

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources

26th September 2019

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources – Councillor J Mutton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Deputy Chief Executive (People)

Ward(s) affected:

None

Title:

Agency Workers – Performance Management Report Q1: 1st April to 30th June 2019

Is this a key decision?

No.

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Member with performance information on the use of agency workers procured for the Q1 period 2019/2020.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources is requested to note:

1. The recruitment and retention challenges impacting and affecting the business and strategies in place or working towards to support these.
2. The agency / interim spends for Q1 2019/20.
3. The cumulative spend for both agency workers via Reed and outside Reed (Table 2.1).
4. The upward trajectory of permanent filled jobs in Children Services (Appendix 1).

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 shows a 12 month upward trajectory of filled permanent posts in Children's Social Care.

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it, or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Agency Workers and Interim Managers – Performance Management Report Q1, 1 April to 30 June 2019.

1. Context (or background)

1.1 Coventry City Council has a Master Vendor Contract with Reed for the supply of agency workers. Through the contract, Reed supply all suitable agency workers either through their own agency or via a 2nd tier arrangement with other agencies, using rates of pay based on an agreed pay policy and a negotiated mark-up rate with the Master Vendor. The information supplied by Reed gives detailed information on agency worker usage and expenditure. Spend is based on timesheets paid during the quarter.

Reed is not always able to supply the required agency workers and where this is the case, service areas will use other suppliers. However, where other suppliers are being used, the business is engaging with Reed to bring other suppliers and or workers under the Master Vendor contract. Reed covers all agency workers required by the core council. The contract does not cover agency workers in schools.

1.2 This report highlights across the council several examples where agency is being used during service pressure or restructure/change and special projects. This has a cumulative impact across the business incorporating numerous internal and external factors that affect the context of the council and demonstrate why using agency is on occasions appropriate, but also provides detail around what measures are in place to ensure this doesn't drift.

Whilst the control of agency spend is managed locally within individual service areas, the internal and external factors that drive our workforce challenges lends itself to the whole of the organisation. Financial constraints, technology, political, local and legislative agenda's as well as the speed of change, high customer demand and more attractive offers add to the recruitment and retention pressures the organisation is faced with.

We operate in a very tight labour market i.e. more jobs than candidates, the market is candidate led e.g. financially driven, which in turn creates both internal and external challenges and a highly competitive environment when recruiting and retaining staff. Coupled with skills and experience shortages, locally as well as nationally in qualified and specialist arenas specifically social care, planning and other professional services including surveyors, transportation and UTMC. An ageing workforce also contributes to the recruitment challenges as well as recruiting and retaining staff across 5 generations with differing needs, expectations and requirements, puts extra pressure on service areas to attract and retain the right people.

1.3 The apprenticeship levy has provided some leeway in creating opportunities to address some of these areas, however, unexpected staff cover has contributed to the increased pressure and demand on frontline services across both directorates. Local and national skills shortages and a sparse candidate labour market pool therefore requires reliance on agency workers to counteract the risk of not being able to provide a front-line service. In order to continue to make efficiencies through the organisation, dictates the use of a temporary workforce until such arrangements have been concluded.

1.4 Alternative options can be considered for example pools of workers are viable options, however, they require funding. In addition, to maximise the potential for both service and individuals and to allow for cross service working, would require skills sets in various disciplines across the service areas, which can present problems for regular updated training and maintenance of skills.

At the same time regular working could impact employee status as well as increase the temporary workforce; options need to consider the financial costs to manage and resource. Agency usage is on a pay as you use basis and incurs charges via pay rates x hours worked and agency fees. In comparison with financial obligations to resource a pool, will require a permanent resource – which will incur a fixed price e.g. to use and to source.

Career pathways, development opportunities and graduate placements as well as redeployment outplacements are activities currently being utilised and developed for maximum potential across the business to enhance our candidate pools.

The recruitment service has recently appointed a new Recruitment Manager and the implementation of a new recruitment model will aim to support and assist innovative and direct sourcing of candidates to recruit to vacancies as an alternative to agency usage. In addition, close working with HR/OD will support more collaborative working and pooling of ideas to address many of the recruitment and retention issues that all employers are facing in today's constant changing and challenging times.

1.5 The commentary throughout this report will provide more detail around the specific service area.

2 Directorate Commentary on Agency Worker Spend for Q1 2019/20

Table 2.1

The table below highlights the **overall cumulative spend** on the use of agency workers with Reed and outside Reed, and compares Q4 2018/2019 and Q1 2019/20.

