. This is in response the need for more flexibility in our unsocial hours allowances for those undertaking a lower level of commitment than the current offer allows for.

**Recommendations**

The recommendation is to implement an additional 2 unsocial hours allowances (1% and 2% payments) to support weekend working. Employment Committee are asked to note and agree the recommendations.

**Contact person for access to background papers and further information:**

Name: Angela Beadsworth

Extension: 1291

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	This report aligns with the council’s Corporate Priorities in respect to ‘Thriving places’.
Financial	Maintains stability as at current position.
Legal Implications:	Compliant with legislation, including equal pay principles.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Not applicable
Sustainability Implications	Not applicable
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	Not applicable
Risk Management Implications	Not applicable
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Not applicable
Health and Safety Implications	Not applicable

**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Within Greater Manchester Mental Health (GMMH) there is a need for cover at weekends to undertake duties supporting patients in a red zone (ie high risk and deteriorating). The cover at weekends was initially undertaken by NHS staff only, however it was deemed fairer that since they work together with Trafford Council Social Workers and Support Workers, they should also cover some of the weekends over the year.
- 1.2 A consultation process was commenced with staff to change their working pattern in 2016. Through discussions with ACAS it was agreed in 2017 that they would be paid a payment via a COT 3 agreement for weekends and Bank Holidays. This amount related to 1% of basic pay for Social Workers and 2% for Support Workers, calculated as a one off compensation payment each year.
- 1.3 The annual compensation payments have continued but we need a permanent solution to replace this. In deciding the best option, we also have to consider the fact that this group of staff are working alongside colleagues employed by the NHS on different terms and conditions, to ensure there is some parity and it feels fair. This service provision needs to continue and so it is vital that we can agree payments that reflect the level of commitment. If not and staff are unwilling to cover weekends, it could pose a risk to the service.
- 1.4 An internal review of out of hours allowances was undertaken by HR last year and a report was taken to Employment Committee. Further to looking at our existing allowances framework, benchmarking and considering the future model of health and social care, it was concluded that it was too early to change our framework. This is because we would want to look to review our position on allowance payments in line with different working patterns that may emerge, however at that time, they hadn't yet changed too significantly.
- 1.5 Mental Health Social workers (band 8) were asked to work on a rota basis of no more than 4 extra weekends a year (8 days including bank holidays). They get time back to compensate for these days during the week so still only work their contracted annual hours. The recompense required is for working in unsocial hours. However the level of commitment falls outside of our current unsocial hours allowance policy criteria i.e. it does not meet the criteria for the lowest uplift of 3% of basic pay. This is why the COT3 was put in place for a payment of 1%.
- 1.6 There are also Support Workers (Band 3) who work on a similar basis to cover weekends, who also do not meet the minimum 3% uplift. However, they work more weekends - approximately 8 weekends (16 days including bank holidays). They received a 2% COT3 payment.
- 1.7 This report outlines the proposal to replace the COT3 agreement that has been in place since 2017 with a regular allowance payment.

## **2.0 Proposal**

- 2.1 Our current unsocial hours premia typically vary depending on when the work is carried out, with work undertaken out of normal office working hours, on evenings, nights, weekends or bank holidays. The enhancements vary between a minimum of 3% and a

maximum of 20%, dependant on the level of commitment during unsocial hours (see appendix 1).

- 2.2 Work undertaken on a weekend forms part of contractual working hours, i.e. weekend work is not in addition to contractual hours. staff take a day in lieu during the week if they work at the weekend.
- 2.3 The NHS have a different approach to pay for work during unsocial hours where staff get a percentage uplift for the actual hours worked during the unsocial period. The percentage uplift varies dependant on grade and the unsocial period. It is higher for lower grades and working during more unsocial periods, for example higher on a bank holiday as compared with a Saturday.
- 2.4 Based on the NHS unsocial hours payments approach payments are higher, however as well as being mindful of partnership working with other organisations and pay comparisons, more importantly we need to ensure that their pay is fair internally within the Council.
- 2.5 Our current unsocial hours offer has the lowest percentage uplift as follows:
  - Where **10%** of days shifts are worked at weekends or bank holidays a **3%** uplift is given.
- 2.6 The GMMH Social workers are working 8 days per annum at weekends which equates to about 3% of their annual hours and the Support Workers are working 16 days at weekends which is approximately for 6% of their annual hours. Therefore it is proposed that we add 1% and 2% to the current unsocial hours allowances provision in recognition of the need to pay a consistent allowance.
- 2.7 The proposed two new unsocial hours allowances at 1% and 2% are as follows:
  - Where **3%** of day shifts are worked at weekends or bank holidays a **1%** uplift is given.
  - Where **6%** of days shifts are worked at weekends or bank holidays a **2%** uplift is given.
- 2.8 As per our current policy, these new allowances will be paid monthly and will only be paid to Council staff working on a rota that incorporates weekends and/or bank holidays. i.e. any staff working ad hoc at weekends/bank holidays will not be able to receive this allowance.
- 2.9 These new allowances will be in line with the pay they received under the COT3, however will mean moving from an annual payment to a monthly payment. The level of commitment will be recompensed fairly in line with the commitments of staff in other services.
- 2.10 Our Trade Union colleagues have been consulted on this proposal and are in agreement with the approach and have advised that they will be supportive when we start to talk to staff further.

### **3.0 Implementation**

- 3.1 Presuming Employment Committee agree, the unsocial hours framework will be amended to incorporate the new percentage uplifts and this will be communicated.
- 3.2 HR will support the consultation process with the management of the service ensuring Trade Union colleagues are involved.
- 3.3 Once in place, the GMMH managers will need to produce robust rotas as part of the consultation, which once in place will be monitored for the relevant number of weekends and bank holidays carried out to ensure staff are working them in line with the level of commitment.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 Employment Committee is recommended to note and agree the content of this report and the introduction of two new allowance based on service need.

## Appendix 1

### Rota pattern - allowances for working evening, weekend and/or nights

If you work unsocial hours on a rota basis then there are six levels of unsocial hours allowance payments. The criteria for each level are detailed in the table below.

Level	Criteria – Rota Pattern	% allowance on basic pay
1	a) 10 % of day shifts worked at weekends/bank holidays <b>OR</b> b) 100% day shifts worked includes an element of evening work (defined as working hours between 8pm and 10 pm)	3%
2	a) 10 % of day shifts worked at weekends/bank holidays AND 100% shifts worked includes an element of evening work (defined as working hours between 8pm and 10 pm) <b>OR</b> b) 20 % of day shifts worked weekends/bank holidays	6%
3	20 % of day shifts worked at weekends/bank holidays AND 100% day shifts worked includes an element of evening work (defined as working hours between 8pm and 10 pm)	9%
4	More than 20% hours worked ad hoc/flexibly including weekends and evenings and nights	10%
5	a) 50% shifts worked days, 50% shifts worked nights, including weekends and bank holidays <b>OR</b> b) Hours worked 100% at night, excluding weekends <b>OR</b> c) More than 50% of time at worked at weekends	14%
6	a) Hours worked 100% at night, including weekends <b>OR</b> b) Hours worked 100% across evenings, weekends and nights including at least 50% time at night	20%

### Occasional working at evenings or weekends

If you occasionally work unsocial hours but you do not work them on a set rota pattern then:

For jobs up to and including spinal column point 28, overtime will be paid for unsocial hours worked

OR

For jobs above spinal column point 28 Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) will be given for unsocial hours worked.