

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 26th June 2023
Report for: Information
Report of: Director of Human Resources

Report Title

Agency and Consultant Spend for Q4 Period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023

Summary

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

Recommendations

That the content of this report is noted.

Relationship to Corporate Priorities	This report supports the outcomes of our corporate priorities.
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: Cal Aston, Resourcing Consultant

1. Background

- 1.1 A robust vacancy clearance process is in place to ensure that posts are only filled where there is a compelling case to do so. Vacancies are subject to approval by the relevant Corporate Director, with the Director of HR and Director of Finance overseeing a 4 week vacancy pause in place for some roles (excluding Health and Social Care) to support budget pressures. We ensure a robust recruitment process is followed and primarily consider employees on notice from redundancy (redeployees), “at risk” staff (those employees where there is a real risk of redundancy) and apprentices before we openly advertise roles.
- 1.2 It is recognised, however, that there will be circumstances whereby there are immediate resourcing needs (predominantly short term in nature) for example that are time limited, where 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 agency spend breakdown for Quarter 4 - 2022/2023.
- 1.4 Agency costs for this quarter have been met from within existing staffing budgets to support services whilst they have been restructuring, reshaping and recruiting to vacant posts and meeting our statutory obligations on a day-to-day basis.

Directorate Overview

2.1 Children’s Services

- 2.1.1 In Q4 2022/2023 agency spend in Children’s Services totalled £967,933.31. This includes spend via REED Agency, totalling £717,432.12 and the Social Worker Agency Framework (SWAF), totalling £250,501.19. During Q4 there were 77 active assignments.
- 2.1.2 Agency spend in Q4 has decreased by £108,912.63 compared with Q3 (£1,076,845.94).
- 2.1.3 The largest proportion of the Q4 2022/23 agency spend is on interim qualified Level 3 Social Worker roles totalling £531,266.62 (£339,351.71 with Reed and £191,914.91 with SWAF).

- 2.1.4 We continue to rely on the use of agency workers from other providers which we engaged via the Councils Social Worker Agency Framework (SWAF) in addition to Reed, our umbrella agency. This is because we haven't been able to meet our staffing requirements through Reed alone. Having the SWAF has assisted in managing the gaps and created some flexibility whilst still operating in a framework. The total Children's spend via SWAF in Q4 2022/23 was £250,501.19. This spend has remained static compared to in Q3 (the spend in Q3 was £256,605.01). We have continued to see a level of stability in agency staffing complimented by a relentless focus on permanent recruitment.
- 2.1.5 The majority of agency spend is due to the service discharging its statutory responsibilities for providing social work and social care services for vulnerable children. The interim staffing need is primarily required to cover staffing resource gaps, created where there is cover requirement for sickness, maternity leave or secondment opportunities. Cover is critical to ensure that service users receive the appropriate level of care and support.
- 2.1.6 There are varying reasons for high agency spend which, in part, are linked to the national challenges around recruiting and retaining experienced front line social workers. Work is already underway to help combat some of the challenges and to support a more stable workforce e.g.: Investing in our People Steering Group. HR are also continuing to work closely with the Practice Improvement and Learning Service and continuing to support the service in several of areas: -
- Service redesign and work is progressing on the recruitment and retention strategy required in the service.
 - working with the service in support of their training programme with Strengthening Practice and sharing EPIC Manager programme content, to ensure that there is a commonality of language and approach.
 - Attending their EPIC Leadership Masterclasses the first of which was on resilience and supporting leaders and managers to put the learning into practice with themselves and their teams.
 - Continue to support Children's Leadership forums and will be looking further at how psychological safety correlates to the b-Heard survey results and influence the service and team action plans.
- 2.1.7 HR are continuing to work in partnership with the Strategic Lead - Practice and Improvement and Learning, 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. Individual conversations are held with our current agency workers to share information about the benefits of working at Trafford on a permanent contract. This will aid Trafford to understand current market / labour trends and thinking. Developing target recruitment to key areas of the service is also underway.

