

Leeds City Council uses the IBM strategy and change expertise to deliver improved children's services.



Overview

■ The Challenge

To meet a Government target to improve the co-ordination of children's services

■ IBM Solution

IBM Business Consulting Services developed a strategy for information sharing across stakeholder groups in Leeds

■ Customer Benefit

- *Positions Leeds City Council as a leading authority in children's services*
- *Enables disparate services groups to collaborate and function as a partnership*
- *Met Government deadline*
- *Builds a strong foundation on which to begin implementation.*

The UK Government has been examining ways of improving the service provided to children identified as at risk. The Government's Cross Cutting Review of Children at Risk concluded that there should be effective support for children and their families as soon as a risk is recognised. The Review identified a need for better co-ordination of services at a local level. There is concern that children are sometimes brought to the notice of one agency, but this information is not always shared efficiently with other agencies. Consequently, children can 'slip through the net' and not receive the help they deserve. The Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU), in the Department of Education and Skills designated that all Children's Fund partnerships should have the mechanisms for identification, referral and tracking (IRT) in place as part of this preventative strategy. Local authorities in the UK were tasked with delivering this initiative.

"The personal approach of the IBM staff involved was excellent. They recognised their audience was non-technical and communicated in plain English that everyone could understand."

— *Doug Martin, Co-ordinator for Leeds Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, Leeds City Council*

Leeds City Council is the second largest City Council in England and Wales. Its population includes 182,530 young people aged 0 to 19 years and there is a large group of organisations in the city delivering services to this population. As a result of the CYPUP initiative, Leeds City Council set up a partnership group of stakeholders. The CYPUP then issued their outline requirements, giving six months for the strategy for the delivery of these requirements to be in place.

The Council faced a number of difficulties with delivering the CYPU initiative. Many diverse stakeholders are involved such as local authority departments, educational organisations, the NHS, the Police and the voluntary and community sector. Each organisation has a different structure, communication mechanisms, aims and objectives and even different use of language and terms. In addition, there are concerns about data protection, confidentiality and the risks of stigmatising a child by labelling them as a potential criminal offender, for example.

From complexity to clarity

With the diversity of the stakeholders involved, Leeds City Council felt it would help to use an independent, objective party as a facilitator. IBM was already a preferred supplier to the Council under an existing Framework Agreement. It was vitally important that the project met the Government's deadline and the Council knew from past experience that IBM could react speedily. This was proved when IBM provided an outline solution for the proposed project within a week. The Council also recognised that IBM has a track record of working with groups to move from incomplete thoughts and ideas to concrete, workable strategy.

Doug Martin, Co-ordinator for Leeds Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, Leeds City Council said: "The name IBM conjures up the idea of IT equipment and software. This project needed more than an IT-based solution and a number of stakeholders felt that our recommendation was not an appropriate one. The belief was that IBM would not understand all the issues and would concentrate on the technology side of the project. This was quickly proved wrong. The personal approach of the IBM staff involved was excellent. They recognised their audience was non-technical and communicated in plain English that everyone could understand."

IBM Business Consulting Services agreed the overall objectives of the project with Leeds City Council. These were:

- *To work with agencies to agree a definition of young people at risk in Leeds*
- *To lead on the planning and support of an inclusive and participative consultation process around IRT*
- *To work with agencies across Leeds in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors on an exercise to determine existing information collection and identification systems*
- *To develop a framework within which existing systems and processes might be reshaped to enable the development of information sharing across agencies*
- *To assist in the development of information sharing protocols covering vulnerable young people within the 0 to 19 years age group*
- *To identify existing and developing IRT models that agencies in Leeds might be able to adopt and adapt.*

"IBM provided the project's partners with the strategic facilitation and programme management we needed. With their help, we delivered the key elements required of us by the Government programme within a very tight timescale. IBM also helped build a solid partnership of stakeholders that has positioned Leeds very strongly for the implementation project."

