

CASE STUDY

SHELTER: BUILDING ON SUCCESS WITH MIDLANDHR

Shelter is a national campaigning charity working to improve the lives of homeless and badly housed people. Through a network of Housing Aid Centres, projects and surgeries, Shelter staff provide free, professional and independent advice to over 100,000 homeless and badly housed people each year throughout England and Scotland. Employees, including volunteers, number over 1,000, with 700 at the charity's head-quarters in Old Street, London, 500 in housing centres and projects across the country and the rest in Shelter's 100 shops nationwide.



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BUILDING ON SUCCESS

In 2003 Shelter implemented a new HR & Payroll solution from MidlandHR as recent staff growth within the organisation had begun to put a strain on its existing, disparate systems and the charity needed to find a solution that would bring about greater control of all its processes. Going from primarily paper-based systems – which incurred a significant amount of data duplication meant that Shelter was no longer working cost-effectively and also found it difficult to produce comprehensive management reports – to an integrated, central, automated HR & payroll system, has helped Shelter to significantly streamline processes and reduce costs.

Doug Bird, Payroll Manager at Shelter comments: “We have been extremely pleased with the product, its implementation and support. It has definitely fulfilled all our expectations and met all the criteria we set out to find from a new HR and payroll system.

“For example, the reporting functionality is superb. The salary budget report that used to take 2-3 days to compile using separate, paper-based systems, now only takes two hours, which is a huge help in terms of time and money saved, and makes my job a lot easier!”

Building on this success, Shelter was keen to extend its use of Trent and take advantage of its extensive functionality to further reduce administration time and costs and, most importantly, to streamline processes, ensuring that the HR and payroll department gives maximum support to all employees and the organisation as a whole.

SERVING EVERYONE’S BEST INTERESTS

As such, Shelter is currently implementing self-service functions across its sites. Traditionally, booking staff on one of the many internal training courses available, or requesting holiday has been quite a lengthy procedure. By using self service, employees will be able to enter requests themselves from their PCs, which will be automatically updated by Trent’s workflow tool.

In addition, staff at the charity will be now be able to view their payslips online, instead of having them sent to their homes. This will not only save Shelter a considerable amount of money and administration time, it also allays employees’ security concerns over stolen or missing mail.

Doug Bird adds: “Another great thing about being able to view payslips online is that, as they will be available three days before people actually get paid, if there are any discrepancies, then there is time for these to be sorted out before payday!”

TARGETING TRAINING

The self-service function will interlink with a new training system, already in place from MidlandHR. Shelter offers a plethora of internal training courses and in the past it has been a challenge to keep track of attendance and cost.

Now, not only will employees be able to book themselves onto relevant courses through the self-service module, but the HR department can more effectively create lists of courses, track costs for venues and trainers, as well as attendance levels and cancellations. Detailed reports can also be compiled, breaking figures down into cost per delegate, meaning that the charity can be sure that training is being carried out in a cost effective manner, which is vitally important in a not for profit organisation such as Shelter.

As the module will allow better tracking of who has undergone specific training, it will also automatically alert managers as to when individual employees need refresher courses.

TAKING THE PAIN OUT OF ABSENCE

Rolling out at the same time as self-service, will be Trent’s absence module. Sickness is currently logged manually in a central location, using data sent in from each site. Using the new function, local managers can update reports online, which will automatically be fed into the central system. In addition, managers will also be able to use self service to input sickness pay – something which has been done manually in the past – saving further time for the payroll department.

Doug comments: “Not only will this functionality free up a lot of time, it also means that local managers can see absence patterns in real time. Previously, they had to send in data, which would be keyed into a central report and they would then have to request access to that report. All in all, it was an overly complicated and lengthy process.”

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INVENTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

However, Shelter are not just going to be using the absence tool to monitor sickness levels. During consultation with MidlandHR, the charity was discussing their needs and how, due to the nature of the work Shelter undertake, many regional managers found it difficult to track exactly where staff are at any given time.

Doug continues: "Our regional managers had requested a system that would act as an online, realtime diary for all employees out in the field. Our staff are spread over multiple sites and some regional managers oversee two or more locations, so even though people tend to use a central whiteboard in each office to indicate where they are going to be that day, this doesn't help the regional manager not stationed at that office.

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RECRUITING THE BEST

As with any organisation, recruiting the best possible people is of utmost importance to Shelter. By taking advantage of Trent's recruitment tool, the charity will be able to streamline and better track the recruitment process, from placing initial adverts to hiring successful applicants.

Steve Eddy, HR manager at Shelter comments: "Within this tool you can create new recruitment requisitions, which are assigned a unique identifier and these are given to our advertising agency who use them in our adverts and response handling.

"We enter all applications into this module and use its functionality with mail merge to produce invite to interview, offer and rejection letters. Once an applicant has accepted the offer they can be integrated into the organisation, using Trent's other people management modules such as training."

EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLES

By utilising a range of people management tools, Shelter will be able to track its employees' lifecycles more effectively, from recruitment to training to absence.

Doug concludes: "Using Trent, we have already been able to streamline our payroll and HR functions, freeing up valuable time and money. We have now stepped our strategy up a level by concentrating on improving our people management functions, ensuring that not only do the HR and payroll departments run as smoothly as possible, but that all Shelter employees have access to the best possible support available. In turn, this can produce great results for the charity as a whole and hopefully help improve the lives of more homeless and badly house people."

CHALLENGE

Shelter required an integrated solution to deal with increased staff numbers and centralise processes to enable increased control. The aim of this was predominantly to increase efficiency and reduce costs whilst supporting the organisations current and future growth.

SOLUTION

In-house implementation of Trent, providing a fully integrated solution enabling greater efficiencies. Modules include Reporting, Self-Service, People Development, Absence Management and Recruitment.

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