

Response from Portsmouth Council

How is recruitment of permanent staff organised within your council, e.g. is it organised centrally or is it organised within services? Recruitment is organised centrally.

How concerned is the council about the cost of permanent recruitment and what steps is the council taking to reduce that cost? Although cost was not the driver our approach has significantly reduced the cost of recruitment £400k less spent on advertising in year 1. We also learnt that online application form was a big driver of waste and we have moved to a process where we develop a job profile of what the job is 'today' (not rely on job descriptions which may have become divorced from the requirements of the job over time). We also only advertise when we need to.

Have you considered outsourcing permanent recruitment to a third party? Not at this time, there is no evidence (that holds water) that says outsourcing saves money over time.

What use do you make of the internet for permanent recruitment? We publish our available jobs on a jobsatportsmouth.co.uk website which invites people to apply for positions (no application forms).

How is temporary recruitment organised within your council, e.g. is it organised centrally or is it organised within services? Centrally.

What steps have you taken to reduce the cost of temporary staff? Internal temporary staff pool and contacts with external suppliers for specialist staff.

Have you considered complete outsourcing of temporary recruitment to a single third-party provider? No.

If so, what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages? My view is that outsourcing should only be considered when you understand what waste is in your current system, and work to remove it, only then will you know the true cost of an effective service. A good example of this is call centres where the question of outsourcing can be around cost per transaction.

I currently handle 500 calls a day that cost £250 a day (staff costs, overheads etc) so a transaction cost of 50p per call, when someone offers to handle these calls for 30p per transaction this seems to make good business sense. The problem is that when you study call centres over 50% of calls are calls you do not want (failure demand) caused by bad service or communication. if you switch off the causes of this demand you only have to resource for the value calls and your costs fall, customer experience improves, staff morale improves (no more dealing with complaining customers), and expertise retained (putting people in touch with someone who can solve their problem). Outsourcing firms have no incentive to look at the causes of calls as they get paid per transaction not why people are calling, they are also notoriously bad at dealing with variation (if it's not in the script they cannot help).

The question is the same for any service: Do we understand what performance looks like and why it is like that from a customer's point of view?

How do you monitor satisfaction levels of managers that are carrying out recruitment within your organisation? Managers are simply asked 2 questions 1)

how satisfied are you (1-10) with the service you received from when you identified the vacancy to when the new employee started, and 2) if less than 10 what could we have done differently for you to have scored a 10.

Do you use a talent pool and, if so, how successful has this been? This is being explored.