	Q4 2018/19	Q1 2019/20	Increase/Decrease
Reed	£1,155,406	£1,173,165	+17,759
Outside Reed	£328,777	£127,325	-£201,452
Total	£1,484,183	£1,300,490	-£183,693

The below table provides a breakdown of the cumulative spend across the Directorates for the same periods.

	Q4 2018/19		Q1 2019/20	
	Reed	Outside Reed	Reed	Outside Reed
PEOPLE	£1,009,693	£246,457	£966,246	£77,675
PLACE	£145,713	£82,320	£206,918	£49,290
TOTAL	£1,155,406	£328,777	£1,173,165	£126,965

Table 2.2

Tables 2.2 below shows comparative expenditure for the **Master Vendor Contract** between Q4 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20 as well as Q1 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20. There has been an increase of £18K in spend between Q4 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20 and a **decrease of £41k** compared to the same quarter in 2018/19. The Master Vendor Contract covers all agency workers required by the core Council, the Reed contract does not cover agency workers in schools.

Spend comparing Q4 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		Spend Q4 2018/19	Spend Q1 2019/20	Increase / Decrease £000's
PEOPLE	Adult Social Care	£235,279	£248,106	£12,827
	Children and Young People's Services	£684,719	£580,141	-£104,578
	Customer Services & Transformation	£84,974	£137,999	£53,025
	Education and Skills	£4,721	£0	-£4,721
	People Directorate Total	£1,009,693	£966,246	-£43,447

PLACE				
PLACE	Finance & Corporate Services	£20,347	£57,874	£37,527
	Project Management and Property Services	£4,534	£12,704	£8,170
	Streetscene & Regulatory Services	£112,750	£105,648	£7,102
	Transportation & Highways	£0	£14,884	£14,884
	City Centre & Major Projects Development	£8,082	£15,806	£7,724
	Place Directorate Total	£145,713	£206,918	£61,205
	Total	£1,155,406	£1,173,165	£17,759

Spend comparing Q1 2018/19 to Q1 2019/20		Spend Q1 2018/19	Spend Q1 2019/20	Increase / Decrease
PEOPLE	Adult Social Care	£182,644	£248,106	£65,462
	Children and Young People's Services	£751,398	£580,141	-£171,257
	Customer Services & Transformation	£70,171	£137,999	£67,828
	Education and Skills	£0	£0	£0
	People Directorate Total	£1,004,213	£966,246	-£37,967
PLACE	Finance & Corporate Services	£29,202	£57,874	£28,672
	Project Management and Property Services	£7,830	£12,704	£4,874
	Streetscene & Regulatory Services	£163,480	£105,648	-£57,832
	Transportation & Highways	£5,108	£14,884	£9,776
	City Centre & Major Projects Development	£4,505	£15,806	£11,301
	Place Directorate Total	£210,127	£206,918	-£3,209
	Total	£1,214,340	£1,173,165	-£41,175

3. People Directorate

The table below shows the main areas that contribute to the Children's and Adult's spend in table 2.2 above:

	Q4 £'000	Q1 £'000
Children's Services: Social workers (Inc. Senior Social Workers)	606	503
Children's Services: Senior roles e.g. Social Work Team Managers, IR0's (G9+).	40	19.5
Adults' Services: Social workers (Inc. AMHP)	191	202
Adults' Services: Support Workers & Drivers	7	2

3.1 Children's Services – Total Spend Q1 £580k (Q4 £685k)

Children Services continues to use agency workers to fulfil frontline services. The bullet points below provides an overview of the impact of their ongoing recruitment and retention interventions:

- A continued stable positive downward trajectory of agency staff since December 2018. There was a further 15% decrease in agency numbers in comparison to Q4.
- There has been a 4% increase in filled posts during Q1 of 2019-20 and a 13% increase over the past 12 months.
- The majority of current agency staff are covering maternity leave or vacancies that have recently been filled with permanent recruitment where the candidate is yet to start in post
- Q1 saw Childrens Services host another open evening held to ensure recruitment, brand awareness and reputation building is optimised through multiple channels. This was boosted by Senior Management attending.
- The development of a social work academy which is attracting cohorts of 12 newly qualified social workers in to a highly supportive and learning environment for the first six months of their career is contributing to increased stability and reduced turnover.

