

## **Use of Consultants and Agency Staff**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr Anthony Harris - Portfolio holder, Personnel and Business Support

### **Executive Summary:**

Councils uses Agency staff to ensure safe provision of services and safeguarding at the front line and supportively within the support services.

The main reasons for using Agency staff are:

- To cover for hard-to-fill vacancies where skills are in short supply. This may be a shortage locally, regionally and/or nationally;
- To cover for long term sickness (or other) absence where there is no opportunity for cross-cover internally; and
- To enable organisational developments to be managed more swiftly by releasing council staff to accommodate the increased workload.

Equally, the Council may employ consultants from time to time to provide specific expertise/support to matters of particular significance.

This report provides information relating to the use of both Agency staff and Consultants for the year 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 (year to date)

### **Consultancy usage**

In 2017-18, Council spend on consultancy totalled £1,345,681.

- £788,146 was incurred in supporting potential road/traffic developments, Phoenix 10, asset management review, Professional service and counsel fees.
- Of the remainder, £460,005 was spent supporting a range of issues within Children's Services and £97,530 supporting Adult Social Care











Consultancy spend in 2018/19 (to end Q3, December 2018) totalled £483,449. Pro-rated, the forecast spend for the 2018-19 FYE) would be £644,600





- £308,895 was incurred in support of Phoenix 10, potential road/traffic developments, professional service and legal counsel fees and smaller developments such as Walsall Market.
- The remainder, £174,555, supported the Children's Services Capital programme.

For both years, the actual spends are detailed in Appendix 2. This Appendix contains exempt information so cannot be published for the public.

### **Use of Agency Staff**

The tables below detail agency spend for the full year 2017-18 and year-to-date (11 months) of 2018-19.

Job Classification	COST		FTE		TREND
	2017/18	2018/9	2017/18	2018/9	
Admin/Clerical/Assistant	£563,918.51	£833,453.81	702.85	896.34	
Clean & Green	£1,265,749.45	£1,237,999.94	1788.32	1776.4	
Customer Service/Advisory	£123,956.16	£204,542.20	135.25	159.8	
ICT	£123,692.57	£189,261.50	104.6	86.2	
Management	£1,079,007.55	£1,182,961.64	446.36	278.97	
Officer/Professional	£3,061,690.81	£2,374,330.27	1834.2	1665.33	
Social Care - Qualified	£4,972,548.48	£5,103,258.72	2693.6	2674.94	
Social Care - Unqualified	£466,971.24	£440,347.17	556.44	344.7	
Other	£308,729.19	£392,925.33	401.03	404.11	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£11,966,263.96</b>	<b>£11,959,080.58</b>	<b>8662.65</b>	<b>8286.79</b>	

Directorate	2017-18 spend	% of total	2018-19 spend (YTD)	% of total	Trend
Adult Social Care	£2,170,276.23	18.14	£2,034,559.88	17.01	
Resources & Transformation	£2,161,714.05	18.07	£2,058,088.56	17.21	
Children's Services	£5,722,085.61	47.82	£6,073,239.26	50.78	
Economy & Environment	£1,912,188.07	15.98	£1,793,192.88	14.99	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,966,263.96</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>£11,959,080.58</b>	<b>100.00</b>	

Overall, the trend is downwards in FTE or Agency hours worked, but broadly equitable in terms of cost accounting for 11/12 months for 2018-19 and it is therefore clear that spend for full year 2018-19 is likely to be above that for the preceding year. Costs will have risen due to a number of factors, not least the right to equal pay to a permanent colleague doing the same job after 12 weeks and the mix of skills engaged via agency.

Pro-rated costs for 2018/19 are tabled below:

Directorate	2017-18 spend	% of total	2018-19 spend (YTD)	2018-19 spend pro-rated	% of total
Adult Social Care	£2,170,276.23	18.14	£2,034,559.88	£2,219,519.87	17.01
Resources & Transformation	£2,161,714.05	18.07	£2,058,088.56	£2,245,187.52	17.21
Children's Services	£5,722,085.61	47.82	£6,073,239.26	£6,625,351.92	50.78
Economy & Environment	£1,912,188.07	15.98	£1,793,192.88	£1,956,210.41	14.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,966,263.96</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>£11,959,080.58</b>	<b>£13,046,269.72</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Presently, manual intervention is required to accurately collate data in respect of the reasons for using agency workers but the ability to collect, collate and report this is being factored into the new systems and will be available in future. Increasing our understanding of the reasons for usage e.g. where agency workers are being used and how long they have been in assignment, will enable managers and officers to better plan use of resources, to explore alternative options and understand the associated costs of their decision making.

