

Committee: Standards and General Purposes Committee

Date: 25 July 2019

Subject: Report on the use of temporary workers and consultants

Lead officer: Kim Brown, HR Lead

Lead member: Councillor Mark Allison, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance

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Recommendations:

- A. To note progress made to monitor and control the use of temporary workers and consultants
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1. Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1. The Committee has received regular progress reports in relation to the number of interim appointments in the council and the mechanisms in place to monitor the use of such workers.

2. Details

- 2.1 The central monitoring database consists of all types of interim/temporary placement (over £30 pounds per hour).
- 2.2 The database is updated on a monthly basis and double-checked with departmental management teams (DMTs) for accuracy, with quarterly reports as at the end of June, September, December and March being reported to this committee.
- 2.3 As at the end of March 2019, the Council employed 139 interim/temporary workers at £30 per hour (or more) compared to 124 in March 18, which is an increase of 17 workers. Appendix 1 refers to the detail and composition of the interim workforce. Where possible, corporate contracts are used as they provide better value for the Council.
- 2.4 The committee on 30th July 2018 requested additional information for interims/temporary worker placements (as defined in para 2.1):
- the costs and numbers over a three year period

- the number of temporary workers who have converted to permanent roles with the Council also known as 'temp to perm'.
- 2.5 The engaging of most interim workers is via Comensura or the LGRP, which is a London wide contract for interim appointments. Even within the aforesaid existing contracts the Council has sought to get the best 'price' and in doing so have attracted high quality interims at 10% of the mark-up price. There have been instances due to market supply issues, although very few, when the Council has not used either of these contracts and has had to go 'off contract'. There are robust processes in place to manage this process, which requires a business case and financial checks to ensure there is a budget to pay for the assignment, as well as sign off by the Director of Corporate Services.
- 2.6 The Council is currently exploring a framework agreement with a designated supplier for the provision of Professional services for project related work. Each project will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine its needs, establish key milestones and deliverables upon which payments will be made on successfully meeting these targets. Adopting this approach to managing projects would generate greater Value for Money and deliver on project objectives. It is recognised that this is a skill set that we do not have sufficient resources of in the organisation because of the technical skills required.
- 2.7 The previously reported situation continues with by far the largest group of temporary workers being "on contract" agency and temporary staff appointed through the Council's corporate contract with Comensura for the supply of agency staff. Whilst there is an increase in the costs of interims via Comensura this represents a reduction in appointments, which are off contract or through LGRP. Interims are engaged with the involvement and oversight of the HR function by way of a database that supplies monthly spend and usage reports to Council managers, DMTs and the Corporate Management Team.
- 2.8 The Council has different delivery models to ensure services are able to realise efficiencies, become more resilient and effective by sharing services with other London Boroughs. In October 2016, the Legal shared services expanded to include Wandsworth and a year later Regulatory Services followed. As a result of the expansions a number of interims with pay rates over £30 per an hour transferred to Merton – the costs of these appointments are shared across the service and rechargeable to partner boroughs.
- 2.9 The Council introduced a temp to perm procedure to reduce the reliance on agency workers and allowed conversions from agency to permanent staff when certain conditions were met. Sixty (60) agency workers have transferred to permanent employment from September 2017 to 31st March 2019 of this number, three (3) alone in the quarter from January 19 to March 19, with more in the pipeline for 2019/20. Temp to perm conversion rates will continued to be reported to this Committee on a quarterly basis.

- 2.10 Within the services career pathways are being developed through the creation of apprenticeships schemes (where standards are available) and ensuring that that the apprenticeship levy is used to meet the development element.
- 2.11 The total spend for interim and temporary workers from 2016 to date are listed below: interims via Comensura Graph 1 and Table 1, LGRP and off contract Graph 2 and Table 2

Graph 1 – List totals for 16/17, 17/18, 18/19 and year to date for interim and temporary workers – Comensura

