

Introducing WM Temps

powered by Opus People Solutions

Dynamic, Innovative, Different



This is not just another agency service! This is a unique resourcing solution

An exciting opportunity for West Midlands' councils to tackle a range of local government workforce problems and transform how they recruit and manage their temporary workforce.

In 2021 councils asked West Midlands Employers to help find a solution to a range of workforce issues, many linked to temp agency services and some which affected the wider workforce. Our approach was not to just find ways to address these issues, but to consider how any solution could go beyond the original ask, to offer greater benefits and added value and not just to individual councils, but to the local government sector in our region, to the workforce we engage, and ultimately to add social value to our communities.

“WME is excited to announce a ground-breaking strategic partnership with Opus People Solutions for a West Midlands Workforce Strategy and WMTemps Agency Framework that promises to be DYNAMIC in its ambitions, INNOVATIVE in its solutions and DIFFERENT to the traditional agency services councils currently use.”

**Rebecca Davis,
Chief Executive, WME**





Your ask of WME

Your solution focused Regional Employers' Organisation

We are a diverse region with a permanent local government workforce of circa 62,059 (excluding schools' staff) and a total workforce spend of £836m annually. The sector also spends a further £126m each year on temporary agency workers – representing 15% of our total workforce.

In 2020 you highlighted for us a range of issues and concerns around agency service provision that was shared by many councils, and which no one council working alone could solve. You also shared problems impacting the wider workforce and a desire to reduce the reliance on temporary staff by converting more workers to permanent employees. You asked for our help to address these concerns.

We listened and as your regional employers' organisation we explored the issues in more detail through a series of consultation events - with you our councils, with agency service providers and with agency workers themselves to get a wider perspective.

It became clear that as a region and sector we need to take greater control of agency provision and the relationship this has with our permanent workforce, to move from a passive to a 'collaborative interventionist' approach.

The West Midlands agency market-place is crowded with many providers (and supply chains), but in some cases they are all fishing in limited talent pools which drives competition between councils within the region, which in turn drives up pay rates - encouraging yet more churn in a difficult market.

Diagram 1: An overview of agency competition within the West Midlands

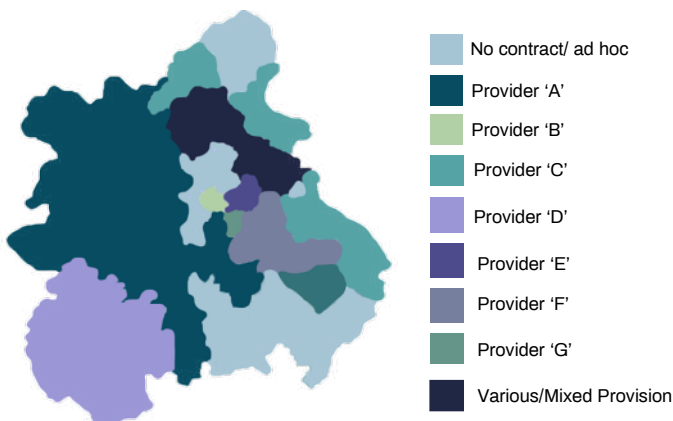
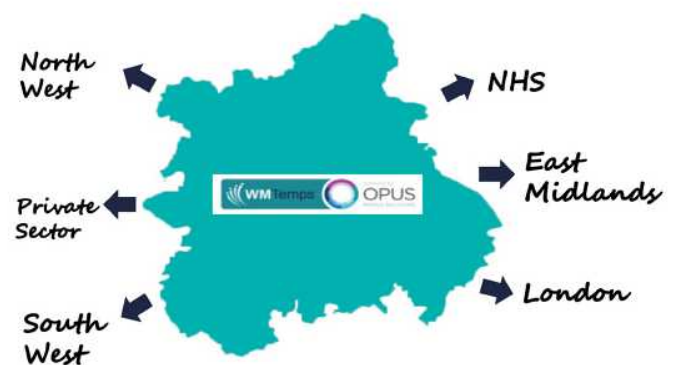


Diagram 2: West Midlands external competition for talent



The Fix List

You asked us to find a solution that would help councils stabilise the permanent workforce, convert more temps to perm, and to improve the access to high quality temporary workers when needed.