Key headlines regarding the data are:

- The total spend for 2017/18 was 22.52% above that for 2016/17. Children's Services spend is 47.82% of the total spend for the year, with the other directorates having a relatively equal split of the spend (E&E 15.98%, ACS 18.14% and R&T 18.07%). Data for 2018-19 to date shows an identical trend.
- Children's Services has increased agency spend by 10.70% in 2017/18 compared to the previous year, with a further increase for 2018/19 (YTD). The main areas of spend are incurred in education (particularly educational psychologists), qualified health & social care practitioners, children's mental health and vulnerable children safeguarding & family support.
- Adult Social Care increased spend on agency workers by 130.53% in 2017-18 compared to the previous year, largely due to a redesign in Integrated Commissioning where agency workers were used pending the review of the service, but is decreasing slightly for the current year based on data available at the time of writing this report. In addition there were a number of Social Worker vacancies being covered by agency workers whilst the posts were being recruited to.
- Economy & Environment saw a 22.92% increase in 2017/18 compared to the previous year. This largely relates to the disruption in the Clean & Green service caused by the fire at Friars Road and the severe weather conditions during Quarter 3 which required extra resources. Agency costs remain broadly flat for the current year.
- Resources & Transformation saw a small increase of 2.41% in 2017/18 over that in 2016/17 mostly linked to capacity issues as a result of long term sickness and covering positions in ICT and Procurement. A small decrease in spend looks feasible for the current year.

### **Reason for scrutiny:**

Requested by committee.

### **Recommendations:**

That, subject to any comments Members may wish to make, the report be noted.

### **Background papers**

None

### **Resource and legal considerations:**

The Council is required to provide safe and effective services for its residents and other stakeholders. Where specific expertise is required, this may be brought in via a specialist consultancy, or indeed to ensure safe service delivery, agency staff may be used to ensure appropriate resourcing.

## Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

Internal focus – I2 A Resilient Council

### Citizen impact:

There is no direct citizen impact.

### Environmental impact:

There is no direct environmental impact.

### Performance management:

The financial impact of employing agency staff and consultants is managed directly by the budget holder, as is on-the-job performance.

The contract, awarded (from 1 April 2019) to Starting Point Recruitment for a 3-year period (with an optional additional 1 year extension) is managed and monitored by the HR team against the following performance indicators:

KPIS	Target
Bookings acknowledged and answered within 24 hours (next working day dependent on the service)	100%
CV's Received within booking timescales	98%
Assignments filled within specified timescales ( <i>reporting reasons for SLA failure</i> )	98%
Temporary Agency Worker's appropriate references, clearances, qualifications, and security checks completed and available in satellite file prior to commencement.	100%
Candidates who accept and start their assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reporting on reasons Candidates decline assignments</li></ul>	95 % 100%
Accuracy of timesheets/invoices to actual service areas delivered	100%
Maximum number of complaints received in line with complaints procedure each quarter relating to volume of assignments and issues with work or attendance of Temporary Agency Workers	2%
Notification provided to Hiring Manager of Temporary Agency Workers who have been employed 13 weeks or longer	100%
Electronic invoice in an agreed format will be provided to the Council's finance department within 14 calendar days of a Temporary Agency Worker's payment being made.	100%
Undisputed invoices are paid to 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Suppliers by BACS transfer with 30 calendar days of receipt.	100%
Reporting on Social Value created	Annually

The Employment & Skills Team also scoped a range of social value KPIs from the commitments Starting Point Recruitment made as part of their tender. These are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

Additionally, Starting Point Recruitment have begun to engage much more closely with the directorates, attending recruitment and retention meetings with key Council staff. Initial feedback from this is positive, with increased understanding of Council requirements, which in turn should result in a quicker turnaround to the engagement of the most appropriately skilled agency workers for our needs.


Due to the extensive shortage of Social Care workers (both quality and quantity nationally), the HR team continues to explore further options to secure the best support for Children's and Adult Services where Agency staffing is required. Current options include awarding a specialist agency contract as well as the possibility for adopting a regional approach to agency provision of social care workers via Future Social.

### **Consultation:**

N/A


### **Contact Officers:**

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **STARTING POINT RECRUITMENT SOCIAL VALUE COMMITMENTS**

## **SPR Master Vendor Social Value Commitments**

Accountability for the below social value commitments lies with Starting Point Recruitment (SPR) and are additional commitments outside of the usual business of Steps To Work (STW). However, SPR may draw on resource provided by STW in the delivery of these commitments, where required.

### **Themes 1-3 - Walsall's Communities/Children/People**

- **Working with Walsall's Community Associations and Community Organisations** - The development and delivery of a rolling programme of monthly events working with community associations and organisations to deliver content and programmes relevant to Walsall's communities, to include employability and mentoring. One event per month, minimum of 2 hour sessions. Aim for 5 to 12 participants per session.

**Frequency of SPR review** – One per month

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

- **Digital inclusion** - To host a minimum of 12 digital training workshops per year for Walsall residents, including usage of mobiles and PCs and how to identify relevant online council resources. Duration will vary but minimum of 1 hour sessions as part of customised training programmes offered. Aim for 5-12 participants per session.

**Frequency of SPR review** – One per month

**Reported on** - 6 monthly

**Health & Wellbeing programmes** - To host a minimum of one Health and Wellbeing workshop every three months for Walsall residents. Duration will vary but minimum of 1 hour sessions as part of customised training programmes offered. Capacity is dependent on the size of the venue. Aim for 5 to 12 participants per session

**Frequency of SPR review** – Quarterly

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

- **Social Worker continuity pilot** – Attend the Social Worker recruitment and retention forum and work in partnership to react to the Social Worker recruitment demands. These take place on a monthly basis and are organised by a senior manager within Children's Services.