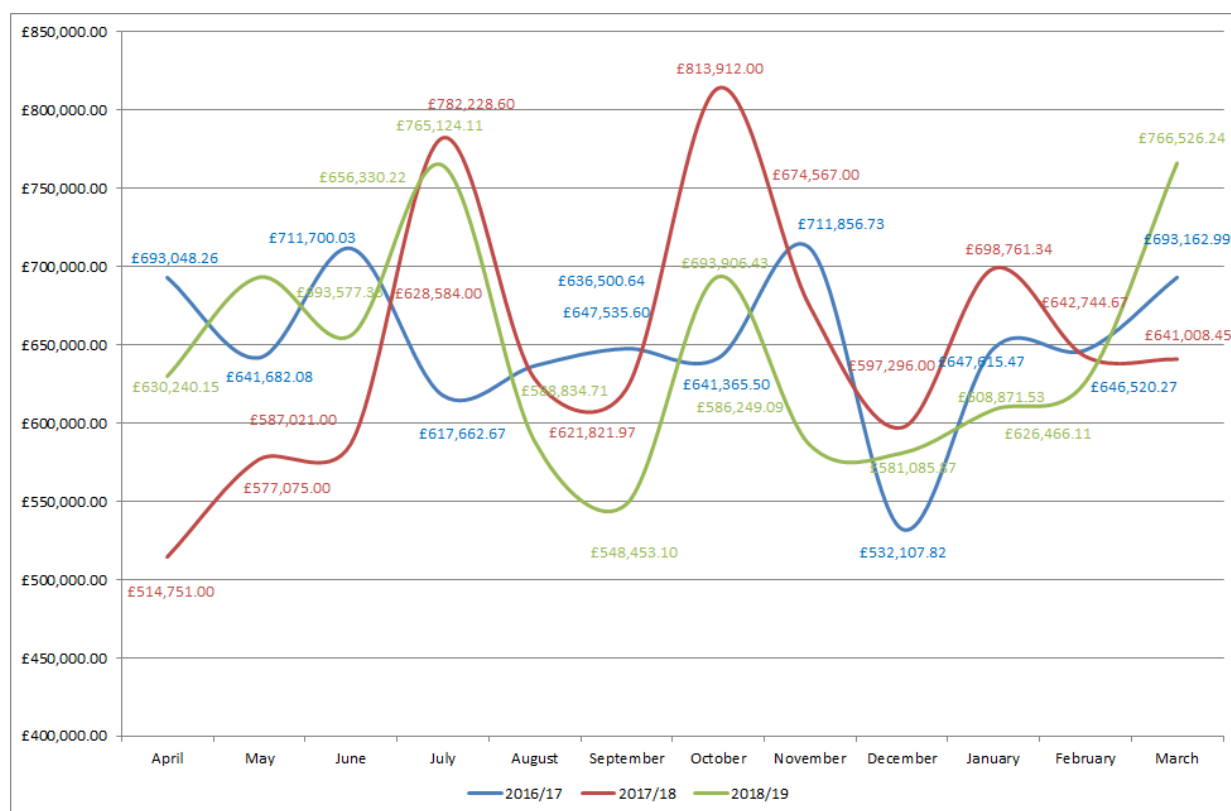


Table 1 - List totals for 16/17, 17/18, 18/19 and year to date for Interim and temporary workers – Comensura

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
April	£693,048.26	£514,751.00	£630,240.15
May	£641,682.08	£577,075.00	£693,577.33
June	£711,700.03	£587,021.00	£656,330.22
July	£617,662.67	£782,228.60	£765,124.11
August	£636,500.64	£628,584.00	£588,834.71
September	£647,535.60	£621,821.97	£548,453.10
October	£641,365.50	£813,912.00	£693,906.43
November	£711,856.73	£674,567.00	£586,249.09
December	£532,107.82	£597,296.00	£581,085.87
January	£647,615.47	£698,761.34	£608,871.53
February	£646,520.27	£642,744.67	£626,466.11
March	£693,162.99	£641,008.45	£766,526.24

Graph 2 - Total of LGRP and Off Contract assignments over £30 for each financial year

