

HR Committee

16 February 2023



Report of: Director: Workforce & Change

Title: Contingent Workforce Report - update

Ward: City Wide

Officer Presenting Report: James Brereton (Head of Human Resources)

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Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Council's use of agency workers.

The significant issues in the report are:

- Spend on agency workers has reduced by 10% since 2018/19.



Policy

1. In this report we use the phrase ‘agency workers’ to refer to all individuals who provide a service personally to the Council and are not on our payroll. This includes for example consultants, contractors, interims, and locums.

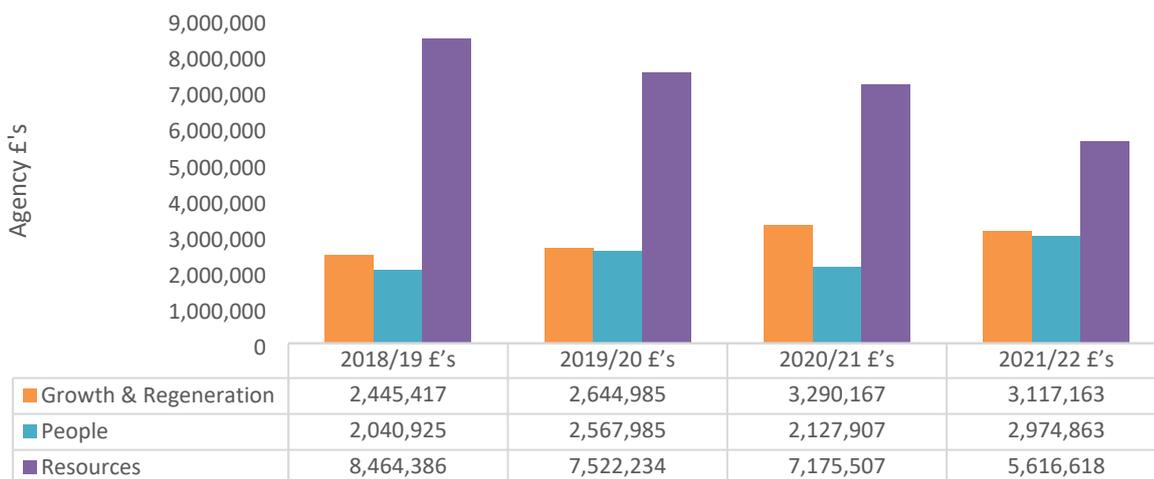
Consultation

2. **Internal**
Not required because this report is for information only.
3. **External**
Not required because this report is for information only.

Context

4. Agency workers are a necessary part of our workforce. They provide short-term cover and specialist input to services as required.
5. During 2021/22, the Council spent £11.7m on agency workers via our managed service provider, Guidant. The Council’s pay bill for 2021/22 was £260m; agency spend was therefore 4.5% of the pay bill. It should be noted that total agency spend value also includes agency fees and is not solely monies paid to agency workers.
6. Overall we have seen a 10% reduction in spend since 2018/19 and 7% since 2020/21. Spend in Growth & Regeneration increased by 27% since 2018/19, People increased by 46% and Resources reduced by 34%. These changes reflect the difficult recruitment market.

Fig 1

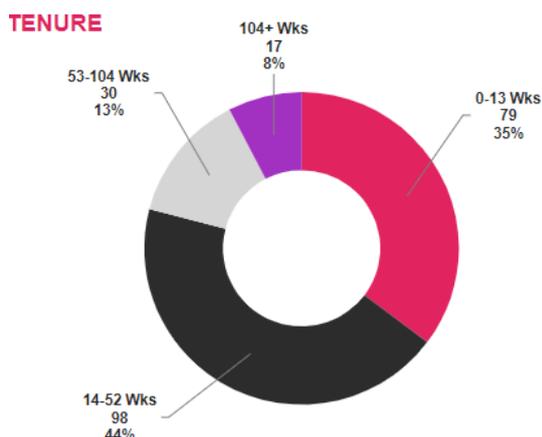


7. During 2021/22 the highest number of agency worker assignments were in two job types: business support / administration and project management.
8. For business support / administration, these assignments are attributed to our Business Support Service, which operates as a centralised service within the Resources directorate offering administrative support to services across the Council.

9. Most project management assignments arise within Change Services which is also a centralised service within the Resources directorate offering project support to services Council-wide. Because of the demand led nature of the work the Council utilises a flexible pool of project management resource which can be switched on and off at short notice.
10. Of the £11.7m shown in Fig1 18.5% includes the services of individuals on an interim and consultative basis during 2021/22, as previously published in the Council’s Annual Statement of Accounts. The total fees (including agency charges) payable by the Council in respect of these individuals in 2021/22 were as follows:

Directorate	Total value for 2021/22 £'s	Average Monthly Value £'s	Headcount
Growth & Regeneration	749,881	3,440	9
People	119,453	2,342	8
Resources	1,297,481	2,864	16
Grand Total	2,166,816	3,001	33

11. The current average tenure for an agency placement is between 14 and 52 weeks. 79% of all agency placements have been in place for less than 52 weeks. As at 31 December 2022:



12. 98% of agency assignments are filled by workers living in Bristol and its surrounding areas.
13. The pattern of agency worker engagement is symptomatic of national skill shortages, for example in relation to social care and social work. It also reflects how competitive the Council can be on salaries within its existing policies. Our work continues on talent development to encourage more people into a career with the council, particularly on hard to fill roles that most often filled with agency workers. This includes increased recruitment of apprentices and supporting colleagues with their career development pathways to help ‘grow our own’ and help address diversity gaps such as the imbalance in the number of young people employed. In addition the increased focus on redeployment may lead to some agency assignments being ended so as to give continuing employment to those at risk of redundancy.

Proposal

14. That the Committee notes this report.

Other Options Considered

15. None.

Risk Assessment

16. Not required because this report is for information only.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 17a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 17b) Not required because this report is for information only.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Not required because this report is for information only.

Financial

(a) Revenue

(b) Capital

Not required because this report is for information only.

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

Appendices:

None.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**Background Papers:**

None.