- 2.1.8 Regional meetings facilitated by North West Employers have taken place bringing colleagues together to consider the ongoing challenges of recruitment and retention across the social care workforce at a national, regional, and local level. We will be focussing on the need for national early career requirements, standardised pay and conditions, alongside a national communications strategy. GM we are working towards a NW pledge (that aligns to the London Pledge). This involves the introduction of a set of national rules on the engagement of agency social work resource in local authority children's social care including the introduction of national price caps on what local authorities may pay per hour for an agency social worker. GM are aiming for a September launch.
- 2.1.9 ASYE: The senior learning and development officer supports the Learning and Improvement team with the coordination of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), supported by the Learning and Improvement team in children's services. There are currently 16 NQSWs in Children's Services on the ASYE. This programme involves support and assessment against the Post Qualifying Standards in their first year in practice.
- 2.1.10 Social work students: we have facilitated 10 social work final placements and 2 first year placements this academic year. We have successfully recruited 5 social workers from this cohort so far, with plans to interview the others who are nearing the end of their placements shortly.
- 2.1.11 Greater Manchester Step Up partnership: we are involved with this 15 month post graduate fast track route into children's social work. We are recruiting 3 more Step Up students who will start their programme in January 2024
- 2.1.12 Social worker apprenticeship: We have a successful social worker apprenticeship programme, which involves completing a social work degree in 30 months, through university learning at Man Met, with and extended practice development opportunities within their substantive roles. Two social workers have graduated this year and are now starting their ASYE. Cohort 3 (2021-2024) has 3 staff members, who have started their final year and 4 staff on Cohort 4, successfully completed their first year at the end of March.
- 2.1.13 Career progression: There has been a recent review and new approach to this pathway in children's services. This new approach will be piloted with 2 social workers who will present to a panel in September. This involves band 7 social workers (post ASYE) evidencing their practice against the Experienced Social

Worker level of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for social workers before their progression is confirmed.

2.2 Adult Services

- 2.2.1 In Q4 2022/23 spend in Adult Services totalled £264,330.96 via REED our umbrella agency. In Q4 there were 122 active assignments across the Directorate.
- 2.2.2 This has decreased by £28,774.43 when compared with Q3 2022/23 where the spend was £293,105.39.
- 2.2.3 Please note that overall Reed spend (table 2), includes spend on 1:1 Support in Private Care Homes totalling £189,819.63 which is a commissioning contract for services. This spend is recharged to clients and is not part of the Council staffing budget.
- 2.2.4 The largest spend in Q4 2022/23 was £157,219.71 on interim qualified Social Worker roles. This has decreased when compared to Q3 where the spend was £215,341.21
- 2.2.5 The next biggest spend is on Support Workers at Ascot House and Supported Living in Q4 which totals £92,372.55. Spend has increased when compared to Q3 2022/23 (£55,195.68). The internal Resourcing service continues to support the targeted recruitment of Support Workers via a social media campaigns and attendance at job and career fairs.
- 2.2.6 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](#).
- 2.2.7 The academy provides 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 schools' 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; there are now 6 schools offering the course and will increase to 7 in September 2023. Trafford Learning Academy is now a school enterprise advisor for Altrincham College and Flixton Girls School. The Learning Academy has developed links with Manchester Metropolitan University to promote Trafford ASC career opportunities with Integrated Health and social Care undergraduates.

- 2.2.8 Trafford Learning Academy provides a range of support to aid staff retention, such as confidential 1:1 support around career aspirations or frustrations, Ripfa communities of practice to support workers CPD, group learning support for newly qualified Social Workers, and learning support for apprentices.
- 2.2.9 The Learning Academy is proactively supporting school students with their work experience opportunities in Year 10, identifying schools and social care services by locality, and linking students seeking work experience with local social care providers. A similar offer has been extended to college students who require a year-long placement as an integral part of their health and social care course.
- 2.2.10 There was a recent paper on this committee that set out a response to the challenges faced recruiting to and retaining qualified social workers. The paper sets out options which included increasing the rate of pay by paying a market supplement which has been agreed, development opportunities and incentives, and bespoke recruitment campaigns.
- 2.2.11 We continue to support the directorate with action planning following a staff survey and subsequent establishment of a staff group and action plan. This has involved working with the senior leadership team and staff representatives to make sure that the defined action plan has allocated owners and existing work is populated and communicated to the workforce.
- 2.2.12 HR / OD are now in the process of delivering a six month Leadership programme for the Adults and Wellbeing directorate. The 7 workshop programme has been developed with the Director and Quality Assurance Lead and is aligned to the CQC inspection requirements and leadership framework from Skills for Care and acknowledges the b-Heard survey report responses from 2022. Feedback to date has been really positive with individuals on the programme applying the tools in their work practice. The programme is due to be completed in July with discussions already in place around continuous learning
- 2.2.13 ASYE: The senior learning and development officer coordinates the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE), supported by the workforce development officer in adult services. At the end of March, there were 6 NQSWs in Adult services on the ASYE. This programme involves support and assessment of newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) against the Post Qualifying Standards during their first year in practice.
- 2.2.14 Social work students: Adult services have supported and assessed 6 social work final placements to March. We support these degree students to apply for jobs in the authority, once they are qualified.
- 2.2.15 Social worker degree apprenticeship: We have a successful social worker apprenticeship programme. Two SW apprentices qualified in March and are

