



WEST YORKSHIRE MAGISTRATES' COURTS SERVICE

Achieving e-Government through Managed Services

By working alongside West Yorkshire Magistrates' Courts Service (WYMCS), CNT has been able to enhance operational efficiency, ensure maximum system uptime and assist the WYMCS in moving towards achieving e-Government initiatives.

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WYMCS was formed in April 2000 when Calderdale, Leeds and West Ridings Magistrate Court Committees merged. WYMCS now covers Bingley, Halifax, Bradford, Dewsbury, Huddersfield, Leeds, Pontefract and Wakefield. The MCS services a population of over two million, has a weighted caseload in excess of 600,000 and employs almost 1,300 magistrates and five District Judges. The Committee area is the fourth largest in England and Wales.

THE CHALLENGE

WYMCS was using an in-house team to manage its IT infrastructure. The team were finding it increasingly difficult to deal with IT maintenance and upgrade demands whilst also ensuring maximum uptime for MCS users. They were also struggling to deliver the skills base needed to service the Court's aging IT infrastructure and could neither provide measurable reports on system downtime, nor identify the cause of it.

In addition, as part of a national project, WYMCS was beginning to see the roll out of a new IT network that would act as a core system and allow Magistrates' Courts Services across the country to share files and data with each other. The strain of this e-Government initiative on in-house staff was growing and WYMCS needed to ensure not only that it could rely on its existing IT systems and take considerable steps towards achieving e-Government; but that the transition to the new system would be as painless and disruption free as possible for its 500 system users.

With this in mind, WYMCS approached CNT to discuss the possibility of using their Managed Services to ensure system uptime and perform system maintenance; whilst keeping costs within budget and freeing up in-house staff to concentrate on core competencies.

CNT

CNT is one of the UK's fastest growing Managed Services and Systems Providers. With expertise and experience in a range of both public and private sectors, CNT appreciates the business challenges facing organisations both now and in the future and is dedicated to delivering services to improve its customers' operational efficiency.

CNT has a considerable understanding of the way in which Courts Committees operate and offers the expertise gained from working with numerous Magistrates' Courts Committees throughout the UK.

Among others, CNT provides managed services to: Devon and Cornwall Magistrates' Courts; Leicester Magistrates' Courts; Cleveland Magistrates' Courts and Surrey Magistrates' Courts.

THE BUSINESS SOLUTION

Every legal case starts in the Magistrates' Courts, from murders to parking fines, which means it is vital for the Courts to establish and maintain a high level of communication between a number of different groups. These individual groups include, for example, the Police, the DVLA, the CPS and The Probation Service - all of which need to be in constant communication with the Courts in order to process information and operate effectively.

At WYMCS there are approximately 500 employees relying on its bespoke IT infrastructure to enable them to carry out their jobs and manage the Courts. As with any Courts Services, network downtime would have serious consequences in terms of time and money - making it essential to ensure IT is managed and maintained effectively.

When approached by WYMCS to address its IT issues and aspirations, CNT suggested a solution that would involve taking control of its entire IT infrastructure. As part of this proposal, Mainframe services would be moved from Leeds to WYMCS' Bradford location and CNT would appoint experienced members of its team as on-site staff. These individuals would remain on-site from 7am to 8pm each day to provide management and maintenance services to WYMCS' IT infrastructure.

In addition, CNT suggested appointing off-site support in the form of a helpdesk, to ensure all problems and maintenance work could be completed efficiently and effectively via remote

troubleshooting, or sending a member of the team to the appropriate on-site location to manually deal with the problem.

Whilst WYMCS would still own its own hardware, software and licenses, CNT would manage the legacy network and customised software running on it, such as the rota package, which is key to the day to day operations of WYMCS.

THE RESULTS

Now working alongside CNT, WYMCS uses a Wide Area Network (WAN) to link Mainframe services at Bradford to its other locations and groups (eg: CPS). There are individual servers in place at each location running Prime and Microsoft applications and enabling communication between remote users and the Mainframe. All servers are linked via Kilostream or ISDN dial up services. WYMCS BACS and AllPay services are also linked by WAN to enable effective transfer of funds, and CNT is responsible for the essential management of the WAN.

Automated services have been streamlined and responsibility transferred. CNT plays a vital role in suggesting how to develop WYMCS' systems in the future, and how to improve current operations by automating additional services. Automation has made processes less manual and freed staff up to concentrate on other areas of work.

All users have benefited from the service in terms of reduced downtime and speed of response to problems.

The public also get a better service and benefit from faster processing times and greater accuracy of information. In addition, the Courts are able to measure efficiency and achieve the statistics required to meet target performance levels.

BENEFITS

- Fixed annual revenue fee
- Transfer of responsibility
- Staff were transferred under TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings of Protection of Employment)
- Transfer of best practise
- Regular management and user group meetings
- No need for additional employees
- Consistently high level of service

Regular user-group meetings take place between WYMCS and CNT to ensure problems are identified early and dealt with effectively. This process helps CNT achieve high levels of customer service and satisfaction; and empowers users so they feel responsible for their own IT operations and how to improve them.

Diane Belshaw, Resources Director at WYMCS, said "Our excellent working relationship with CNT is invaluable in ensuring that WYMCS continue to provide an effective and efficient customer service. The decision to move to managed services transferred a lot of responsibility. Employees are now free to concentrate on core competencies and a massive concern has been removed from our shoulders, and placed on those of someone we can rely on. Staffing issues with regards to holidays and sickness are no longer a concern and we are able to benefit from shared best practise from CNT's experience and relationships with other Magistrate Courts' Services and public sector organisations."



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