

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 27 June 2022
Report for: Information
Report of: Angela Beadsworth, Interim Director of Human Resources

Report Title

Agency and Consultant Spend for Period 1st April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Summary

This report details the annual spend for the Council on agency workers and on consultants who were engaged over that period. Spend is broken down by quarter and by Directorate with an overview of the reasons agency and consultants were 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 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 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 4 – 2021/2022.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of assignments that were still active on 31 March 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. A small number of roles in Adult's have been funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) Contain Grant, along with an Interim COVID Programme Director engaged by Strategy & Resources.

2. Summary Agency Spend Position

- 2.1 The total agency spend in 2021/2022 was £6,191,468.70 (includes REED Agency: £4,419,326.15 and the new Social Worker Agency Framework: £1,772,142.55). This is a significant increase of 43.48%, equating to an increase of £1,876,381.70 compared to the previous year's total of £4,315,087. The position for the 4 most recent years can be seen in the table below, which shows increases year on year.

2018/19 Total	2019/20 Total	2020/21 Total	2021/2020 Total
£2,081,312	£2,717,933	£4,315,087	£6,191,468.70

2.2 There have been varying patterns of spend within directorates over the 12 months period 2021/2022. Please see the table below which details spend each quarter by directorate.

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Adults	£325,586.20	£319,624.14	£317,378.61	£281,767.04	£1,244,355.99
Children's	£812,278.89	£1,076,569.27	£1,286,293.68	£1,130,533.89	£4,305,675.73
F&S	0	0	£5,551.61	£9,455.70	£15,007.31
G&CS	£66,883.91	£82,366.36	£107,036.65	£122,450.31	£378,737.23
Place	£42,545.05	£30,406.57	£28,829.42	£27,661.77	£129,442.81
S&R	£59,566.31	£21,602.85	£15,802.38	£21,278.09	£118,249.63
Total	£1,306,860.36	£1,530,569.19	£1,760,892.35	£1,593,146.80	£6,191,468.70

2.3 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.

Directorate	2020/2021	2021/2022	% Increase (+)/Decrease (-)
Adults	£714,607	£1,244,355.99	74.13% (+)
Children's	£3,056,257	£4,305,675.73	40.88% (+)
F&S	£14,878	£15,007.31	0.87% (+)
G&CS	£392,796	£378,737.23	3.58% (-)
Place	£33,564	£129,442.81	285.7% (+)
S&R	£102,985	£118,249.63	14.82% (+)
Total	£4,315,087	£6,191,468.70	43.48% (+)

3. Directorate Overview

3.1 Children's Services

3.1.1 The total agency spend for Children's in 2021/2022 was £4,305,675.73 (includes REED: £2,611,740.96 and the Social Worker Agency Framework (SWAF): £1,693,934.77).

3.1.2 This is a significant increase when compared to total spend in 2020/2021 which was £3,056,257 – spend in 2021/2022 increased by 40.88% (£1,249,419.73).

3.1.3 The spend is predominantly on all qualified social worker roles which was £3,479,228.89. This is an increase of £840,923.12 in spend on all qualified social workers when compared to 2020/2021 which was £2,638,365.77. The largest spend was on Level 3 Social Workers which was £2,626,790.96 (61.01%). Although spend on Level 3 Social Workers has increased by

£753,058.16 when compared to 2020/2021, percentage spend is very similar in 2020/2021 which was £1,873,732.8 (61.31%). The next largest spend in 2021/2022 was on Team Leaders which was £584,983.96 (13.59%), Strategic Lead Front Door & Social Care at £261,030.22 (6.06%), Service Manager at £249,643.29 (5.8%) and Strategic Lead Quality & Improvement at £157,978.45 (3.67%).

- 3.1.4 We still have a reliance on agency workers from other providers which we engaged via the Councils new 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. The spend in Children's via the SWAF in 2021/2022 was £1,693,934.77, which is an increase when compared to spend via SWAF in 2020/2021 which was £1,517,818.31. The largest spend via SWAF was spent on Level 3 Social Workers which was £1,466,614.66 (86.58%). The second largest spend via the SWAF was Team Leader which was £166,666.12 (9.84%). The service will continue to monitor this situation and ending assignments as soon as permanent workers have commenced in post.
- 3.1.5 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.
- 3.1.6 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 a number 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.

- 3.1.7 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 will be 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.
- 3.1.8 Recently there have been calls (ADCS, Joint Letter, 27 April 2022) 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.
- 3.1.9 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 undergoing the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE).
- 3.1.10 We have a successful social worker apprenticeship programme and are currently planning the recruitment of our fourth cohort of 6 staff to support on the 30 months degree programme to start in September 2022.
- 3.1.11 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 are currently on their first placement in adult services. They will start their final 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 2023. For several years we have supported two Frontline units, this is a 12 month post graduate route into Children's social care.