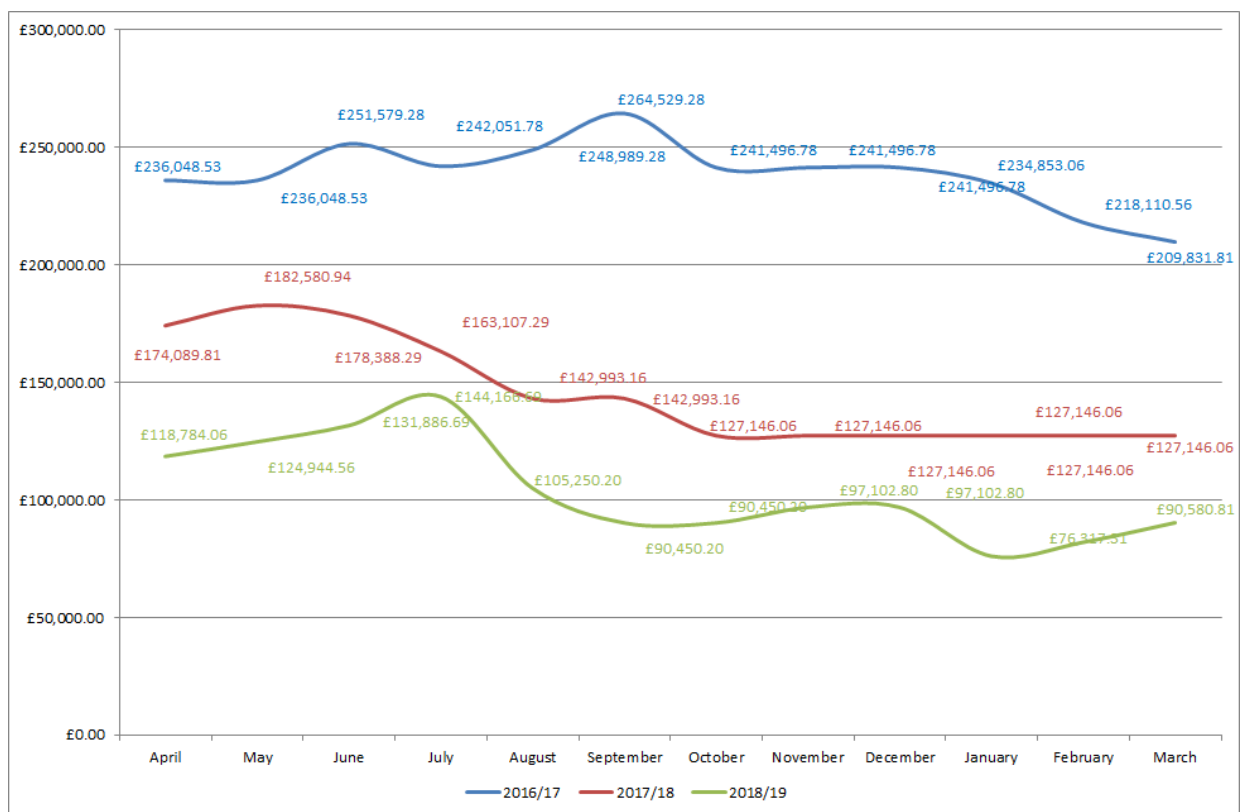


Table 2 - Total of LGRP and Off Contract assignments over £30 for each financial year