The consultation phase saw the 'fix' list get bigger and we quickly realised that a truly innovative approach was required to have any chance of sustained and impactful change.

It was clear that YOU wanted: -



	To have greater control and influence over your agency provision
	To improve service quality, whilst still securing best value prices
	To reduce reliance on temporary workers, converting more temps into permanent roles - creating greater stability in the workforce and reducing costs
	To be offered work ready candidates and more efficient temp processes

and after talking with temporary workers, WME wanted to: -

	Work with ethical providers to improve temporary workers experiences (especially when working in local government)
	Make workers feel valued through improved management and support
	Recognise the valuable contribution they make as part of our total workforce by making the move from temp to perm an attractive option, and
	Make Local Government an attractive sector to work in and for workers to see our councils as employers of choice

Time to try something different?

Low risk but with the potential for huge rewards

There was a wide range of issues and challenges needing consideration, but it was also evident that many of the problems would be best addressed if councils stopped working in competition and started working in collaboration. For councils to do this, it also required them to be able to access an agency service that offered everyone the same type of service, the same quality of service, and the same pay rates.

But the agency service was just part of the solution. There were wider workforce challenges that required a more strategic approach that may take time to develop, involving other stakeholders, or requiring investment.

It needed a unique solution - a strategic partnership between WME, its councils, and a single agency provider working collaboratively to support and deliver a regional workforce strategy that was underpinned by a regional agency solution.

Ideally, the service provider should be willing to pay a rebate to the region from commercial services sold. This would enable this income to be reinvested in the workforce strategy with potential to create a self-financing model with no additional costs to councils.

WME believed that this combination of strategy and improved agency service would also offer the best chance for success in resolving agency service issues, as well as offering greater potential benefits through a regional workforce strategy designed to complement and work alongside your existing People Strategies and Workforce Plans. This combination of strategy and service could help address the permanent and temporary workforce issues that are interlinked and experienced by a great many councils.

WME quickly realised that only a commitment from councils to try something different, such as a collaborative and region-wide approach, could deliver sustainable and impactful change the sector needed. If WME could provide councils with a low risk opportunity to commit to working together in support of a Regional Workforce Strategy, underpinned by a single Regional Agency Solution, we could address many of these challenges.

Participating councils would then have greater influence and control over their temporary agency service, access to better quality workers, and work with a provider committed to reducing reliance on temporary workers. In turn, our councils could compete for talent with a strong 'West Midlands' and 'Local Government' identity and voice in the wider market - where we only need to compete with other regions and sectors, rather than competing with each other too.





Our track record of innovation!

WME is your partner in the development of innovative and shared services

This is not the first time that you, our councils, have taken a collaborative approach to deliver a regional solution, resulting in huge success!

Around 12 years ago WME launched WMJobs – an e-recruitment (ATS) platform linked to a new jobs board for the public sector. Today we have 26 councils in the region accessing this service plus a range of other public sector employers including the West Midlands Combined Authority. The service has delivered huge cost savings for councils over this time, both in terms of service savings but also the savings to councils of not having to run local procurement processes - as WME manages procurement (currently via an ESPO framework).

WMJobs.co.uk is the biggest public sector jobs board in the country – last year it advertised over 6,800 jobs, processed over 58,000 candidates, and demand this year has shot up, reflecting greater job churn across the sector.

The jobs board service is also a valuable asset to our new service - supporting a 'regional agency talent pool' by driving candidates interested in temporary contracts through to the new WMTemps service.



Key steps in our journey to WMTemps

WME conducted a full open procurement, so you don't have to!

WME and its elected member Management Board were so convinced of the potential opportunity and benefits of this innovative approach for councils that; we invested £80,000 in developing a robust **business case** for the service, we sought external validation (Amion Ltd), and we conducted a full open procurement process (managed by MCP2 Ltd).