3.2 Adult Services

- 3.2.1 The total agency spend for Adults in 2021/2022 was £1,244,355.99 (includes REED: £1,166,148.21 and the Social Worker Agency Framework (SWAF): £78,207.78).

- 3.2.2 Although spend has reduced over each quarter in 2021/2022 (by 13.46% between Q1 and Q4 which equates to a reduction of £43,819.16), total spend in 2021/2022 has increased by 74.13% (£529,748.99) when compared to total spend in 2020/2021 (£714,607).
- 3.2.3 The majority of spend was on all qualified social workers which was £707,344.47 (56.84%). The largest spend was on Level 3 Qualified Social Workers which was £670,610.7 (53.89%), followed by Support Workers at £358,233.63 (28.79%), Team Leaders at £152,945.99 (12.3%) and Service Manager at £36,733.77. £112,932.91 (9.8%) of the agency spend was funded from the COMF Contain Grant to engage additional temporary resources during the pandemic to support hospital discharges. The internal Resourcing service have been supporting Supported Living and Ascot House to recruit Support Workers via several social media campaigns which has helped reduce the reliance on agency workers. Spend on Support Workers has reduced over each quarter in 2021/2022. In Q4 2021/2022 the agency spend on Support Workers has reduced by 61.3% (£42,657.57) compared to Q1 2021/2022 (£110,223.16). Spend on Team Leaders has also reduced from £51,062.89 in Q1 to £22,821.55 in Q4.
- 3.2.4 Adults still have a reliance on agency workers from other providers which we also engaged via the Councils new 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. Adults spend via SWAF in Q4 2021/2022 is £78,207.78 which has increased when compared with 2020/2021 which was £3739.05. The agency spend via SWAF for 2021/2022 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.
- 3.2.5 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.
- 3.2.6 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 but will increase to 5 in September 2022 and 6 in September 2023. Trafford Learning Academy is now a school enterprise advisor for Altrincham College and Flixton Girls School.

- 3.2.7 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.
- 3.2.8 The Adults Workforce Development Group continues to assist and oversee workforce development across Adults Directorate and will align closely with the other DASS and Trafford Strategic Safeguarding Partnership sub-boards to enable shared working wherever there is shared priorities.
- 3.2.9 There is a paper on this committee that sets 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, development opportunities and incentives, and bespoke recruitment campaigns.
- 3.2.10 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 a GM funded post is being recruited to support.
- 3.2.11 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.
- 3.2.12 Funding has been secured from GM Health and Social Care partnership for a school leaver apprenticeship pilot, offering a level 2 Social Care apprenticeship qualification whilst working at Ascot House.

3.3 Finance & Systems

- 3.3.1 Total agency spend for Finance & Systems in 2021/2022 was £15,007.31 which is a slight increase of 0.87% when compared to spend in 2020/2021 which was £14,878.
- 3.3.2 There was no agency spend in the first 2 quarters of 2021/2022. The service engaged an additional agency worker in Q4 to support the roll out of Windows

365 whilst the recruitment was underway to recruit several resources at Band 2 on a casual basis.

3.4 Governance & Community Strategy

- 3.4.1 The total agency spend in 2021/22 was £378,737.23 which is a slight decrease of 3.58% when compared to 2020/2021.
- 3.4.2 There was a small amount of spend on Procurement roles as this service moved under this directorate during 2020/2021 which was £23,636.14. The largest amount of spend was on legal roles which was £344,228.36 (90.89%) which has increased when compared to 2020/2021 at 78% of the total directorate spend. The remaining spend was on an Information Governance Officer at £10,823.03.
- 3.4.3 There has been a continued difficulty with 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 underway to identify a solution to the recruitment and retention of these staff, which 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.

3.5 Place

- 3.5.1 The total agency spend for Place was £129,442.82 which has significantly increased when compared to 2020/2021 which was £33.564, although spend has reduced over each quarter in 2021/2022.
- 3.5.2 The largest spend was on Head of Regulatory Services which was £35,891.87 to provide cover for the postholder who was seconded to a role to support COVID related engagement activity. The secondment was funded from the COMF Contain Grant. The second largest spend was on Building Control Officer (£22,530.22) due to the difficulties recruiting to this role, followed by Tenancy Support Officer at £17,365.06, Sustainability & Climate Change Officer (£16,648.98), Inclusive Economy & Communities Manager which has now been recruited to on a permanent basis, Housing Options Officer (£11,292.76) which is also funded from COMF Contain Grant, Skills Outreach Officer (£4,622.70) which was funded by GMCA and the remaining spend on Business Support Officer and ESOL Assessors to provide assessments to people arriving from Hong Kong.