3.2 Adult Services – Total Spend Q1 £248k (Q4 £235k)

The number of Agency Social Workers in Adult Services continues to cover posts which are being permanently recruited to and to maintain operational service levels. There has been a £13K increase from Q4 to Q1. The reasons for continuing to employ agency social workers are:

- a) Older People agency expenditure has been necessary in order to maintain operational services at optimal levels whilst permanent recruitment is underway.
- b) Adult Social Care also employ support workers and OT/OTA's within provider services on an agency basis in order to maintain the staffing levels required to meet the needs of service users in registered care provision. Agency support workers tend to be required in order to cover vacancies where recruitment is underway and some occasions of sickness absence. The use of agency OT/OTA has increased due to transferring services from NHS partners to the Council. A large permanent recruitment campaign is underway for this.
- c) IPS has continued to reduce agency usage through management actions and is continuing to develop recruitment processes with HR to minimise future agency use.

3.3 Customer Services & Transformation Q1 £138k (Q4 £85k)

Agency spend of £138k for Q1 in **Customer Services and Business Services** represents a 62% increase on Q4. The continued usage of temporary workers is explained below;

- A review of Business Services has been undertaken and now moved into the implementation phase of the proposals. Through discussions at the project board an agreement was reached to avoid recruiting to vacancies where possible to ensure the services continued to be supported and to allow posts to be secured for those undergoing consultation. As a consequence it has been agreed with the service area that temporary support would be used to fill vacant hours.
- Agency cover via Northgate for Housing Benefit Online Forms – against 10019 (Customer Services). This has been due to shortage of resource and the team is in the process of recruiting / training – This is anticipated to end by the end of the calendar year.
- Housing & Homelessness - The service were given approval to recruit 2 additional agency staff from March due to the increase in work regarding temporary accommodation. Since Q4 the service have reduced agency spend and numbers of staff and as of end of August will only have 2 agency staff in the service. Efforts are continuing to work to decrease this further through recruitment to vacant posts in the structure.
- The £15k agency worker spend in **ICT & Digital** is across three distinct areas. We are using agency staff to assist with the closure of the Mitel platform and migration to Skype as well as utilising agency staff to assist with the mobile phone deployment project. Reed are used to help with recruiting to some of our more specialist permanent roles. Moving forward we are looking to bring our reliance on agency staff to a close – especially on the Mitel project. The need for this agency resource will cease by the end of Q2 2019/20.
- **HROD** used Reed for a period of time to cover maternity and a recruitment to a vacant post to enable the continuation of business (1 day per week).

- **HR Recruitment Team** used a temp to cover tasks during a period of transformation. This spend will not continue following Q2.
- **Procurement & commissioning** total spend of £14K, relates to the use of one agency worker providing cover for Contracts workload and vacant post interviews are scheduled for these permanent posts in September.

3.4 Education Services

Education Services have reduced there spend to £0 from Q4 to Q1.

4. Place Directorate – Total Spend Q1 £207k (Q4 £146k)

The table below shows the main areas that contribute to the “Streetpride, Streetscene and Regulatory Services” in table 2.2:

	Q4 £'000	Q1 £'000
Waste Services	34	18.5
Street Pride	49	66
Planning & Regulation	29	16.5

4.1 Waste Services - The spend in domestic waste relates primarily to drivers & refuse collectors which has been used to cover sickness & leave due to insufficient cover in the casual pool. A number of individuals in the casual pool have moved to seasonal & full time positions in both domestic & commercial waste with recruitment into the pool now due. Sickness is running at 19 days/ft with the pool only covering for 10 days/ft.

4.2 Streetpride spend (Q1 £66k) continues to reflect the high number of vacant posts within the service and the seasonal nature of the service. The number of Agency staff used by the service will reduce as a result of the current recruitment exercise in the service area. A recent recruitment activity will reduce this spend which should show next quarter.

4.3 Planning Services Within Planning Services, the Development Management team currently employs 1 agency officer. The team has experienced various vacancies over the last couple of years and due to the level of workload in the team and difficulty recruiting to the vacancies it has been necessary to employ agency officers. Whilst the team has just recruited to the last vacancy, with the new officer starting at the beginning of August, there is now a requirement for maternity leave cover from the end of August. We are advertising for a temporary member of staff to cover the maternity leave but until we have someone in post we have retained the existing officer extending the contract until the end of October 2019. If we are successful with recruiting to the temporary post and no further vacancies open up we will be able to cease using agency staff.

