

Registers of Scotland**RoS Board****9-10 March 2026****Changes to use of Contingent Workers across RoS****Purpose**

1. To update the RoS Board on:
 - The continuing downward trend in contingent worker numbers across RoS.
 - The rationale for retaining any remaining contingent workers.
 - Forward plans for reducing or converting contingent worker roles, particularly within DDaT and Policy & Corporate Services.
 - The reduction of both cost and organisational risk through increased permanent recruitment.

2. The Board is invited to take assurance that costs and risks associated with contingent roles are decreasing ahead of plan.

Recommendation

3. Continue to replace base operating roles, currently filled by contingent workers, with permanent RoS employees. This is primarily in the DDaT directorate, but other opportunities will be realised as they arise in other directorates.
4. Aim to use contingent workers only for short-term, specialist, or temporary capacity requirements by the end of FY27/28.

Background

5. Over the past decade, RoS became overly reliant on contingent workers, particularly within DDaT, where 60–80 contingent workers filled long-term base operating roles due to challenges in recruiting permanent staff.
6. A dedicated programme was launched to convert these roles into permanent posts, supported by the introduction of the DDaT market-related pay allowance, improved talent acquisition processes, better workforce planning, increased pipeline, and skills development activity.
7. Contingent worker usage outside DDaT has historically been low but has recently been required in areas such as Policy & Corporate Services, People & Operations, and Secretariat to meet short-term business needs.

Current and Forecast Developments in Contingent Worker Resource

8. DDAT

The DDAT market-related pay allowance and the transformation of our talent acquisition process enabled a reduction in contingent workers from 139 to 110 in 2025. A further 7 roles have been offered and accepted at the start of 2026, reducing numbers to 103 upon their onboarding. The plan for FY26/27 is to convert at least 24 additional contingent worker roles to permanent RoS roles, with a stretch target to convert a further 20 subject to validated permanent need and recruitment success in hard-to-fill disciplines (Architecture, Cyber Security, AI).

9. People & Operational Services

Operational Services have historically used contingent staff at AO level while finalising long-term workforce planning linked to automation, retirement risks and forecast validation. Permanent recruitment has now been completed (12 AOs + 15 Modern Apprentices), enabling all contingent AOs to be released by January 2026. People & Change have removed all contingent roles, aside from one AO temporarily covering long-term sickness until May 2026.

10. Policy and Corporate Services

Contingent worker numbers fell from 4 to 3 in 2025 following the permanent recruitment of a C1 Senior Finance Business Partner. The remaining 3 roles were two Security & Information Risk Advisers, providing resource augmentation, and a Finance Assistant providing maternity-leave cover. However, a temporary Finance Assistant was added in January 2026 for recruitment cover, taking contingent worker numbers back to 4. Both Finance contingent workers are scheduled for release in June/July 2026, with one Security & Information Risk Adviser post planned for conversion to permanent early FY26/27 and the second to be reviewed later in the year.

11. Secretariat

Secretariat started 2025 with 1 contingent worker to plug a resource gap resulting from maternity leave up until end of May 25.

Impact on Risks, Benefits or Cost

12. Historically, contingent workers have represented a high-cost resourcing model.

13. The DDaT Project aims to reduce staffing costs by £2.2M per annum and is on track to do that.

14. Significant organisational risk existed due to key technical knowledge residing with contingent staff who could exit at short notice.

15. Converting base operating roles from contingent to permanent staff strengthens internal capability, knowledge retention, and long-term organisational resilience.

16. Summary Changes to Contingent Worker Numbers across Directorates

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	Jan 25 actual	Dec 25 actual	Mar 26 planned	Mar 27 planned
DDAT	139	110	98	60-80
Policy & Corporate Services	4	3	4	1
People & Operations	16	8	1	0
Secretariat	1	1	1	0
TOTAL	160	122	104	61-81

17. Progress is strong and sustained, and the organisation is well on the way to significantly reducing both the cost and risk associated with using contingent workers in base operating roles.

18. The future aspiration is to limit the use of contingent workers to only meet short term resource gaps, or to engage temporary specialist skills unavailable inhouse.

Conclusion

19. RoS continues to make significant progress in its strategic shift away from the use of contingent workers to fill permanent resource requirements. The organisation is on track to strengthen workforce stability, build internal technical expertise, reduce long-term cost and to deploy contingent workers only where they genuinely add temporary or specialist value.

Job Title: Head of HR Transformation
Directorate: People and Operational Services
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