2016/17				2017/18			
	LGRP	Off Contract	Total		LGRP	Off Contract	Total
Apr-16	£60,027.88	£176,020.66	£236,048.53	Apr-17	£60,869.63	£113,220.19	£174,089.81
May-16	£60,027.88	£176,020.66	£236,048.53	May-17	£80,368.26	£102,212.69	£182,580.94
Jun-16	£82,551.63	£169,027.66	£251,579.28	Jun-17	£83,205.60	£95,182.69	£178,388.29
Jul-16	£82,551.63	£159,500.16	£242,051.78	Jul-17	£67,924.60	£95,182.69	£163,107.29
Aug-16	£93,559.13	£155,430.16	£248,989.28	Aug-17	£58,170.48	£84,822.69	£142,993.16
Sep-16	£81,349.13	£183,180.16	£264,529.28	Sep-17	£58,170.48	£84,822.69	£142,993.16
Oct-16	£70,526.63	£170,970.16	£241,496.78	Oct-17	£42,323.38	£84,822.69	£127,146.06
Nov-16	£70,526.63	£170,970.16	£241,496.78	Nov-17	£42,323.38	£84,822.69	£127,146.06
Dec-16	£70,526.63	£170,970.16	£241,496.78	Dec-17	£42,323.38	£84,822.69	£127,146.06
Jan-17	£70,526.63	£164,326.44	£234,853.06	Jan-18	£42,323.38	£84,822.69	£127,146.06
Feb-17	£70,526.63	£147,583.94	£218,110.56	Feb-18	£42,323.38	£84,822.69	£127,146.06
Mar-17	£70,526.63	£139,305.19	£209,831.81	Mar-18	£42,323.38	£84,822.69	£127,146.06
2018/19							
	LGRP	Off Contract	Total				
Apr-18	£33,961.38	£84,822.69	£118,784.06				
May-18	£49,371.88	£75,572.69	£124,944.56				
Jun-18	£56,314.00	£75,572.69	£131,886.69				
Jul-18	£72,594.00	£75,572.69	£144,166.69				
Aug-18	£71,950.20	£33,300.00	£105,250.20				
Sep-18	£71,950.20	£18,500.00	£90,450.20				
Oct-18	£71,950.20	£18,500.00	£90,450.20				
Nov-18	£78,602.80	£18,500.00	£97,102.80				
Dec-18	£78,602.80	£18,500.00	£97,102.80				
Jan-19	£67,067.31	£9,250.00	£76,317.31				
Feb-19	£73,005.81	£9,250.00	£82,255.81				
Mar-19	£81,330.81	£9,250.00	£90,580.81				

2.12 From January 19 to March 19 we have increased the number of staff paid £30 per hour and above (Graph 3 / Table 3) by 15, and for the first time we have also increased year on year by 2 workers from March 18 to March 19. Overall, during the quarter we have had 11 leavers and 26 new starters, and these new starters fall under the following categories; 10 workers engaged for project work, 8 engaged to cover permanent positions, and the other 8 are engaged for short term assignments, sickness cover and secondment cover.