4.4 Finance and Corporate Services agency spend in Q1 is £58k, increased from Q4 £20k as anticipated. This is due to posts being covered by agency staff in Legal Services covering long term sickness and maternity leave. Costs increased as a further agency staff was taken on in

Q1 to cover vacant posts. There are some delays in recruitment to permanent posts to support career development opportunities pending qualification.

4.5 City Centre & Major Projects, CSW Sport is a hosted service which is governed by a partnership board. All permanent recruitment has been put on hold by the Board while a transformation project is scoped and any change concluded. Therefore, agency workers and freelance contractors are being used to deliver the service during this time. The spend in Q1 is £8k. Following any transformation project the service intends to reinstate recruitment processes.

4.6 Project Management & Property Services spend in Q1 £12k relates to short term cover of a Senior Building Surveyor agency post was needed to deliver a number of building related projects on the Council's Commercial Property Portfolio to include a Planned Maintenance Programme. At the time there was no Building Surveying resource in the Council with all Building Surveying consultancy being outsourced except for the project work which was then picked up by this agency post. A full time Building Surveyor position has now been created and filled, so this spend on an agency Building Surveyor has now ceased and outsourcing of building consultancy reduced.

5. Spend outside of the Reed Contract

Table 5.1 below shows comparative expenditure outside of the Reed contract between Q4 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20 as well as Q1 2018/19 and Q4 2019/20.

There has been a **decrease of £201k** in spend outside of the Reed contract between Q4 and Q1. With a **decrease of £79.5k** in comparison to the same quarter Q1 2018/19.

Table 5.1:

a) Q4 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20

Directorate	Total Spend Q4 2018/19	Total Spend Q1 2019/20	Increase / Decrease
People: Children's	£109,491	£20,996	-£88,495
People: Education	£82,000	£31,363	-£50,637
People: Cust. Serv.	£54,966	£25,316	-£29,650
Place: Professional Services Contract	£82,320	£27,621	-£54,699
Place: Waste & Fleet Services	£0	£22,029	£22,029
TOTAL	£328,777	£127,325	-£201,452

b) Q1 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20

Directorate	Total Spend	Total Spend	Increase / Decrease
	<u>Q1 2018/19</u>	<u>Q1 2019/20</u>	
People: Children's	£87,624	£20,996	-£66,628
People: Education	£27,765	£31,363	£3,598
People: Cust. Serv.	£20,934	£25,316	£4,382
Place: Professional Services Contract	£70,323	£27,621	-£42,702
Place: Waste & Fleet Services	£0	£22,029	£22,029
TOTAL	£206,646	£127,325	-£79,321

5.2 People: Children's Services

Spend of £21K in Q1. (Q4 £110k)

These costs refer to two interim contractors secured directly by the Council who supported service delivery and improvement. Of these, one was filling a Team Manager post and the other an Improvement Partner working closely with external bodies. The assignments for both of these individuals have now completed and there will be no off contract spend moving forward..

5.3 People: Education Q1 £31k (Q4 £110k)

Centrally employed teachers/teaching assistants:

Q1 has seen a decrease in spend (£50k) as agency usage shrank but the use of agency staff is still needed due to sickness, vacancy cover and difficulties recruiting. Costs for the provision of teaching for specific children with an education Health and Care Plan that are either not in school or require supplementary provision e.g. LAC is a continued due to safeguarding requirements. The Management Board and Director have been informed and are aware of the pressures. Once the restructure is in place for September 2019 the amount should see a gradual decrease over 4 months once we are able to appoint staff.

AP CELC centre continue to use agency staff due to open vacancies and the restructure having been ongoing for 12 months. This should come down as we now have a structure in place 1st September 2019 and will be recruiting staff to roles However there will be a small ongoing elements due to sickness cover

The recruitment team are working with the Service area & Reed to discuss how we can shift the supply in these areas through to our Master Vendor agreement.

5.4 People: Customer Services

Spend of £25k in Q1. (Q4 £54k)

There has been a decrease in spend outside of Reed in Customer Services (Homelessness). There is still a need for continued temporary support (as set out in 3.3) but the service trying to move the spend through to the managed service.

5.5 Place – Professional Services Contract

The revenue spend in Q1 is £28k (Q4 £82k).

Professional Services contract spend has been significantly reduced having successfully filled a number of vacant permanent posts using the Transport & Highways microsite and recruitment campaigns, the service continue to recruit using these methods with a view to further reduce agency spend where possible.

For posts that prove difficult to recruit to, services continue exploring options such as career grading, career development opportunity and graduate placement. Where possible, costs are recharged to relevant revenue costs to Capital projects and external funding to reduce the impact on core budgets.