taking up social work posts and starting the ASYE. Cohort 3 (2021-2024) has 3 staff members, who are starting their third year and 3 staff member in Cohort 4 have started their second year. This programme involves the employees (social worker apprentices) working in frontline roles in social care, while completing the degree in social work, through university learning at ManMet and extended development opportunities within their substantive roles.

2.2.16 Career progression: This involves social workers attending and passing a university module at Masters level, and preparing a portfolio of practice evidence for a panel. In the portfolio and panel discussion, the social worker evidences their work and development against the Experienced Social Worker level of the Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF) for social workers, before their progression is confirmed.

2.3 Legal and Governance

2.3.1 In Q4 2022/23 the total agency spend in Legal and Governance totalled £158,418.80. Spend has decreased compared to Q3 2022/23 which was £211,069.95.

2.3.2 The largest spend is on solicitors for Q4 22/23 £145,417.97, this was a slight decrease when compared to Q3 22/23 which was £161,255.34. There is 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.

2.3.3 A review is underway to identify a solution to the recruitment and retention of these staff, includes looking at options to develop a pipe-line in-house for example through apprenticeships and the development of career pathways to support succession planning and career progression.

2.4 Finance and Systems

2.4.1 In Q4 2022/23 the total agency spend in Finance and Systems totalled £23,958.16. Spend has increased when compared to Q3 2022/23 which was £8,934.38.

2.4.2 This increase is due to the employment of a Finance Manager to cover long term sickness absence.

2.4.3 The service has also engaged a agency worker to support the roll out of Windows 365.

2.5 Place

2.5.1 In Q4 2022/23 agency spend in Place totalled £4,184.31 and as of 31 March 2023, there were 3 active assignments.

2.5.2 Agency spend has increased slightly compared to spend in Q3 2022/23 which was £2,432.72.

2.5.3 The total spend in Q4 is for ESOL assessor roles are being funded from the Home to Ukraine Funds.

2.6 Strategy and Resources

2.6.1 In Q4 2022/23, the total agency spend in Strategy and Resources totalled £16,857.78 and there were 3 active assignments as at 31 March 2023.

2.6.2 Agency spend has decreased when compared with Q3 2022/23 which was £44,692.64.

2.6.3 The agency spend this quarter has been for a variety of roles (Director of Communications, Application Support Officer and Catering for The Terrace at Trafford Town Hall).

3. **Summary Agency Spend Position**

3.1 The total agency spend in Q4 2022/23 was £1,625,439.95. In the previous period of Q3 2022/23 the spend was £1,714,205.62 – so it has decreased slightly.

3.2 In the corresponding Q4 2021/22 the overall spend was £1,593,146.80. So this figure remains fairly static.

3.3 The majority of agency spend continues to be in Adults and Children's Services, due to ongoing challenges with recruiting and retaining social workers. Work continues to try to mitigate this and move to a more stable resourcing position.

3.4 The majority of the agency spend was through Reed (our umbrella agency) where the spend was £1,375,231.00 with the remaining spend via the Social Worker Agency Framework. Much of pressure continues to be the difficulties recruiting qualified Social Workers.

3.5 We will continue to monitor agency spend and provide reports for visibility.

4. Annual Agency Spend across GM

Table (1): The table below highlights the annual agency spend to March 2023 with REED, our umbrella agency provider across Greater Manchester by Local Authority. 52% of all agency spend with Reed is within the social care sector.