In January 2022 the WME Management Board gave a green light for WME to establish a single provider framework for a West Midlands Agency Service, to award the framework contract to Opus People Solutions, and to bring this exciting new service opportunity to our councils.

The **procurement process** invited proposals from all agency providers keen to work in a strategic partnership with WME and our councils; providing enhanced agency services, linked to the West Midlands Workforce Strategy. MCP2 Ltd are experts in procurement and were commissioned by WME to manage the procurement process culminating in a Framework Agreement with the successful bidder. This means that councils wishing to access the new regional agency solution can simply enter a framework call-off contract, as a fully compliant procurement process* has been undertaken by WME.

*We have a detailed procurement report we will make available to councils developing their business case to access the WMTemps service.

External validation of the WME business case was provided by Amion Ltd using HM Treasury's 'five case' business case model as the framework for their assessment. They provided a detailed report* to the WME Board stating that the business case for the Workforce Strategy for Local Government and Service Offer was well-evidenced and well-developed. They recognised the innovative nature of the service and recognised that whilst success cannot be guaranteed, WME made a compelling case for the nature of the benefits that could be secured if councils take up the new service.

They case demonstrated a clear need for change and a rationale for intervention. The introduction of a Regional Workforce Strategy for Local Government accompanied by a Regional Agency Solution represented an innovative and ground-breaking approach to tackling workforce issues which are long-standing and becoming even more acute in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

*We can provide a copy of the full Amion report on request – please email info@wmemployers.org.uk



“The strength of Local Government comes from our workforce working daily alongside our communities, which we have seen demonstrated over the past 2 years in responding to the pandemic. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with other Councils across the region to ensure Local Government remains a competitive employer, attracts the best talent and provides fulfilling work with career opportunities”

Cllr Tony Jefferson, Leader
Stratford on Avon Council and
WME Board Members for District
Councils



The WMTemps Service

Opus do what's right for councils, reducing agency reliance and funnelling money back into the sector. We are also committed to supporting the ambitions of the West Midlands Workforce Strategy to drive improvements for the whole workforce.

We will work with you through a detailed engagement process from your initial expression of interest to provide detailed cost and benefits data and a client focussed proposal to ensure a clear understanding of what the WMTemps service will offer you.

Framework / Call Off Service Contract



As part of the WME Temps call off agreement Opus will work directly with you to provide cost effective resource of temporary workers. Our specialist recruitment teams have a wealth of local authority experience and understand the unique recruitment challenges that can be faced. We will work with you to truly understand your organisation and its recruitment needs.

WMTemps offers you:-

- Access to the service via the WMTemps Framework Call Off Agreement
- Consistent rates for all councils (competitive with YPO fees but offering an enhanced service)
- Local Relationship Manager and performance reviews
- Your own data and tailored billing

“Our goal is to support local authorities to improve quality and reduce reliance on agency workers.”

We endeavour to fill all vacancies via our direct candidates; however, we also have a supply chain of over 160 local and national agencies to support on more specialist roles. We regulate the market for external agencies to ensure fixed fees and we meet all statutory requirements.

We will provide you with your own dedicated recruitment team to act as a key point of contact for your organisation and work closely with your hiring managers finalise details, resolve queries and establish budget expectations. We will also be able to provide tailored data and management information to enable you to get better control, understanding and influence on your temporary workforce and align temporary recruitment with your strategies, policies, and procedures.

What we do to implement services with you....

- We'll manage implementation of services – tailored project to ensure continuity of service and workers
- You will need to provide data – we'll work with your incumbent provider if you have one
- Support delivery of communications so your stakeholders and staff know what's happening and how to use our services

We offer a complete recruitment service from implementation to ongoing delivery. The implementation process will be tailored to your organisation's requirements and existing processes to help provide continuity of service and workers.

Our project team, led by our implementation manager, will work alongside your HR team and existing provider (if you have one) to gather all the required data and enable a smooth transition. Throughout this period, we will support the delivery of regular communications to your hiring managers, workers, and other key stakeholders to provide full information on the changes and clear guidance on how to use our services.