3.6 Strategy and Resources

3.6.1 The total spend in Strategy & Resourcing in 2021/2022 was £118,249.63 which is a slight increase of 14.82% when compared to spend in 2020/2021 (£102,985), although spend reduced over Q1, Q2 and Q3 in 2021/2022.

3.6.2 The largest spend was on a HR Consultant engaged over the 12 months which was £54,320.41 (45.94%), followed by Head of Shared Service at £32,864.29 however, this post was recruited to in Q2 on a fixed term basis. The remaining spend was on a Pensions Specialist which was £12,508.70, Application Support Officer (£9,841.06) in the Performance Team which was moved under this directorate during 2020/2021, HR Business Partner (£5,470.25) and Pensions Support Officer (£3,244.92).

4. Annual Agency Spend across GM

The table (1) below highlights the annual agency spend 2021/2022 with REED, our umbrella agency provider. Table (2) details the annual spend 2021/2022 and out of the 10 local authority neighbours in GMCA and GMP that use REED, we are the 5th lowest spend authority.

Table (1)

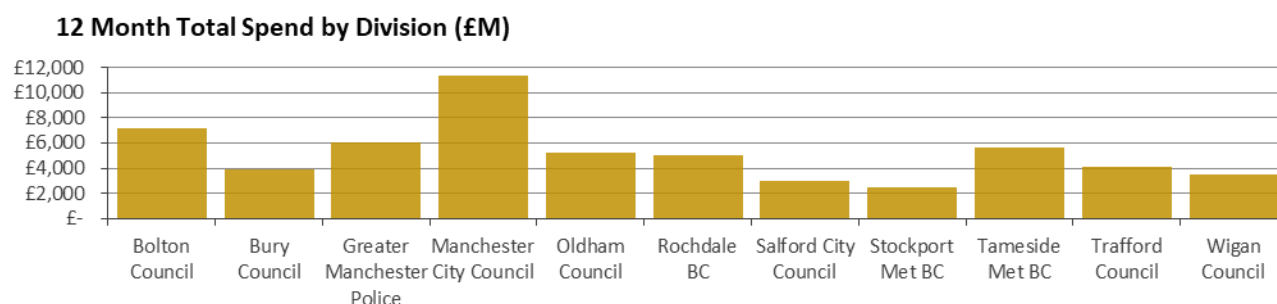


Table (2)

Organisation	Annual Spend 2021/2022	Spend by Division (1 = Lowest)
Bolton	7,555,760	10
Bury	4,261,747	4
MCC	11,347,519	11
Oldham	5,010,978	6
Rochdale	5,112,926	7
Salford	2,886,350	2
Stockport	2,837,392	1
Tameside	5,632,159	8
Trafford	4,406,628	5
Wigan	3,406,546	3
GMP	6,776,070	9

5. Consultant Spend

5.1 The total spend in 2021/2022 was £519,614.45 including £205,700 spend in Strategy and Resources for COVID Programme and £14,000 spend in Place funded via the COMF Contain Grant. The table below details consultancy spend each quarter across the Directorates. The spend in some quarters has increased compared to previous spend originally reported due to either late invoice payments or delays in invoices being sent in.

Directorate	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Children's	£29,166.76	£35,142.56	£36,917.88	£0.00	£101,227.20
Adults	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£28,531.25	£28,531.25
F&S	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
G&CS	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Place	£42,871.00	£50,063.00	£40,809.00	£36,413.00	£170,156.00
S&R	£51,850.00	£65,850.00	£49,300.00	£52,700.00	£219,700.00
Total	£123,887.76	£151,055.56	£127,026.88	£117,644.25	£519,614.45

5.2 Consultancy spend has increased slightly when compared to 2020/2021 spend which was £517,407. The table below details the total spend across each quarter for 2020/2021.

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
£79,150	£113,887	£118,179	£203,191	£514,407

5.3 There were 11 consultants engaged over 2021/2022 as follows:

- Adults x 1
- Children's x 4
- Place x 4 (1 x funded from the COMF Contain Grant)
- Strategy & Resources x 2 (1 x funded from the COMF Contain Grant)

5.4 Spend over 2021/2022 related to the following:

- Adults: – Interim Head of Children's Integrated Commissioning.
- Children's: – Interim Strategic Commissioning Lead for Health & Children's Social Care - to backfill some of the responsibilities of the Head of Commissioning who was seconded to work on COVID related activity.
- Children's: - 2 associates in Education Psychology.
- Children's: - Interim School Leader for Early Help.