5.6 Place – Waste & Fleet Services

Spend in Q1 is £22K (Q4 £0)

The reason for the increase in spend in Q1 is due to the Master Vendor being unable to provide staff for short term cover for an urgent cover need for 10 refuse collectors. The external supplier (Drive Force) has since been added to REED's supply chain by the Recruitment Team. Spend should fall in subsequent quarters as supply moves to REED,

6. Overall Management Comment

The Master Vendor contract is a planned strategy to work towards reducing the level of agency spends and to better understand where and how we use agency workers.

There will always be the need to use agency workers. The current usage continues to cover extra workload, vacancy, sickness absence and short-term cover whilst Service Reviews are taking place and to cope with sudden surges of demand. This will require the need for scarce skills and workers during these reviews; organisational restructures and sudden peaks in demand.

In terms of the cost of using agency workers, it is important to note that not all of the cost is in addition to normal staffing spend. Although agency cover associated with sickness absence in front line services is often an additional cost, in the case of agency cover for vacant posts the cost will be funded at least in part by the relevant staffing budget due to increase in demand of services.

Where opportunities exist for bulk recruitment campaigns to front line essential services, the Human Resources Recruitment Team will continue to work with service managers to identify workers, who are available for casual, temporary or permanent work in order to reduce the use of agency workers.

However, some roles continue to be hard to recruit particularly as we notice a skills shortage across the wider labour market which in turn creates a highly competitive employee led market place which is candidate driven. This is becoming more notable in areas that require legislative knowledge and experience as well as those of a specialist skill set.

In the case of children's social workers there has been some success with the current campaign which has been evolved to make extensive use of social media and other recruitment initiative to attract talent. Nevertheless, recruitment of experienced, high quality children's social workers continues to be difficult reflecting the national shortage of experienced social workers.

The new Master Vendor contract started on 25th June 2018 and is now embedded fully across the authority. The new contract is joint with Solihull and again is a hybrid Master Vendor.

The need for managers to ensure that the process of filling vacancies is undertaken at the earliest opportunity has been communicated to senior management teams and this has been reflected in the process to be used for the new contract.

The requirement that all engagement of agency staff be approved by senior management has been communicated to management teams. This requirement has been built into the set-up for the new contract. Combined with a consistent approach in the way data is recorded and collected should allow for governance and monitoring on the use of agency workers.

7. Results of consultation undertaken

- 7.1 The report sets out the steps the Council is taking to reduce expenditure on agency workers, particularly in those areas where they are used most intensively.
- 7.2 Officers will continue to bring the monitoring information to the Cabinet Member and steps will continue to be taken to endeavour to reduce the level of expenditure.
- 7.3 Management Information has given the opportunity for the Recruitment Team to target large areas with high usage of agency workers to try and reduce the need for agency workers. This work is ongoing.

8. Timetable for implementing this decision

Not applicable

9. Comments from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

9.1 Financial implications

Quarterly monitoring of expenditure on agency workers will continue throughout the contract.

Reed operate a live management accounts system which places the cost of agency workers in the period the work took place rather than the period of time in which the Council was billed

for or paid the related invoices. The system shows the volume of agency activity/usage in a particular quarter irrespective of when invoices are paid.

Reeds system only incorporates timesheets authorised by managers and therefore the costs for a particular quarter will have a small tendency to increase throughout the year as more timesheets are authorised. We actively work with the master vendor to keep outstanding timesheets to a minimum.

Spend outside of the Reed contract, relates to the invoices paid during the relevant period. This expenditure relates to both temporary workers supplied by agencies other than Reed and to interim workers who operate under a PSC (Personal Service Company) with whom we contract directly.

9.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

10. Other implications

10.1 The Agency Worker Contract arrangement provides good value for money in relation to the procurement of agency workers. It also provides firmer controls on the use of agency workers and has in place sound management reporting to see where spend is taking place to target recruitment, maximise resources, and reduce spend on agency workers.

10.2 How is risk being managed?

There may be a risk to the Council where managers go outside of the Reed and contract directly with workers with the advent of changes to IR35 arrangements. There has been numerous communications across the Council to inform managers of changes and this will continue into the future.

10.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Through the rigorous monitoring of agency worker usage and alternative strategies for resourcing short-term work requirements, the dependency on agency workers should be reduced. The Council's Policy on the use of agency workers states that Agency Workers should only be used when:

- Proper recruitment processes have failed to secure an appointment and staff cover has become crucial to the delivery of services;
- Short-term temporary cover is required until proper recruitment processes have been completed and an appointment is made;
- Unplanned absences that require immediate cover to ensure continuity of services;
- Unplanned, short-term or peak workloads occur.

