



Oxfordshire  
County Council  
**Case study**

[comensura.com](http://comensura.com)

# Comensura helps Oxfordshire County Council to efficiently maintain a diverse contingent workforce that represents value for money.

## The customer.

Oxfordshire County Council is a large employer with over 4,000 employees, and spends approximately £11 million per annum on temporary staff. This cuts across all service areas and categories of staff at all levels.

## The challenge.

The Council has undergone significant change in recent years and employs a diverse workforce in a range of disciplines/professions.

Agency workers are an important part of the Council's workforce, allowing it to flex its workforce needs to meet changes in demands and bring in specialist skills and expertise as and when required for particular projects.

Due to recruitment difficulties in some sectors, the Council has also experienced a trend in the rising use of agency workers to cover permanent vacancies pending recruitment.



**288**  
hiring  
managers

**330**  
locations

**20** job  
categories



## The solution.

The Council competitively tendered its requirement for a managed service provider in 2017 using the YPO national framework, and awarded to Comensura. The contract went live in December 2017. Comensura provides Oxfordshire County with an Adaptive managed service model, shaped around its required outputs.

The contract has been used to support a number of key strategic objectives as part of the Council's transformation programme "Fit for the Future". A key strand within this programme being around

ensuring the Council has a workforce and an organisational design which is fit for the future:

**To ensure the Council has the ability to flex its workforce effectively with the supply of high calibre agency workers.**

Prior to the introduction of Comensura, a local agency provided staff to the council on a master vendor basis for its general staff. The council had separate preferred supplier agreements in place for qualified social care, professional, technical and interim staff supply.

**To ensure the Council pays competitive rates for agency workers, achieves value for money and suppliers work in partnership with the council to limit pay escalation for hard to fill vacancies.**

Comensura has used its combined buying power to negotiate competitive margins with suppliers, but at sustainable levels.

A mix of fixed pence and percentage margins have been employed to reflect the supply nuances associated with each job category, ensuring that suppliers focus on providing quality workers that deliver value for money.

We have introduced pay controls to ensure that pay escalation can only be progressed as an exception, and with the approval of a nominated Council authorisation point. Savings on margins stand at 3%.

**Support the strategic aims of the Council to fill permanent vacancies with permanent employees, working in partnership with the council to achieve this.**

In addition to establishing temporary supplier margins, rates for permanent introductions are in place. Additionally, our Business Partner provides management information and commentary to establish whether any workers employed in temporary roles could be given permanent roles. Contractually, no temporary to permanent conversion fees are applicable after a qualifying period.

**To effectively pre-screen candidates, only putting forward those that are suitable and meet the essential criteria and carry out all vetting and checking to meet the council's requirements.**

Each hiring manager at the council has their own profile in c.net, and is able to specify their exact requirements at the point of order. This information is presented to suppliers, and only candidates that meet the exact criteria as specified can be submitted through our system. All suppliers contributing to our solution have been signed to contractual terms, to ensure that they supply in line with Council and Comensura terms and conditions, and in line with their legal obligations.

**Provide a good understanding of the labour market in Oxfordshire and work in partnership with the Council feeding in market intelligence to help the council recruit and retain the talent it needs.**

We provide the council with a Business Partner who is based on-site at the council, lives locally and has a detailed knowledge of the labour

market in Oxfordshire. Through retaining a local supplier as master vendor, we have been able to address some of the challenges that the council faces in recruiting, for example competition with workers travelling into London, low unemployment and a high cost of living. The supplier has a long established presence and reputation in the local market across a number of offices and understands where to successfully target candidates.

Our Business Partner works in partnership with both hiring managers/contract manager at the council and suppliers to help the council recruit and retain the talent that it needs. For example, if hiring managers are slow to review candidates and provide little or no feedback, our Business Partner has encouraged them to respond quickly/provide feedback or risk losing out on candidates and disincentivising supplier participation. We also provide support at the point of hire, particularly for specialist roles.

**To promote the reputation of the Council as an employer of choice and actively take steps to source skills required by the organisation.**

Our Business Partner meets regularly with suppliers to promote the reputation of the Council as an employer of choice, and also chairs meetings between suppliers and hiring managers at regular intervals to ensure that the right workers are sourced. Meetings are also used to look at solutions for filling 'hard to fill roles' in areas such as qualified social care.

**To promote a culture of fairness and inclusion in employment and service delivery.**

Equality, diversity and inclusion are hugely important to us. Suppliers are contractually obliged to recruit in line with equalities legislation, and at an operational level our teams promote a culture of fairness and inclusion wherever possible. Aside from the retained master vendor arrangement for general staff, all suppliers operate on a level playing field and are treated fairly and equally.

**Smarter  
saves  
money.**

**3%**  
**Savings on  
margins**



# The benefits.

The contract has been used to support a number of key strategic objectives as part of the Council's transformation programme "Fit for the Future".

A key strand within this programme being around ensuring the Council has a workforce and an organisational design which is fit for the future

The customer now has 100% fulfilment rate of temporary roles and 4% savings on total expenditure.

**Smarter  
service  
results.**

**100%**  
Fulfilment rate

**A smarter  
way to work.**

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