

Freedom of Information – Response – 26629

I am writing to request the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 relating to the use of agency staff in Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

1. Agency spend

Please provide the total spend on agency staffing for the following financial years:

- 2022/23
- 2023/24
- 2024/25 (to date)

See information below.

- 2022/23 - £2,495,289.93 (Adult Social Care) / £2,505,542.07 (Children's Services)
- 2023/24 - £2,555,097.15 (Adult Social Care) / £2,594,169.41 (Children's Services)
- 2024/25 - £1,840,461.26 (Adult Social Care) / £5,275,555.88 (Children's Services)
- 2025/26 - £964,538 (Adult Social Care) / £3,067,482 (Children's Services) April – October.

2. Spend breakdown

a) Spend by staff group, e.g.:

- *Adult Social Workers*
- *Children's Social Workers*
- *Residential Care Workers*
- *Home Care / Support Workers*
- *Nurses (if applicable)*

The below tables give a breakdown of spend by the staff groups requested. The remainder of spend would be across roles such as leadership, administrative and non-qualified staff.

2022-2023	Adult Social Care	Children and Young People	Grand Total
Nurse	667.20	95,465.24	96,132.44
Social worker	1,533,511.08	1,445,420.19	2,978,931.27
Grand Total	1,534,178.28	1,540,885.43	3,075,063.71

2023-2024	Adult Social Care	Children and Young People	Grand Total
Nurse		45,627.33	45,627.33
Social worker	1,408,340.44	1,604,343.58	3,012,684.02
Grand Total	1,408,340.44	1,649,970.91	3,058,311.35

2024-2025	Adult Social Care	Children and Young People	Grand Total
Nurse		2,119.13	2,119.13

Social worker	674,387.60	1,472,469.90	2,146,857.50
Grand Total	674,387.60	1,474,589.03	2,148,976.63

April to October 2025-26	Adult Social Care	Children and Young People	Grand Total
Nurse		11,401.10	11,401.10
Social worker	296,653.88	851,070.01	1,147,723.89
Grand Total	296,653.88	862,471.11	1,159,124.99

b) Spend by agency/supplier for the same periods.

Opus People Solutions:

- 2022/23 - £2,495,289.93 (Adult Social Care) / £2,505,542.07 (Children's Services)
- 2023/24 - £2,555,097.15 (Adult Social Care) / £2,482,641.41 (Children's Services)
- 2024/25 - £1,840,461.26 (Adult Social Care) / £4,394,149.88 (Children's Services)
- 2025/26 - £964,538 (Adult Social Care) / £2,689,737 (Children's Services) (April to October)

Tile Hill Limited

- 2022/23 Zero
- 2023/24 £111,528
- 2024/25 £881,406
- 2025/26 £377,745

3. Vendor model

Do you use a Master Vendor or Neutral Vendor model for agency staffing in Adult or Children's Social Care?

- If yes, please provide:

- o The supplier's name
- o The council services in scope (Adults / Children's / both)
- o Contract start date
- o Contract end date (and any extension periods)

Agency workers are primarily sourced through Opus People Solutions for all roles, who act as a Master Vendor. However, for executive-level positions, we engage the services of Tile Hill recruitment agency, who also act as a Master Vendor.

- o The supplier's name: Opus People Solutions
- o The council services in scope (Adults / Children's / both): Both
- o Contract start date: 30/05/2014
- o Contract end date (and any extension periods): This was established under the TECKAL exemption, meaning no competitive procurement process was required. The arrangement operates on a rolling basis with no fixed end date.

- o The supplier's name: Tile Hill Ltd
- o The council services in scope (Adult / Children's / both): Both (executive level only)
- o Contract start date: 26/11/2025
- o Contract end date (and any extension periods): 25/11/2026, with the option to extend for 12 months.

4. Preferred Supplier List (PSL)

Do you operate a Preferred Supplier List (PSL) for agency staff in Adult and/or Children's Social Care?

No, we do not use a PSL.

- *If yes, please provide:*

- o *A list of the agencies on the PSL*
- o *The original start date of the PSL or framework*
- o *The current expiry/renewal date*
- o *The procurement route used (e.g. CCS, ESPO, regional framework, own tender)*

N/A.

5. Frameworks / contracts

Please provide details of any frameworks or contracts currently used for the provision of agency staff in Adult and Children's Social Care, including:

- *Framework or contract name*
- *Provider(s) or host authority*
- *Start date*
- *Expiry date*
- *Any known or planned retender date, if available*

The Opus People Solutions contract was not procured through an external framework. Instead, it was awarded under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 Regulation 12 (TECKAL) exemption because Opus People Solutions is a wholly owned company of Suffolk County Council (via Suffolk Group Holdings). This means no competitive procurement process was required. The contract commenced on 30 May 2014. As Opus is a wholly owned company, the arrangement operates on a rolling basis with no fixed end date, under the TECKAL exemption. Opus People Solutions is a master vendor.

The agreement with Tile Hill was established through a direct award, following their demonstrable success in supporting Suffolk County Council with executive recruitment. Previous engagements with alternative executive recruitment agencies did not meet the organisation's standards; therefore, a direct award was considered necessary to ensure continuity and avoid further disruption to executive appointments, particularly given the immediate need for senior leadership support. Tile Hill is engaged as the designated preferred supplier for agency support in the provision of management and executive roles within Suffolk County Council. This arrangement encompasses Head of Service positions and above, equivalent to or exceeding the Senior Manager (SM) pay grade on the Council's pay scales, as well as interim management assignments remunerated at £500 per day or higher, across all council service areas.

6. Rates

Please provide the current charge rates or rate card for agency staff used in Adult and Children's Social Care, including where applicable:

- *Qualified Social Workers – Adults (by level if available)*
- *Qualified Social Workers – Children's (by level if available)*

- *Residential Care Workers / Support Workers*
- *Home Care / Domiciliary Care Workers*
- *Nurses (if applicable)*

If a full rate card is not available, please provide indicative typical hourly charge rates for the above groups.

- Qualified Social Workers – Adult (by level if available): £34.19 per hour
- Qualified Social Workers – Children's (by level if available): Average rate paid for agency Social Workers in 2025/26 £36.26 per hour
- Residential Care Workers / Support Workers: £13.05 per hour
- Home Care / Domiciliary Care Workers: £13.05 per hour
- Nurses (if applicable): Average rate paid for agency Nurses in 2025/26 £24.20

7. Contact

Please provide the role title (not personal contact details) of the officer(s) responsible for:

- *Agency staffing / workforce commissioning in Adult Social Care*
- *Agency staffing / workforce commissioning in Children's Services*
- *Corporate procurement / vendor management for staffing frameworks*

If possible, please also confirm which team (e.g. Commissioning, Procurement, HR, Resourcing) leads on these arrangements.

Details on how you can contact Suffolk County Council can be found via the following link:
[Contact us - Suffolk County Council](#)