“This project isn’t just about moving an issue from A to B or increasing profit margins, it will influence the lives of many families, children and young people. I was delighted to see that IBM picked up this important point quickly.”

— Doug Martin, Co-ordinator for Leeds Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership, Leeds City Council

IBM Business Consulting Services developed a three-phase approach to the project. Phase one brought together all key stakeholders to define the direction and structure of the project. Phase two involved an audit of current organisations, processes and systems (all systems not just IT systems) used by the stakeholders. Phase three used the audit information to develop a strategy and build an initial plan to reshape and enhance existing systems and processes to improve information sharing across agencies.

The IBM project team used a range of IBM Strategy and Change consultancy tools alongside techniques developed by the IBM Cynefin Centre for Organisational Complexity. The Cynefin techniques helped the IBM project team to provide the client with an innovative approach to working across a diverse group of stakeholders. This was helpful in building a common purpose and goals that could be translated into clear roles and accountabilities.

The techniques used provided the flexibility needed as the scope and complexity of the initiative became better understood. This flexibility was particularly useful as the Government refined and added to its requirements during the course of the project.

Building futures

The objectives of the Leeds project were successfully achieved within the tight deadlines. The stakeholders were initially overwhelmed by the scope and complexity of the project but were pleased, and surprised, by the progress IBM enabled them to make. “IBM provided the project’s partners with the strategic facilitation and programme management we needed. With their help, we delivered the key elements required of us by the Government programme within a very tight timescale. IBM also helped build a solid partnership of stakeholders that has positioned Leeds very strongly for the implementation project,” explained Doug Martin.

The IBM team became trusted advisors across multiple stakeholders. They were trusted by Leeds City Council to attend local government regional events on behalf of the Council without supervision. The Leeds team are still finding the documents produced during the project of great value and sent a number to the Government Office to show how well the project went and to explain what has been achieved. An external central Government interim review near the end of the project identified Leeds as a leading authority in meeting the requirements for children’s services.

Doug Martin concluded: “This project isn’t just about moving an issue from A to B or increasing profit margins, it will influence the lives of many families, children and young people. I was delighted to see that IBM picked up this important point quickly.”

For more information

To find out more about IBM Business Consulting Services contact your IBM sales representative or visit:

ibm.com/bcs/uk



IBM United Kingdom Limited

PO Box 41
North Harbour
Portsmouth
Hampshire
PO6 3AU

Tel : 0870 010 2503

ibm.com/bcs/uk

IBM Ireland Limited

Oldbrook House
24-32 Pembroke Road
Dublin 4

Tel : 1890 200 392

ibm.com/bcs/ie

IBM Nederland N.V.

Postbus 9999
1006 CE Amsterdam

Tel : 020 513 5151

ibm.com/bcs/nl

IBM South Africa Limited

Private Bag X9907
Sandhurst
2196
South Africa

Tel: 0800 130 130

ibm.com/bcs/za

UK company-wide registration to ISO9001.
Certificate number FM 92089.

The IBM home page can be found at **ibm.com**

IBM, ibm.com and the IBM logo are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both.

Other company, product and service names may be trademarks, or service marks of others.

References in this publication to IBM products, programs or services do not imply that IBM intends to make these available in all countries in which IBM operates. Any reference to an IBM product, program or service is not intended to imply that only IBM products, programs or services may be used. Any functionally equivalent product, program or service may be used instead.

This case study illustrates how one IBM customer uses IBM and/or Business Partner technologies/services. Many factors have contributed to the results and benefits described. IBM does not guarantee comparable results. All information contained herein was provided by the featured customer and/or Business Partner. IBM does not attest to its accuracy.

This publication is for general guidance only. Information is subject to change without notice. Please contact your local IBM sales office or reseller for latest information on IBM products and services.

Photographs may show design models.

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2004
All Rights Reserved.

GSCEE01017-4 (05/04) JT