- Place: Development Team: Interim Director of Development to strategically lead and develop Trafford's development programme
- Place - One Trafford Partnership x 2 - Interim Consultant to provide contract management support and development of Electric Vehicle specification, and Interim Consultant: strategic investments.
- Place: Inclusive Economies Team: Interim Consultant to support the Trafford Inclusive Economy Recovery Plan - focussing on business engagement and support, employability, and town centre regeneration.
- Strategy & Resources: Interim Programme Director to Lead on the establishment and strategic development of the COVID 19 response and recovery programme and subsequent management, delivery, and evaluation.
- Strategy & Resourcing: Performance Team – Interim Consultant to support the Liquid Logic (LCS) and Early Help Module (EHM) system development.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The HR service will continue to facilitate targeted and bespoke interventions to support managers to pro-actively manage temporary resourcing needs to continue to ensure that agency and consultancy demand is proportionate and appropriate.
- 6.2 It has been another extremely challenging year for the Council, responding to COVID and with emerging staffing pressures in front line services to ensure that we are discharging our statutory duties and keeping our citizen's safe with the services they require.
- 6.3 Agency and consultant spend will continue to be monitored on a regular basis and reports will be presented to Employment Committee, for information.
- 6.4 Employment Committee is recommended to note the content of this report.

Appendix 1

Trafford Council Agency Spend By Directorate Q4 - 2021/2022

Directorates	Job Title	Number of Active Assignments	Total Cost
Children's Services	Business Support Officer Level 3	2	£7,642.25
	Childcare Worker	1	£1,783.06
	Early Help Intervention Worker	1	£8,358.50
	Head of Service	2	£36,263.6
	Independent Reviewing Officer	1	£19,553.72
	Practice Manager	1	£8,195.12
	Residential Childcare Officer	8	£7,474.18
	Senior Business Support Officer	1	£6,625.52
	Service Manager	4	£79,031.00
	Social Worker Level 3	44	£592,675.21
	Social Worker Level 3a	9	£125,279.78
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	2	£61,500.66
	Strategic Lead - Quality and Improvement	1	£35,464.55
	Support Worker	1	£9,160.92
	Team Leader	8	£130,310.14
	Waking Night RCCO	1	£1,215.68
	Total	87	£1,130,533.89
Adults	Contact Tracing Caseworker (paid from Contain grant)	1	£3,288.91
	Cook Manager	3	£888.39
	Freedom of Information Support Officer	2	£2,977.51
	Service Manager	1	£27,156.04
	Social Care Team Leader	1	£22,821.55
	Social Worker Level 3	20	£181,977.07
	Support Worker	29	£42,657.57
	Total	57	£281,767.04

Finance & Systems	Windows 10 Deployment Lead	2	£9,455.70
	Total	2	£9,455.70
Governance & Community Strategy	Litigation Solicitor	2	£31,251.05
	Procurement Officer	1	£8,243.16
	Solicitor	6	£82,956.10
	Total	9	£122,450.31
Place	Building Control Officer	1	£10,368.38
	ESOL Assessor	2	£1,938.28
	Housing Options Officer	1	£6,546.38
	Tenancy Support Officer	1	£8,808.73
	Total	5	£27,661.77
Strategy and Resources	Applications Support Officer	1	£5,568.78
	HR Consultant	1	£12,464.39
	Pension Support Officer	1	£3,244.92
	Total	3	£21,278.09
Grand Total		163	£1,593,146.80

Appendix 2

Trafford Council Agency Tenure by Directorate

Breakdown by Directorate showing active assignments as at 31 March 2022

Directorate	Job Title	No. of active assignments
Children's	Business Support Officer Level 3	2
	Early Help Intervention Worker	1
	Head of Service	2
	Independent Reviewing Officer	1
	Residential Childcare Worker	4
	Practice Manager	1
	Senior Business Support Officer	1
	Service Manager	4
	Social Worker Level 3	42
	Social Worker Level 3a	7
	Strategic Lead for Front Door & Children's Social Care	2
	Strategic Lead for Quality & Improvement	1
	Support Worker	1
	Team Manager	6
Total	75	
Adult Services	Freedom of Information Support Officer	1
	Service Manager	1
	Social Care Team Leader	1
	Social Worker Level 3	16
	Support Worker	29
	Total	48
Finance & Systems	Windows 10 Deployment Lead	1
	Total	1

Governance & Community Strategy	Litigation Solicitor	2
	Solicitor	6
	Total	8
Place	ESOL Assessor	2
	Housing Options Officer	1
	Tenancy Support Officer	1
	Total	4
Strategy & Resources	Applications Support Officer	1
	HR Consultant	1
	Total	2
	Overall Total	138