

Focusing on lives not services



Client

Wiltshire is a predominantly rural county in the south-west of England. It has a population of 433,000, nearly half of whom live in towns or villages with fewer than 5,000 people.

Goals

- ◆ Refocus activities on the needs of the customer
- ◆ Create more efficient ways of working
- ◆ Improve the customer experience

Charteris' Role

- ◆ Guide employees to evaluate their own roles and processes
- ◆ Communicate the goals of the change programme to teams and senior managers
- ◆ Support staff to design and implement new business processes and organisation structures

Results

- ◆ Positive attitudes towards change at all levels of the organisation
- ◆ Efficiency gains across the department, including a 50% reduction in the time needed to perform assessments
- ◆ Positive feedback from customers, who are receiving a faster and more personal service

Wiltshire Council has a strong commitment to change. Rather than simply delivering services, it wants to put customers right at the very heart of everything that it does. With Charteris' support, employees have completely redesigned processes for community services and introduced new job roles to enable them to better meet customer needs. Following the successful completion of a customer trial, the council is now transforming all areas of its Adult and Social Care department to create a truly customer-centric business.

"People want lives not services," says Sue Redmond. And she says this with complete conviction. Appointed director of community services for Wiltshire Council in December 2006, Redmond is at the forefront of a programme to completely restructure the council's adult care department. Her goal is simple: to put customers at the heart of everything that the department does and focus on improving quality of life.

"I feel that all councils have in many ways become obsessed with structures and bureaucracy," explains Redmond. "A lot of what we do doesn't directly add value for our customers, and it is often hard for people to access information and services. This is not a sustainable approach. Wiltshire Council wants to refocus all departments on meeting customer needs quickly and effectively."

Launched in May 2007, the business change programme is huge both in its ambitions and its scope. It is likely to impact the entire department of over 950 full-time and part-time employees. In addition, it

will influence a wide range of people working across other council departments as well as partner organisations.

"The project is about changing literally everything that we do to become more customer focused – and that will necessarily impact everyone," says Iain Kirby, head of business change in the department. "This is not just about minor tweaks; it is about major, fundamental transformation."

Given its ambitious goals, Wiltshire Council recognised that it would require the support of a partner to help it along the way. First, the council needed to build up a deeper understanding of how the department operated now. Then, led by clearly identified customer themes and the 'voice of the customer', the council needed to design new processes, roles and organisational structures. In parallel, the council had to communicate the goals and benefits of the changes throughout the organisation. The council appointed Charteris to facilitate this entire process and help it achieve its business transformation goals.





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“I anticipate customers will become much more satisfied with the services that we deliver.”

Sue Redmond,
Director of Community Services,
Wiltshire Council

Focusing on a common goal

Firstly, Charteris organised a series of workshops and investigative interviews, involving employees from all levels and areas of the department. The consultants analysed the outcomes of these sessions and compiled detailed diagrams and reports on the council’s as-is processes.

Next, Charteris helped the council communicate the benefits of change to employees, senior executives and partners. “Charteris took us on a journey,” explains Kirby. “Our employees had the opportunity to examine our processes and realise for themselves how complex they are. Charteris is incredibly good at bringing people together and focusing them on a common goal.”

Charteris then helped the council’s staff to design new processes for Adult Social Care. It facilitated a series of workshops and guided employees to consider what the best processes might be from a customer’s perspective. “Charteris’ whole approach is centred on the customer and inclusive of employees,” says Redmond.

One of the most significant changes was the creation of a new customer coordinator role. Employees in this role provide a single point of contact for customers and coordinate the delivery of all of the services and equipment they need, across all community services teams. The physical location of teams was also changed, to group professionals with multiple skill sets together according to real customer needs.

Emma Townsend was closely involved in the change initiative as a Team Manager. She says: “All staff are now clear about their roles; processes are straightforward; and everyone is working together to benefit the customer.”

Creating a customer-focused business

Charteris and a team of council staff tested the new processes rigorously using a combination of historical and current cases. Over 100 customers took part in the trials, and Wiltshire Council was overwhelmed by the positive feedback from them.

In a survey carried out following the trial period, one customer wrote: “The person who did the assessment really seemed to understand my problems and how I was feeling. I felt that she took time to find the best solution for me and my mother. She put the plan into action very quickly and made me feel more confident about the future.”

By taking a level of technology dependency out of the council’s existing processes, Charteris has greatly simplified them. This, in turn, has enabled the council to dramatically speed up its delivery of community services. At the end of the trial period, the project steering group committee reported that the time needed to perform assessments had been reduced by 50%.

Charteris anticipates that Wiltshire Council will make further productivity improvements of over 30% right across the department. These efficiency gains will allow the council to invest in more preventative measures.

Charteris is now working with the council to implement the new processes and organisational structures across the entire department. “People are experts in their own lives,” says Redmond. “That’s why we need to be listening to them rather than processing them. I anticipate customers will become much more satisfied with the services that we deliver.”

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IT experts who think business



About Charteris

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Leading public and private sector organisations draw on our deep experience to help them improve performance and reduce costs. Our services include [Customer Centric Business Change](#), [Microsoft Dynamics](#) solutions and other advanced solutions based on the full spectrum of [Microsoft Technologies](#) and associated technologies.

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