“The implementation process when we transitioned to a brand-new unitary Council was managed in an extremely professional and efficient way. Opus kept us fully engaged throughout and worked in partnership with us to ensure a smooth transfer”

Alison Golding, Assistant Director of Human Resources (North Northamptonshire Council)





What sets WMTemps apart?

This is not any agency service, this is YOUR WMTemps agency service.

WME and Opus are committed to delivering an ethical supply chain and a service that our councils will be proud to own, eager to support and excited to access.

We have developed a unique approach that links a regional workforce strategy to a regional agency solution. This means that our councils can have a more in depth understanding of their agency service, have greater transparency over processes and fees, have access to meaningful data and wider service insights reports, and a master vend service solution that will deliver work ready candidates, streamlined and consistent processes for all councils, and a reduction in 'manager time' as a result.

Alongside the enhanced agency service is an overarching Strategy that includes ambitions that impact the whole workforce and as a strategic partner, Opus is as committed to supporting the Strategy as it is to delivering a first class agency solution.

Opus was PPMA Excellence in People Management 2021 Gold Award Winner and winner of the Best Collaboration Award with Brentwood Borough Council.

This is not just another agency service - this is a workforce solution driven by a regional strategy underpinned by an enhanced agency service.

Opus operates against the grain of the stereotypical recruitment agency and our values of trust, respect, excellence, adaptability and teamwork lie at the heart of everything we do.

- Opus are accredited by the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and operate to its codes of conduct, all relevant government legislation, and industry best practice
- Opus recruitment consultants are focused on finding the right candidates for a role whilst delivering a market leading service
- Opus work directly with hiring managers and candidates and always keep their best interests in mind. We meet all of our candidates to understand their needs and ensure that our clients' quality and compliance standards are maintained.
- Opus heritage in the public sector gives them insight and expertise in the local government field setting them apart in the market
- Opus suppliers operate to agreed standards so they can regulate the market and improve transparency
- Opus meet all statutory pay requirements and undertake regular compliance audits within their supply chain to ensure ethical practices are maintained.

Opus has three main aims in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

1	To build a diverse pipeline of people into the framework as well as valuing diversity of thought and experience of staff;
2	To create an inclusive work- place for all; and
3	To reflect diversity in the delivery of our service to the diverse communities we serve



Welcome to your WMTemps Agency Framework

Powered by Opus People Solutions

Our framework provider - Opus People Solutions

Opus as a brand was established in 2014, however our teams have successfully been providing resourcing solutions since 2004. We are an expert recruitment provider, offering extensive experience in recruitment solutions across multiple disciplines in the public and private sectors including Social Work, Business Support & Administration, Residential Care, Professional & Technical and much more.

Opus consistently report on customer satisfaction rating across our customer base on a quarterly basis - our customer satisfaction rating over the past 12 months averages 97%.

As a wholly owned local authority trading company, we have the expertise and connections to deliver the end-to-end temporary staffing needs of local councils. Our unique set up means that we keep money in public sector, reassuring councils that a partnership with us will deliver a return on investment in more ways than one. WMTemps services will deliver a rebate to the region to support delivery of the West Midlands Workforce Strategy.

Our heritage working in local government across a wealth of resourcing requirements and master vendor MSP solutions, means we have the knowledge and experience to deliver against even the most challenging of hiring needs.

Opus have a proven track record of partnership working and strong credentials of service excellence.

Partnership working

Opus work in partnership with our supply chain rather than in competition. A positive relationship with our suppliers where we understand the dependency on each other means we foster a true collaborative approach and work together to provide the best service for our clients.

Ethical provider

Opus work closely with our supply chain to ensure ethical practices that are also in line with our client's vision. Our supplier agreement outlines the need for fair recruitment practices, the ability to monitor and report on protected characteristics and they are aware of our mission to recruit a diverse and inclusive workforce, ensuring the authority receives access to best value talent from diverse and inclusive pools.

Best practice

Opus host training sessions with suppliers and have a suite of e-learning modules to ensure our suppliers are up to up to date on best practice for recruitment, safeguarding and modern slavery.

