

Customer Case Study

About the London Borough of Wandsworth

Wandsworth is one of an elite group of 11 authorities to have scored the highest possible marks for both the standard of its main services and its ability to improve in the Audit Commission's recent Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) exercise. The Council holds a record 27 Charter Mark quality awards across all of its departments including Education, Leisure and Amenity Services, Social Services and Housing.

The Social Services department is highly regarded and accredited. It is one of just four London Boroughs to hold a 3-star CPA rating, serving a population of over 260,000.

The Challenge

The Department has a policy of managing complaints at the top of the organisation. The Social Services Directorate inspects all outstanding complaints at its weekly meetings. Although low in volume, the complaints can be complex, which cover and may relate both to matters of policy and to quality of service. Although their in-house built CMS (Complaints Management System) was generally stable, James Cuthbert of the Social Services Management Information Team recognised the shortcomings of the system:

"We needed to move from a content storage and retrieval system to a system that would manage workflow as well".

Another fundamental challenge was that the incumbent system could not give an accurate picture of the Department's complaints profile. CMS recorded a separate record for each stage of each complaint, and could not associate different complaints and enquiries originating from the same individual. The resulting duplication had the potential to cause over-reporting and necessitated time-consuming manual reconciliation.

The Solution

The project to source and implement a new complaints system started in November 2002. An extensive review of enterprise and niche vendors was conducted. Each vendor's system was evaluated against an exhaustive list of criteria cost, functionality, platform-compatibility, user-friendliness and vendor reputation criteria.

Blue Flag won the contract for the new complaints system with its SERVICEmail solution amidst intense competition. SERVICEmail matched Wandsworth's selection criteria better than the competition. Wandsworth were impressed by Blue Flag's ability to deliver a fully thin-client version of the system, with life-time upgrades provided as a standard in the support contract.

"Ultimately Blue Flag won on technology"

Blue Flag played a crucial role in implementation, training and data-migration from the Department's old system prior to the system going live. This took the pressure off the Department's IT and Management Information staff at a time when resources were pressured. James commented

"This made a lot of difference for the delivery and acceptance of the system"



London Borough of Wandsworth



The Benefits

Although the system is in its infancy, it has been well received. A major benefit of the solution has been the ability to mirror the Department's complex organisational structure. This means that based on the complaint category chosen, a complaint can be directed to the complaints officer for a given team quickly and accurately.

The notification and warning mechanism has proved invaluable. Users are warned of impending deadlines well before they are reached and Wandsworth expects that this will further improve its high rate of in-target complaints resolution. The once notorious problem of finding duplicate records and identifying past complainants has been negated by the 'previous contact tree' functionality.

As the use of the system continues to grow, user benefits will become more apparent. It is in the administration and support of the system that the Department has experienced immediate benefits. SERVICEmail's robust SQL Server platform has significantly reduced the maintenance overhead compared with their previous MS Access-based CMS system.

Due to the extensive support provided from Blue Flag, with their 'free lifetime upgrade promise', the burden of maintenance and support of the system has been eased. James was impressed with the relationship that has been built with the Blue Flag support team in such a short space of time:

"The service has been very personal... Blue Flag's support staff always do what it takes to resolve support issues. It makes a huge difference when one of the team who supports the system is the person who originally configured it."

The Future

Future plans for the system focus on the move from client-server to a fully web browser-based system under thin-client. It is intended that Wandsworth citizens would also be able raise complaints via the web, which would automate logging and assignment of complaints.

SERVICeMAIL

Blue Flag Technologies have partnered with leading public and commercial organizations. We have over 12 years implementation expertise, our solutions have helped our customers take advantage of numerous business benefits in the areas of

- Operational cost savings
- Operational revenue gains
- Business Improvement
- Improved Customer Service and Marketing.

Blue Flag
TECHNOLOGIES



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