

Wiltshire Council Human Resources

Agency/interim and consultancy staff procurement policy

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

What is it?

This policy provides guidance on the appropriate and cost effective use of consultant and agency/interim staff and outlines the correct procedure to follow when undertaking professional procurement activities.

Who is covered by this policy?

All Wiltshire Council employees (with the exception of teaching and non-teaching staff employed in locally managed schools) who undertake procurement of consultants or agency/interim workers.

What are the main points?

1. In line with the council's recruitment policy, prior to any procurement taking place you should consider:
 - Is re-distribution of work possible amongst existing team members?
 - Would restructuring remove the need for the role?
 - Is there an opportunity to streamline working practices and processes which could remove the need for the role?
 - Is there an opportunity for an existing employee to act up or be seconded into the role?
2. Procurement of consultant or agency/interim staff should only take place when in-house employees are not available.
3. You must identify whether you need to procure a:

Consultant	to undertake a bespoke piece of work that is time bound, has an outcome and sits outside of a Wiltshire Council job description or remit of an employee
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Agency/Interim to undertake work which sits within a job description or would be in the remit of an employee

4. Contact the central procurement unit (CPU).for further information about which procurement route to take

Agency/Interim procurement

5. Agency/interim staff may be used where:
 - there is a requirement to fill a vacancy quickly
 - there is a short term increase in workload
 - to cover a temporary period of absence
6. You are not able to make arrangements with any agency direct – all agency and interim procurement must go through one of the three routes identified below:
 - For administration and clerical staff you must contact the Wiltshire Temporary Agency in the first instance.
 - For care workers you must contact the Relief bank
 - For all other agency/interim staff you must go through Comensura's C-Net system
7. In most cases agency/interim staff should not be used to cover a role for more than 12 weeks.
8. If the role is envisaged to last longer than 6 months you should consider recruiting on a fixed term contract in line with the council's Recruitment Policy
9. You must complete the approval process using the approval to recruit form (this is available on the C-Net site if using Comensura).
10. You will be required to include an end date on your approval to recruit form.

Consultancy procurement

11. All consultancy procurement should be carried out in consultation with the professional buyer within the central procurement unit (CPU).
12. To initiate recruitment of a consultant you must complete a business case form, which must be approved by the budget holder, and forward this to the CPU.
13. This will be reviewed by the CPU within 3 working days to ensure it has been accurately completed.

14. Once reviewed by the CPU the business case will be assigned a business case number and forwarded directly to the chief executive for approval.
15. Once approval has been obtained the CPU will ensure that the tender and negotiation process is carried out in line with procurement regulations.
16. The CPU will arrange contract set up in conjunction with you.
17. Once the CPU have confirmed the provider you must initiate a requisition through the SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) system

Monitoring arrangements

18. You must ensure that appropriate review arrangements are in place to monitor the performance of temporary agency/interim staff and consultancy staff.
19. If you wish to extend the contract period you will need to complete a further approval (for agency/interim) or business case form (for consultants).

Policy compliance

20. The CPU will provide guidance and monitor compliance with this policy.
21. Failure to comply with this policy will be managed through the appropriate disciplinary or performance management route.

Frequently asked questions – agency/interim procurement

23. Where can I get further information about procuring agency staff?

For administrative staff you should contact the Wiltshire Temporary Agency. For careworkers you should contact the Relief Bank. For all other types of agency staff you should contact Comensura. If you have further queries please contact [Nicky Griffiths](#), senior procurement officer.

24. I always use a particular agency – why can I no longer use them and have to use Comensura instead?

Comensura are not an agency, they do not supply staff but manage third party agencies on our behalf. Therefore if you have a particular agency you have used in the past, who are not currently part of the Comensura arrangement, they can contact Comensura directly and sign up to our agreement. You can then procure staff via this agency as normal through the Comensura C-Net system.

Frequently asked questions – consultancy procurement

25. Why does every single piece of consultancy work have to go through this process?

At present we engage with numerous consultants and recruitment agencies which can be time consuming, expensive and can also put the council at risk of legal challenge from non-compliance of employment law, EU procurement directives and HRMC regulations.

The approach we are taking, requiring a business case for each piece of work, will enable the council to better manage and track the use of consultants. It is important to highlight that the project is not about stopping consultancy spend but ensuring that the best practice and value for money is achieved.

26. What are the timescales for approval?

Once a business case is submitted to the CPU it will be reviewed within 3 working days and either returned to the manager (if incomplete) or forwarded to the chief executive for approval.

Once approval is obtained the CPU will work with the manager who submitted the business case. Some projects will require more complex tender arrangements in line with procurement regulations but the CPU will keep the manager updated regarding progress.

27. How will compliance be monitored?

You will not be able to procure professional services via the SRM system without an approved business case number. This will ensure that all procurement has gone through the approval route.

The Shared services team – finance will not be able to process payments through any other route within SAP.

28. What happens if there is a problem with the consultant who has been given the contract?

As part of the contract negotiations managers should work with the CPU to ensure that deliverables are written into contracts where appropriate to enable them to manage the performance of the consultant, and ensure outcomes and project delivery.

29. What about arrangements already in place – can these be renewed?

When current arrangements are due to end or be reviewed you will be required to submit a business case in line with this policy if you wish to extend the arrangements.

Are there any exemptions?

None – all procurement must follow the appropriate procurement route as outlined in this policy.

Further advice

For all queries you should contact the central procurement unit

Policy author	HR Policy and Reward Team – PM
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