Worker support

WMTemps will have a single, easy to use, onboarding portal for both direct and supply chain workers, providing access to policies, guides and e-learning to ensure all workers are trained and understand the importance of equality and inclusion for themselves, their colleagues and hiring managers.

Sectoral roots

Opus heritage in the public sector enables them to understand the need for councils to reduce reliance on temporary workers. Despite this being at odds with their business providing agency services, they can take a helicopter view of the resourcing challenges and support a strategy that is committed to convert temp to perm and only used temporary workers where necessary.



“We are excited to launch this new partnership with WME to offer a valuable solution to the workforce issues faced by councils in the West Midlands. WMTemps is the first service to offer a regional solution, enabling all authorities to work together with a shared vision.”

Brad Sinclair, Managing Director of Opus People Solutions



Solution focussed

Opus is here to provide workforce solutions to the market challenges and ensure we are future proofing our clients. We are confident at working strategically to tackle difficult to fill roles working with our customers best interests.

Quality assurance

Opus will play a big part in stopping poor resource moving around the WME region. Opus will triage and filter any candidates that do not meet the expected standards as necessary with all placements subject to a double sign off plus weekly, monthly and quarterly sample compliance checks.



“My experience of working with Opus Associate Director regarding a Strategic Partnership is outstanding. Opus always deliver on time and with excellent results.”

Colin Foster CEO Northampton Children Trust



The West Midlands Workforce Strategy and the WMTemps Resourcing Solution

Our VISION

Our vision for the West Midlands Workforce Strategy is to work together as a region to deliver improvements and efficiencies across the local government workforce that benefit the community, organisations, employees and temporary workers

Why we need change now

Over the last few years, councils across the West Midlands have been experiencing challenges with their temporary workforce. These challenges range from recruiting to hard to fill roles, inflated prices from agencies as a result of councils competing with each other for workers as well as the private sector, and poor-quality in temporary workforce and agency provision.

By working together and having a regional approach to managing our temporary workforce alongside our permanent workforce strategies, we believe we can make improvements to our temporary workforce that will bring real benefits to our councils and the region.

No one council acting alone can address the workforce challenges within local government and by adopting a regional collaborative approach, we can offer individual service solutions to councils linked to an overarching strategy that works across a whole region temporary agency economy.

What are we doing

Bringing strategic value to our customers by transforming the way we procure and manage temporary workers via a resourcing solution that also supports and invests in a regional strategy - tackling whole workforce improvements

What we'll do differently

As a sector we want to have greater control over agency provision and the relationship this has with our permanent workforce - to move from a passive to a 'collaborative interventionist' approach. **There are 3 key drivers for change ->**

Efficiency

The ambition is to only use temporary workers where there are short-term resource needs, reducing total agency spend year on year and the reliance and associated supply and demand issues, reducing competition led rate increases

Effectiveness

The ambition is to deliver whole system improvements to how organisations source and manage their temporary workforce, with regional autonomy over agency providers

Equilibrium

The ambition is to stabilise the permanent workforce to ensure there is a deep understanding of the equipoise between the agency market, recruitment, and other employment factors in our sector and our region

Benefits

Better visibility and control of the temporary workforce

Achieved through thorough and transparent data and information at all levels

Reduction in utilisation of Temporary Workers

Achieved through better oversight of workforce as a whole with management of volume placements

More Effective & Efficient Agency Service Provision

Achieved through common single point of entry and engagement approaches, onboarding and HR policies

Local workers and suppliers

Achieved through focus on volume and spend in the local market with local providers

Greater satisfaction for Managers and Temporary Workers

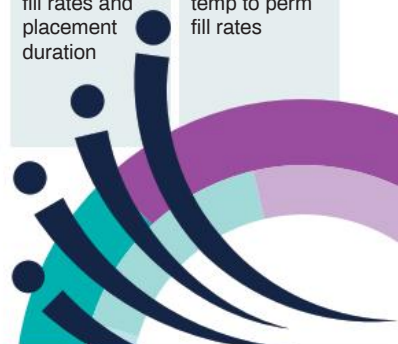
Achieved through effective feedback and management processes which are two-way

Better quality provision of temporary workers

Achieved by monitoring and managing fill rates and placement duration

Contribution to Permanent Workforce

Achieved by monitoring and actively managing temp to perm fill rates



Your WMTemps - Your next steps

WME has invested significantly in developing innovative solution for the Region. The regional workforce strategy and resourcing solution seeks to address the many challenges you highlighted to us. The Strategy is necessarily ambitious and combined with the WMTemps Framework is intended as a 5 year plan to enable us all to test out the potential for success with this new and unique initiative.