Graph 3 - Total no. of interim workers over £30 in each financial year

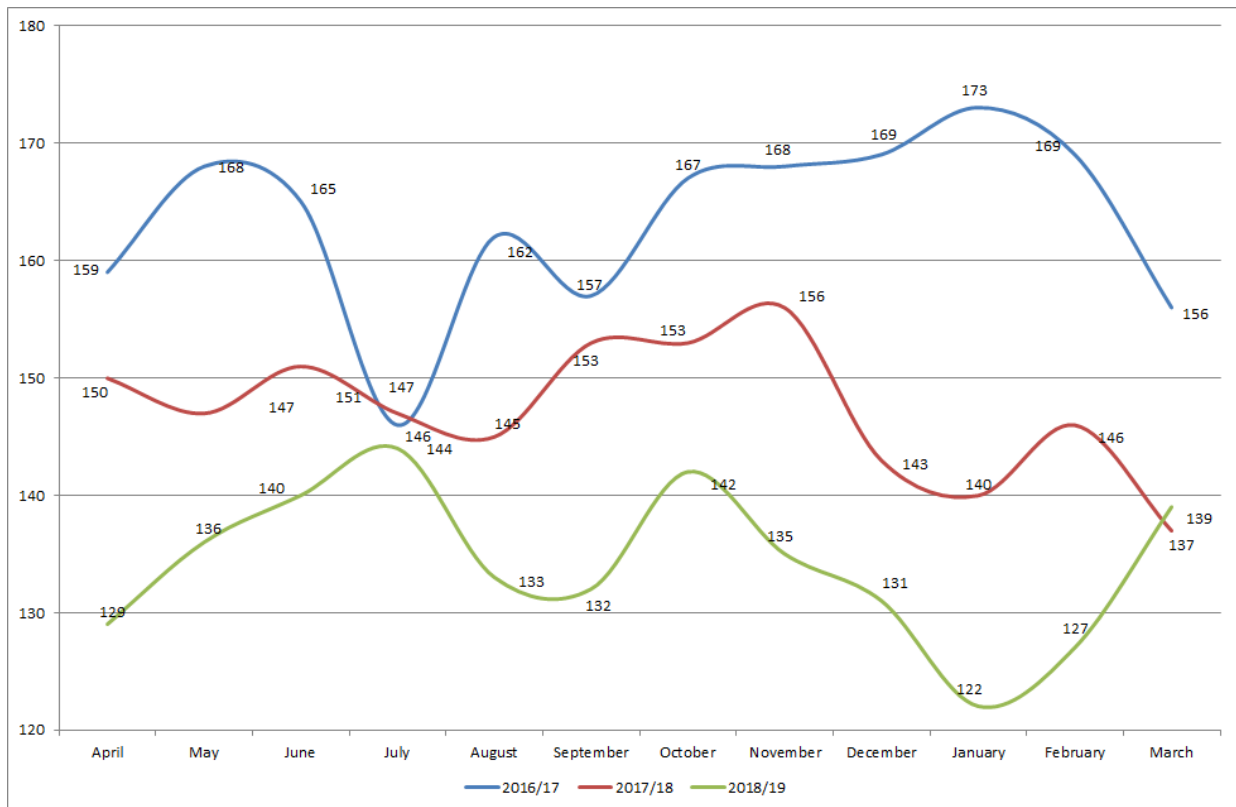


Table 3 - Total no. of interim workers over £30 in each financial year

No. of workers over £30/hr					No. of workers over £30/hr				
Month	Comensura	LGRP	Off Contract	Total	Month	Comensura	LGRP	Off Contract	Total
Apr-16	125	8	26	159	Apr-17	124	8	18	150
May-16	134	8	26	168	May-17	123	8	16	147
Jun-16	129	8	28	165	Jun-17	128	7	16	151
Jul-16	108	8	30	146	Jul-17	126	5	16	147
Aug-16	124	9	29	162	Aug-17	124	5	16	145
Sep-16	119	9	29	157	Sep-17	131	6	16	153
Oct-16	131	7	29	167	Oct-17	132	5	16	153
Nov-16	132	7	29	168	Nov-17	135	5	16	156
Dec-16	133	7	29	169	Dec-17	122	5	16	143
Jan-17	138	7	28	173	Jan-18	120	4	16	140
Feb-17	135	7	27	169	Feb-18	127	4	15	146
Mar-17	128	7	21	156	Mar-18	118	4	15	137
No. of workers over £30/hr									
Month	Comensura	LGRP	Off Contract	Total					
Apr-18	112	2	15	129					
May-18	119	3	14	136					
Jun-18	122	4	14	140					
Jul-18	129	5	10	144					
Aug-18	117	7	9	133					
Sep-18	120	7	5	132					
Oct-18	130	7	5	142					
Nov-18	122	8	5	135					
Dec-18	118	8	5	131					
Jan-19	112	6	4	122					
Feb-19	115	7	5	127					
Mar-19	127	8	4	139					

2.13 Directors have been invited to provide short overall summary comments on agency/consultant usage and action being taken in their area and these are:

Children, Schools and Families

CSF currently have 2 agency workers via Comensura, which have been here over 24 months and 1 consultant over 24 months.

Positive action continues to be taken to reduce the CSF reliance on agency workers and Agency costs continue to be relatively low for this service.

CSF continues to actively recruit to permanent roles, with 16 roles currently being recruited to. In particular, the use of consultants has decreased significantly since this time last year.

In all but a few exceptions, the CSF agency workers and consultants are covering social work posts including frontline social workers and other social workers have to have professionally manageable caseloads, these are now creeping up from 15 per worker, and the position will continue to be reviewed.

The others are for specialist posts such as speech and language therapy which is also a statutory requirement as part of children’s Education, Health and Care Plans.

Information is provided monthly to DMT on the usage, costs, hourly rates and length of engagement of agency workers so that management action can be taken in any case where the use of an agency worker can no longer be justified.

HR has worked closely with the social care management team to review and update the retention packages to ensure that we are able to recruit the right talent but also being able to retain them to provide continuity of service to some of our most vulnerable clients. Our retention measures have been submitted for benchmarking against other London boroughs.

We expect the reduction in the use of interim and temporary workers to continue

Community and Housing

C&H currently have 6 agency workers via Comensura, which have been here over 24 months and 1 Consultant over 24 months.

