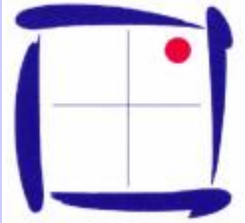


Case Study:

Kirklees Housing Needs Redesigning the Homelessness Process



The Challenge

Kirklees Metropolitan Council operates two Housing Advice offices that answer questions from citizens regarding the provision of local accommodation. This includes making decisions on applications for Homelessness as well as the maintenance of the Housing Register. A new strategy for dealing with Homelessness has been prepared by the Head of Housing Needs that focuses activity on the Prevention of Homelessness not the Reaction to it. Included in this are several objectives regarding key Housing Needs processes such as a reduction in the time taken to process applications for Homelessness.

In addition the performance of the two offices is not the same, with Dewsbury lagging behind Huddersfield and recently having received adverse and very public criticism from Councillors.

The Challenge was to devise new processes for the Service that would integrate the various Council Services (Call Centre, Information Points, Housing Needs) and bring some short term performance improvement at the same time as allowing the long term strategy to be implemented.

The Solution

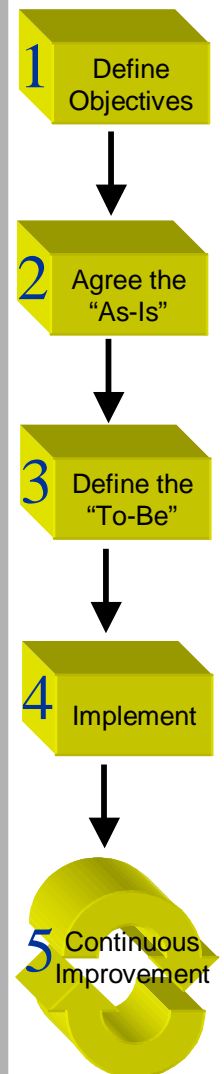
Housing Needs needed to:

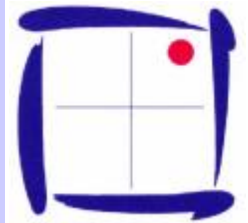
- ∅ Provide a greater level of expertise in Housing Needs matters at the earliest possible time in the process using a variety of sources of expertise;
- ∅ Make as many decisions at the earliest point in the process as possible without handing off to others;
- ∅ Rearrange the Housing Needs Front Office/Back Office responsibilities;
- ∅ Actively manage the existing processes within the Back Office.

What we delivered

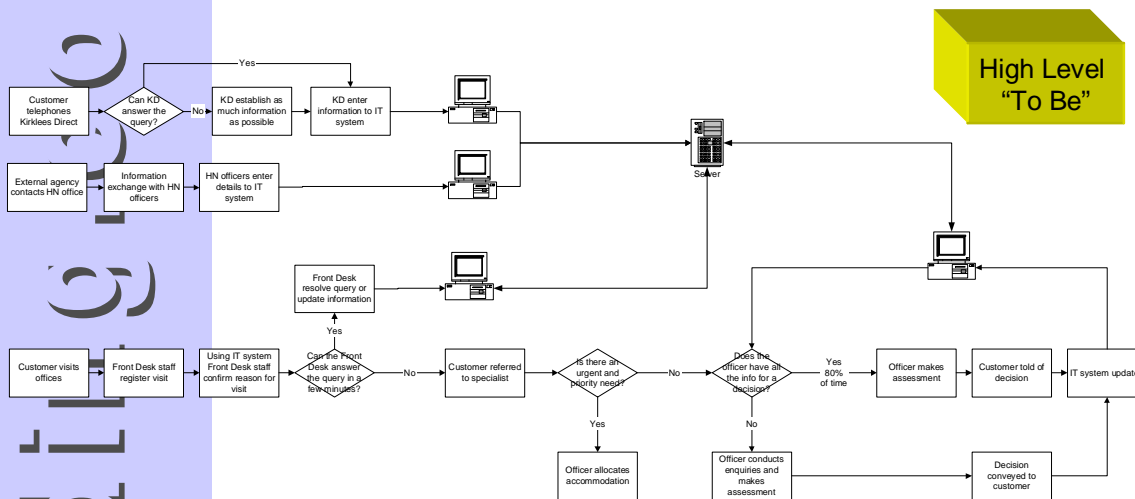
Through a series of investigation activities we:

- ∅ Mapped the existing process;
- ∅ Analysed the process metrics, including the numbers of times that visitors were passed from one officer to another;
- ∅ Identified key issues;
- ∅ Made detailed recommendations for process management;
- ∅ A clear unambiguous report for management to follow;
- ∅ A series of presentations to staff on the contents of that report.





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Implementing the results

To ensure wider acceptance of the need to change and to integrate our recommendations with the Strategy, we facilitated a series of workshops where key staff members were given the opportunity to contribute to the development of an implementation plan.

We produced the final plan showing the need to involve teams of staff working on small problems or issues, all coordinated to bring together the final implementation.

This ensured that the concept of Continuous Improvement was truly embedded and allowed the staff to feel part of the overall change process.

Once the implementation plan was established with a proper Steering Group we reduced our involvement to attending monthly meetings to act as the external, impartial arbiter of progress.

The benefits

As many staff as practical were involved in the development of the plan;

- Ø The need to change was communicated consistently and effectively;
- Ø As an external group we recommended the direction of change necessary totally impartially without appearing to side with one team or another;
- Ø Clear unequivocal process measures were put in place to record and measure progress.