**Frequency of SPR review** – 6 monthly

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

- **Supporting local jobs events** – Attend and record the numbers of engagements with local residents via the Walsall Works Expo and other recruitment events. 4 per year.

**Frequency of SPR review** – Quarterly

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

- **Apprenticeships** - The recruitment of at least one apprentice each year, either via the SPR Contract Team, Head Office or supply chain. SPR will always aim for this apprentice to be a Walsall resident but are unable to guarantee this.

**Frequency of SPR review** – 6 monthly

**Reported on** – Annually

**Journey to Work model** - The journey to work model is for unemployed Walsall Residents to enable them to access employability support, provided by Steps to Work. The aim is to improve their chances of gaining employment through Starting Point Recruitment. This includes:

- Six residents per year to engage on SPR's Journey to Work model
- Host 4 x 1 week work placements at the Council for local people as part of Journey to Work model

**Frequency of SPR review** – 6 monthly

**Reported on** – Annually

- The creation and annual review of the below documents (to be displayed on the SPR and STW websites):
  - Portfolio of education providers in the Walsall area (by April 2019) (**Commitment #4 - Working with local educational partners**)
  - Community Directory, to identify where there are social programmes for children, young people and families to attend in the Walsall area (by June 2019) (**Commitment #5 - Social support and inclusion (cross-referrals)**);

**Frequency of SPR review** – March 2020, March 2021 and March 2022

**Reported on** – annually, from April 2020

- Comprehensive directory (to be updated annually) to support residents staying in their home and manage their cost of living with the aim of helping to reduce homelessness by September 2019. (**Commitment #13 - Community programmes (referrals)**)

**Frequency of SPR review** – September 2020, September 2021 and September 2022.

**Reported on** – annually, from October 2020.

- **Working with Walsall Council to get more people into employment** - Support the Council's Employment and Skills team by collecting and collating data on reasons for unemployment and develop partnership working to enhance relationships, following successful registration.

**Frequency of SPR review** – 6 monthly from September 2019.

**Reported on** – 6 monthly from September 2019



- **Creating a safer Walsall** - Maintain status as a registered hate crime centre on an annual basis throughout the life of the contract.

**Frequency of SPR review** – Annually

**Reported on** – Sharing commitment annually (each April)

- **Supporting local work clubs** – Attend and record the numbers of engagements with local residents via the local Walsall Works job clubs (one per month, four hour sessions, dependent on participant attendance)

**Frequency of SPR review** – Quarterly basis from June 2019

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

- **Programmes with social housing providers** – Steps to Work (STW) work in partnership with Walsall-based housing providers. Ensuring social housing providers are aware of the SPR services that we can offer to their residents. Future action, SPR to report on partnership working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Work to commence on this within 6 months and measurables to be agreed

**Frequency of SPR review** – 6 monthly

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

**Building social cohesion** – STW work in partnership with Walsall-based organisations and groups to engage and improve in social cohesion. STW have committed to the Armed Forces Covenant. Future action, SPR to report on measures taken to build social cohesion.

**Frequency of SPR review** – 6 monthly

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

#### **Theme 4 – Walsall’s Economic Growth**

- **Local investment into Walsall businesses** – Emphasis on localism when determining the supply chain by monitoring the volume of Walsall-based suppliers, their vacancy fill rates and revenue generated annually. SPR to confirm amount and percentage of those on supply chain who are Walsall based, when this has been reviewed.

**Frequency of SPR review** – annually

**Reported on** – annually

**Living wage** – Throughout the lifetime of the contract, all SPR staff will be paid at least the Living Wage, with Apprentices paid at least the National Minimum Wage

**Frequency of SPR review** – annually

**Reported on** – annually

**Non-specialist vacancies advertised via Walsall Works on weekly basis**

**Frequency of SPR review** – 6 monthly

**Reported on** – 6 monthly

- **Employee upskilling** – All SPR staff will receive at least five days of training per annum. SPR will report on the type and duration of training, including wellbeing training for employees.

**Frequency of SPR review** – annually

**Reported on** – annually

### **Theme 5 – Walsall Council Focus**

- **Delivering strategic social value with all council partners** – SPR's supplier agreement will require a commitment to delivery of social value. This will be delivered and measured through the supply chain management. (This information isn't available at present but is scheduled as a future action)

**Frequency of SPR review** – annually

**Reported on** – annually

- **Partnership training plan** – Work with the Council to identify joint training opportunities. Scheduled as a future action when available.

**Frequency of SPR review** – Quarterly

**Reported on** – annually

- **Improving service excellence (ISE) group** – Develop the best practice group. Scheduled as a future action. TOR to be established by SPR and membership of the group agreed with Walsall Council.

**Frequency of SPR review** – Quarterly

**Reported on** – 6 monthly