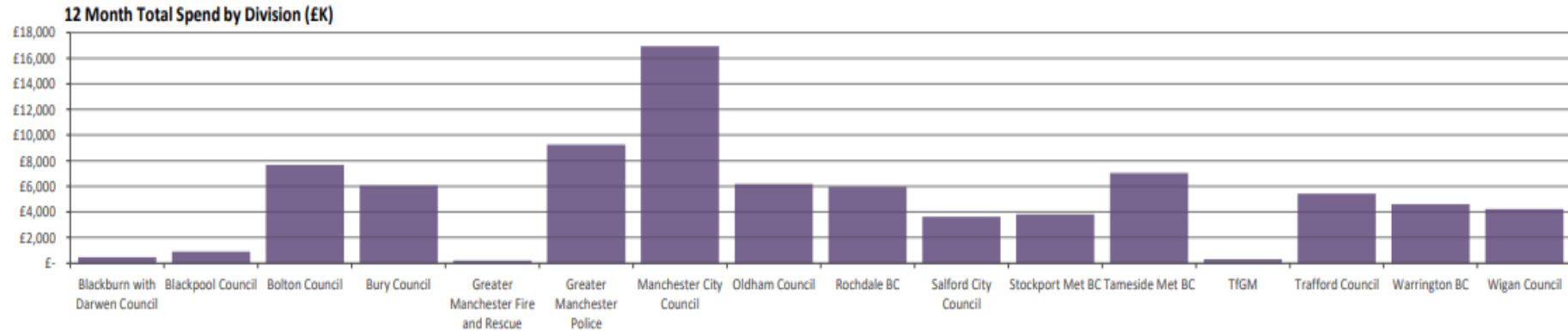


Table (2): Details the annual spend of the 10 local authority neighbours in GM and GMP, GM Fire and Rescue and Transport for Greater Manchester that use REED.

Spend by Client	£
Blackburn with Darwen Council	468,508
Blackpool Council	908,877
Bolton Council	7,662,888
Bury Council	6,075,538
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue	209,824
Greater Manchester Police	9,263,809
Manchester City Council	16,932,213
Oldham Council	6,202,134
Rochdale BC	5,958,476
Salford City Council	3,619,210
Stockport Met BC	3,806,080
Tameside Met BC	7,038,658
TfGM	317,848
Trafford Council	5,415,703
Warrington BC	4,617,030
Wigan Council	4,217,233
Total	82,714,029

		Total / Average	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23
Spend by Client	Blackburn with Darwen Council	£ 468,508	£ 34,681	£ 27,448	£ 36,078	£ 31,363	£ 29,925	£ 46,919	£ 35,511	£ 27,789	£ 35,389	£ 34,082	£ 56,223	£ 73,103
	Blackpool Council	£ 908,877	£ 76,026	£ 78,687	£ 97,268	£ 62,685	£ 66,451	£ 88,364	£ 79,822	£ 70,514	£ 77,078	£ 46,076	£ 70,060	£ 95,847
	Bolton Council	£ 7,662,888	£ 572,355	£ 596,761	£ 739,577	£ 610,338	£ 545,449	£ 698,427	£ 602,992	£ 588,390	£ 721,919	£ 538,969	£ 608,496	£ 839,216
	Bury Council	£ 6,075,538	£ 399,366	£ 409,529	£ 477,202	£ 362,790	£ 354,067	£ 457,433	£ 443,926	£ 555,619	£ 699,831	£ 511,670	£ 598,393	£ 805,710
	Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue	£ 209,824	£ 16,270	£ 17,087	£ 16,566	£ 13,133	£ 16,508	£ 23,280	£ 21,676	£ 9,586	£ 25,165	£ 14,717	£ 14,456	£ 21,379
	Greater Manchester Police	£ 9,263,809	£ 567,814	£ 631,699	£ 772,808	£ 602,708	£ 662,239	£ 822,410	£ 691,374	£ 725,193	£ 991,870	£ 752,582	£ 918,166	£ 1,124,948
	Manchester City Council	£ 16,932,213	£ 953,670	£ 972,998	£ 1,348,388	£ 1,156,387	£ 1,249,938	£ 1,652,329	£ 1,382,100	£ 1,369,673	£ 1,764,941	£ 1,392,354	£ 1,534,868	£ 2,154,567
	Oldham Council	£ 6,202,134	£ 354,657	£ 412,088	£ 473,525	£ 381,365	£ 413,896	£ 577,210	£ 475,991	£ 575,236	£ 678,282	£ 480,358	£ 622,991	£ 756,534
	Rochdale BC	£ 5,958,476	£ 417,709	£ 418,433	£ 529,681	£ 452,120	£ 464,089	£ 545,452	£ 429,777	£ 425,887	£ 563,807	£ 474,540	£ 538,553	£ 698,427
	Salford City Council	£ 3,619,210	£ 237,994	£ 205,767	£ 249,247	£ 211,728	£ 223,976	£ 332,197	£ 303,147	£ 301,807	£ 436,609	£ 294,135	£ 386,254	£ 436,347
	Stockport Met BC	£ 3,806,080	£ 217,510	£ 235,669	£ 285,860	£ 286,800	£ 267,414	£ 342,278	£ 330,665	£ 318,800	£ 409,915	£ 277,265	£ 378,521	£ 455,384
	Tameside Met BC	£ 7,038,658	£ 486,624	£ 541,168	£ 607,606	£ 557,402	£ 545,911	£ 622,583	£ 547,140	£ 609,639	£ 678,211	£ 479,986	£ 632,316	£ 730,073
	TFGM	£ 317,848	£ 17,311	£ 13,555	£ 31,567	£ 38,932	£ 39,710	£ 67,584	£ 47,460	£ 30,987	£ 16,640	£ 5,932	£ 4,477	£ 3,693
	Trafford Council	£ 5,415,703	£ 363,094	£ 371,084	£ 481,624	£ 392,357	£ 438,323	£ 536,138	£ 488,189	£ 435,826	£ 533,838	£ 401,318	£ 444,257	£ 529,656
	Warrington BC	£ 4,617,030	£ 292,464	£ 356,868	£ 430,154	£ 376,528	£ 337,034	£ 454,446	£ 405,396	£ 388,773	£ 454,360	£ 316,475	£ 379,044	£ 425,490
	Wigan Council	£ 4,217,233	£ 221,843	£ 273,407	£ 363,757	£ 288,162	£ 333,323	£ 397,193	£ 362,860	£ 364,003	£ 432,873	£ 285,414	£ 377,505	£ 516,892
	Total	£ 82,714,029	£ 5,229,390	£ 5,562,248	£ 6,940,907	£ 5,824,797	£ 5,988,254	£ 7,664,243	£ 6,648,025	£ 6,797,722	£ 8,520,726	£ 6,305,872	£ 7,564,579	£ 9,667,267

