

# HR Committee

24<sup>th</sup> November 2016



**Report of:** Service Director HR & Workplace

**Title:** Use of agency staff

**Ward:** N/A

**Officer Presenting Report:** Richard Billingham

**Contact Telephone Number:** (0117 92) 22670

## Recommendation

That the Committee notes this report.

## Summary

The report updates the Committee on the Council's progress towards getting better value from its use of agency staff.

## The significant issues in the report are:

- A new contract between the Council and Guidant Group started in April 2016. The expectation is that all agency staff are sourced through this contract in order to reduce spend on agency fees and improve the monitoring of how agency staff are used.
- Agency staff are used for a variety of reasons. Used well, they can be a good quality and flexible resource – and an important talent pipeline that can help to address longstanding inequalities in the Council's directly-employed workforce, particularly around age and gender.
- The Council aims to scale back its use of agency staff from current levels in order to reduce spending, to maintain proportionality with the reducing size of its directly-employed workforce and to give priority wherever possible to existing staff to cover absence/vacancies or undertake project work as development opportunities.



## Policy

1. A new contract between the Council and Guidant Group started in April 2016. The expectation is that all agency staff are sourced through this contract in order to reduce spend on agency fees and improve the monitoring of how agency staff are used.
2. Staff of other agencies will either migrate to Guidant or, where terms cannot be agreed, will have their placement ended.

## Consultation

3. **Internal**  
None because this report is for information only.
4. **External**  
None because this report is for information only.

## Context

5. The key points to note are as follows:
  - 5.1. The Council spent £6.05m on agency staff through Guidant Group in April – September 2016. The highest spending directorate was Business Change (£3.06m), £1.9m of which was spent on IT staff (which is to be expected, as the IT jobs market is mainly short-term contracts).
  - 5.2. An average of 680 FTE agency staff were employed by the Council during the first quarter. This dropped to 610 FTE during the second quarter.
  - 5.3. 46% of placements last less than 13 weeks; 37% have lasted up to a year. 56 (17%) have lasted more than a year.
  - 5.4. £939,009 has been spent off-contract in the year to date (ie, on agencies that have not agreed terms with Guidant).
  - 5.5. 6.3% of Guidant agency staff are aged under 25 (compared to 4.3% of the Council's directly-employed staff). 60.8% are aged between 25 and 49 (compared to 54.2% of Council employees).
  - 5.6. 54.7% of agency staff through Guidant are men – compared to 39.8% of the Council's own staff.
  - 5.7. 1.6% of agency staff state they are disabled as compared to 6.7% of Council staff.
  - 5.8. 6.3% of agency staff state they are lesbian, gay or bisexual as compared to 4.4% of Council staff.
  - 5.9. 48.2% of agency staff state they are Christian; 43.5% state they have no religion/belief. This compares to 43.2% and 48.2% of Council staff respectively.

**5.10.** 53% of agency staff sourced through Guidant live in Bristol, the highest numbers in the BS5, BS4 and BS3 post code areas.

6. Agency staff are used for a variety of reasons. Used well, they can be a good quality and flexible resource – and an important talent pipeline that can help to address longstanding inequalities in the Council’s directly-employed workforce, particularly around age and gender.
7. The Council aims to scale back its use of agency staff from current levels in order to reduce spending, to maintain proportionality with the reducing size of its directly-employed workforce and to give priority wherever possible to existing staff to cover absence/vacancies or undertake project work as development opportunities.

### **Proposal**

8. That the Committee notes this report.

### **Other Options Considered**

9. None because this report is for information only.

### **Risk Assessment**

10. None because this report is for information only.

### **Public Sector Equality Duties**

- 11a) 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.

11b) No equality impact assessment has been undertaken because this report is for information only.

## **Legal and Resource Implications**

### **Legal**

The Council should ensure that it complies with any notice requirements before terminating any arrangements with organisations other than Guidant.

Kate Fryer, Solicitor  
14 November 2016

### **Financial**

#### **(a) Revenue**

The report sets out the financial implications of the spend on agency staff in this financial year to September 2016. This spend is across all service areas, including the HRA.

A review of agency spend is included as one of the mitigating actions to reduce the Council's forecast outturn deficit, as reported to Cabinet on 1st November 2016. This report sets out the progress that has been made to date and ongoing planned actions. The impact of these actions will be reflected in the Council's budget monitoring and forecasts.

Advice given by: Janet Ditte: Service Manager, Finance Business Support

Date: 16th November 2016

#### **(b) Capital**

Not applicable.

#### **Land**

Not applicable.

#### **Personnel**

HR implications are included within the report.

### **Appendices:**

None.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

#### **Background Papers:**

None.