Within Community and Housing, use of agency staff is predominantly within adult social care and in specialist, hard to recruit to posts. Targeted recruitment is in progress and this is outlined in detail in the appendix. A principal social worker post is now in post. Her role will focus on recruiting new staff, retention and developing new opportunities for career development

We have reviewed and amended payments for Approved Mental Health Social Workers (AMHPS) to bring it into line with south west London. This is a particularly hard to recruit to statutory function. The aim is to increase the number of permanent AMPHS and reduce the use of agency staff. We are also reviewing access to AMHP training for existing staff.

Social Work posts are difficult to recruit too across London and nationally. The Department of Health & Social Care and Skills for Care have launched a national recruitment campaign for roles across social care.
(<http://www.everydayisdifferent.com/home>)

Corporate Services

CS currently have 7 agency workers via Comensura, which have been here over 24 months.

Of the 7 agency workers, 6 are lawyers in the Shared Legal Service (SLLP) paid for by the five participatory boroughs; mainly in the property and procurement team where we compete with the private sector. We have an ongoing recruitment campaign but still have limited success in attracting permanent staff. We are looking at further temp to perm within SLLP and there is one in the pipeline. For the final agency worker, they left the organisation on April 2019.

There has been a short term increase in support via the LBRP to assist with the closing process as mentioned in previous Final Accounts update reports and with our Draft Accounts completed, permanent solutions are now being explored. There are five agency workers linked to projects and therefore no permanent roles exist.

Environment and Regeneration

E&R currently have 10 agency workers via Comensura, which have been here over 24 months and 1 Consultant over 24 months.

Usage is relatively low in E&R and reducing. A number of workers are covering positions, which are subject to a service review in particular the Regulatory Service Partnership where a new management structure came into effect on 1st November 2018. This has temporarily increased the number of agency staff whilst the consultation and reorganisation was concluded. Further work will be undertaken to review the non-management staff over the coming months and this again may temporarily increase agency staff use

Others are providing specialist skills or are covering [often short term] externally funded roles including capital schemes. There are a number of professional areas where there is an extremely competitive market in which all London boroughs are struggling to recruit and retain permanent staff. This includes Traffic engineers, Planning officers and Building control surveyors where the emergence of a strong interim market as well as private sector competition [in building control particularly] has changed employment patterns and our ability to recruit and retain staff.

E&R DMT reviews this matter on a regular basis in order to manage risk including the financial impact.

- 2.14 There has been a reduction in the use of off contract appointments due to monitoring and the introduction of IR35 tax legislation in April 2017. IR35 is tax legislation designed to combat tax avoidance by workers supplying their services to clients via an intermediary, such as a limited company, but who would be an employee if the intermediary was not used.
- 2.15 The purpose of IR35 is to prevent contractors, consultants and freelancers from trading via their own limited company in order to pay less tax and national insurance contributions (NIC) than if they were employed directly by their end client or agency. This has only been rolled out to the Public sector; the rollout to the Private sector has been delayed.
- 2.16 HR monitors suppliers and contractors to ensure they are IR35 compliant.

3 Timetable

- 3.1 Regular monthly reports of all interim/temporary placements are sent to departments and suitable “challenge” meetings are held with DMTs on a monthly basis. Agency spend and number of agency staff forming part of the workforce are reported to CMT on a monthly basis as part of the HR Metrics.
- 3.2 Quarterly updates will be provided to this committee. September information (Quarter 2) will be reported to 8th November meeting.

4 Financial, resource and property implications

- 4.1 The aim is to challenge hiring managers’ interim/temporary placements and reduce overall costs associated with interim workers where possible, noting that in many cases the Council has to cover statutory functions.

5 Legal and statutory implications

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the report

6 Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications

- 6.1 The amendments that have been made to the Council’s HR policies and processes will improve confidence in the Council’s HR recruitment procedure and the maintenance of the interim position database to provide the means to ensure compliance with Members’ requirements.

7 Crime and Disorder implications

- 7.1 None

8 Risk management and health and safety implications

- 8.1 These are detailed in the Ernst and Young report of 12 March 2014 and subsequent reports.

9 Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report

- 9.1 None

10 Background papers

- 10.1 None