5. Consultant Spend

5.1 The total spend in Q4 2022/23 was £19,345.10. The spend breaks down as follows.

Children's	Adult & Well-being Services	Governance and Community Strategy	Finance and Systems	Place	Strategy & Resources
£19,345.10	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

5.2 Consultancy spend in Q4 2022/23 has decreased when compared to Q3 2022/23 which was £47,742.50.

5.3 During Q4 2022/23 four consultants were engaged in Children's Services.

The (x4) consultants have been engaged to undertake bespoke pieces of work, such as independent grievance investigation, work with Early Help/Family Hubs, bespoke training. We have also engaged a consultant who is reviewing the quality of practice of work with children in need.

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

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

6. Conclusion

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

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

Appendix 1

Trafford Council Agency Spend with Reed By Directorate Q4 - 2022/2023

Directorates	Job Title	Number of Active Assignments	Total Cost
Children's	Social Worker Level 3	29	£339,351.71
	Service/Team Manager	8	£123,514.56
	Strategic Lead	2	£71,043.12
	Advanced Practitioner	2	£50,272.10
	Residential Childcare Officer	22	£37,471.76
	Independent Reviewing Officer	2	£35,179.06
	Support Worker	4	£26,892.84
	Business Support Officer	6	£22,405.31
	Early Help Intervention Worker	1	£9,713.65
	Childcare Worker	1	£1588.01
	Total	77	£717,432.12
Adults	Social Worker and Advanced Practitioner	17	£157,219.71
	Support Worker	98	£92,372.55
	Safeguarding Board Manager	1	£6138.87
	Deputy Manager – Ascot House	2	£5606.55
	Cook Manager	4	£2993.28
	Total	122	£264,330.96
Spend shows under Adults	1:1 Support (Private Care Homes) This spend is recharged to clients and does not come out of the Council staffing budget.	117 covering various shifts	£189,819.63

Finance & Systems			
	Finance Manager	1	£15,760.24
	Windows 10 Deployment Lead	1	£8,197.92
	Total	2	£23,958.16
Legal & Governance	Assistant Head of Legal	1	£8,165.85
	Solicitor/Lawyer	9	£145,417.97
	Assistant Head of Legal	1	£8,165.85
	Application Support Officer	1	£5,646.93
	Total	11	£158,418.80
Place	ESOL Assessor	3	£4,184.31
	Total	3	£4,184.31
Strategy and Resources	Director of Communications, Marketing and Events	1	£13,201.49
	Cook Manager	3	£1,403.38
	Application Support Officer	1	£2,252.91
	Total	5	£16,857.78
Grand Total	Via Reed	337	£1,375,231.00