As your Regional Employers' Organisation, WME has played its part in bringing this ground-breaking opportunity to our councils. The service will go live on 1st April and WME and Opus are ready to fully support councils interested in being early adopters of WMTemps – through engagement, decision making and implementation.

The West Midlands Workforce Strategy and WMTemps offer significant potential benefits to our councils and the sector. Its success is now wholly dependent on councils in the West Midlands making a commitment to try something different and participate in this regional agency solution.

In doing so you commit to working collaboratively with WME, each other, and with Opus People Solutions to make sustainable and positive changes to how we source and manage our temporary workforce.

The WME Management Board gave their full support to this initiative, approving significant investment to bring this new service offer to our councils.

The independent review by Amion Ltd stated;



“This business case represents an opportunity for Councils in the West Midlands to work together to tackle challenges which cannot be solved by working individually, including addressing skills shortages, recruiting to hard-to-fill vacancies without driving up costs and encouraging churn within the labour market, and ensuring temporary workers are well-trained, well-managed and integrated with the permanent workforce.

“By developing the Strategy and procuring a Regional Agency Provider, WME is creating an opportunity for Councils to work collaboratively and at scale to address common challenges. In order to realise the potential benefits, there is a need for Councils across the region to take up the new offer, and work together, with WME and with the Regional Agency Provider to develop a new model which will deliver improvements and efficiencies across the local government workforce and benefit the community, councils, managers and temporary workers.”



“ We know partnership working and collaboration between local councils can make a real difference in helping more local people find jobs and that ‘our people’ are the Council. From my experience as a Council Leader and Cabinet Member responsible for both adult and children’s services I am also acutely aware of our need for good quality temporary as well as permanent staff, so really welcome the development and launch of WMTemps to give us greater control over who we employ to deliver services and how we develop and support local people”.

Cllr Ken Meeson, Chair of West Midlands Employers Management Board



The next step is yours to take!

Every council signing up to WMTemps will benefit from service improvements and cost efficiencies. But only significant levels of council participation will enable the more ambitious elements of the West Midlands Workforce Strategy for Local Government to be realised.

Every successful service has a starting point Let this be ours!

Email info@wmemployers.org.uk to arrange an initial WMTemps conversation

Not a West Midlands Council?

The WMTemps framework service has been developed for the councils of the West Midlands but is also available to WME Corporate Members (current members listed below).

- Birmingham Children's Trust
- Black Country Consortium
- Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP
- Hamstead Hall Academy Trust
- NHS Stafford & Surrounds CCG
- Shropshire Fire & Rescue
- Staffordshire Police & Crime Commissioner
- Stone Town Council
- Warwickshire Police
- West Midlands Police & Crime Commissioner
- WM Combined Authority
- WM Fire Service
- Wolverhampton Homes

About WME

West Midlands Employers is a not for profit public sector organisation collectively owned by 32 shareholder councils in the West Midlands. We are one of 9 Regional Employers' Organisations in England. Our vision is to "advocate, build and champion people centred organisations for a resilient and diverse public sector workforce that benefits everyone in the West Midlands".





“I believe that by collaborating, we will be in a stronger position to address the workforce challenges which we all face in the years ahead. Many of these challenges are complex and inter-related and no one Council can address them in isolation. Together as a Local Government sector, we have a real opportunity to find innovative solutions to benefit the whole West Midlands Region”



Cllr Gwilym Butler, WME Board Member



South Staffordshire Council



CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL





Proud to design for WME