Human Resources are proactively supporting managers to reduce agency spend.

10.4 Equalities / EIA

The master vendor has made considerable efforts to ensure that the equalities monitoring form is completed. The graphs in appendix 3 show the main equalities data at corporate level for the agency workers who were on assignment with us in the month of June 2018.

No equality impact assessment has been carried out as the recommendations do not constitute a change in service or policy.

10.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

10.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Pete Fahy	Director of Adult Services	People	3 rd September 2019	5 th September
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Barrie Hastie	Director of Finance & Corp Serv	Place	3 rd September 2019	5 th September
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Member: Councillor J Mutton	Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources		5 September, 2019	5 September, 2019

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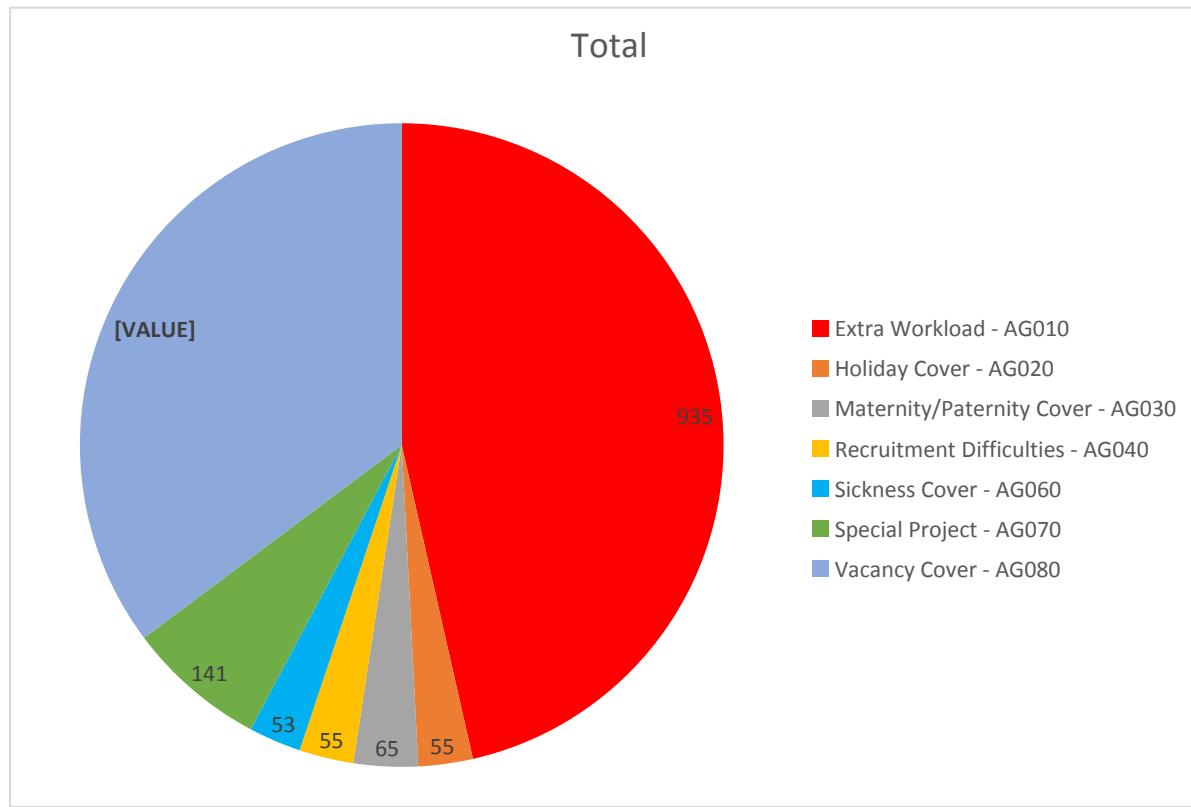
Appendix 1 – Children Services

Please see below graph showing the 12 month upward trajectory of filled permanent posts in Children's Social Care.



Appendix 2 – Reasons For Temp Usage

The below chart lists the reasons for temporary worker use via REED (on contract)



Appendix 3 – Reasons For Temp Useage

The below chart lists the reasons for temporary worker use via external recruitment methods (NB there were 29 orders without a reason)

