



partnerships for schools
building schools for the future

Leeds City Council's Managed Service, provided by RM, covers 14 schools in the local authority region. This case study looks at the benefits for the schools and local authority, with a particular focus on the TUPE transfer of staff.

The Leeds / RM Managed Service was highly commended at the *Excellence in BSF Awards 2009* in the Most Effective ICT Partnering category.

Key project information

Local authority: Leeds City Council
ICT partner: RM
No. of schools: 14
No. of pupils: 14,750

Managed Service provides better support and access to new technologies across Leeds

Project description

The Leeds City Council £260 million BSF project will see a third of its secondary school estate rebuilt or refurbished and these 14 schools will all access their ICT through a Managed Service provided by RM.

The Managed Service provides the schools with access to new hardware, software and ongoing support to enable the anytime, anywhere learning ethos of the Leeds BSF schools.

Phase 1 of the Leeds Managed Service was implemented in April 2008 with nine schools benefitting from the improved and innovative ICT at this time, including the new builds Allerton High, Pudsey Grangefield and Rodillian, while IT staff within the schools were transferred under the TUPE process to become RM employees.

TUPE stands for the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations and is for the protection of employees when the organisation they are employed by changes or undergoes a change of ownership.

The TUPE transfers

Initially, there was some reluctance from the schools to outsource their ICT due to a lack of understanding of how such a process would work and the benefits it could bring. There was a worry that a centralised helpdesk would not be as responsive as in-house staff and that the new management team would not understand the schools' requirements.

The change management process addressed these concerns through regular, clear and transparent communications combined with opportunities for face-to-face meetings with the new RM support team in their Abingdon offices. KPI performance reports from the helpdesk service also allayed fears about response times and issue resolution.

One of the main issues that the TUPE transfer in Leeds had to address was the change in structure and job roles now that ICT and associated support for all schools would be provided centrally by RM. During Phase 1 of the Managed Service this led to the transfer of 20 ICT Managers and Technicians,

Managed Service provides better support and access to new technologies across Leeds

who previously worked for their respective schools under Leeds City Council contracts, to RM.

As well as ensuring that existing staff retained their roles within the schools, the TUPE transfer gave them access to a wider support network and opportunities for professional development and progression, which had been lacking previously. RM also needed to establish and manage relationships within the schools and ensure they had a good understanding of their individual ICT needs and requirements, so the TUPE transfer has ensured that existing relationships and knowledge has stayed within the schools but also passed on to RM.

Karl Nicholson, a Support Consultant for Leeds BSF, was transferred to RM under the TUPE arrangement. He says of his new role: "The transfer from a local authority employee to RM has opened up many new opportunities for me. Within nine months of transfer I was successful in an application for a Support Consultant role. I have gone from supporting a single school to 16, and growing, across Leeds. The TUPE to RM is the single best thing that has happened in my career."

Performance management of the ICT infrastructure had previously been a challenge for all schools, with teaching staff often spending time when they should have been teaching addressing ICT issues instead. The new ICT infrastructure delivered through the Managed Service is more stable and resilient and the centralised support and knowledge base now available to the schools' ICT staff means that issues that do arise can be resolved more quickly with minimal disruption to pupils and teaching staff.

John Richardson, Business Manager at Rodillian School, which is among the first of Leeds' Phase 1 schools to be part of the ICT Managed Service, has been pleasantly surprised by the success of the TUPE transfers and central delivery and management of the school's ICT, and commented: "As the person responsible in school for delivering an efficient IT service you are always nervous when what was previously under your personal control is handed over to a third party.

"After 18 months of operation, which has also seen a move to brand new premises, I can say that nervousness has proved to be totally unfounded. RM are running an IT service four times the size of our previous platform with a similar sized on-site team and meeting the stringent service standards required. One particular advantage of the service is if the on-site team can't solve the problem they can call on the extensive expertise that RM has offsite. In summary, we are delighted with the service provided."

Outcomes and impact

The ICT Managed Service in Leeds is delivering a more reliable and robust service that allows easier implementation of applications and provides access to newer technologies than the schools could previously consider.



Integrated networks, formal reporting and a central escalation point also mean that school-based staff can more easily manage the systems and identify and resolve issues more quickly. The city-wide service also means that this knowledge can be shared with all schools to help them mitigate similar issues in the future.

For the ICT staff that became RM employees as part of the process, a career development path has opened up and opportunities for training and promotion are now available.

Richard Lian a Team Leader for Managed Services in Leeds BSF said of his new role: "Working for RM has opened up a host of career opportunities that were not available to me in my previous local authority role. I have been given the opportunity to advance my career and after

Managed Service provides better support and access to new technologies across Leeds

eight months as a TUPE employee I was successful in being promoted to the role of Team Leader, which I have been undertaking for around a year now.”

The story is similar with all TUPE staff involved in the Leeds BSF project with David Brooke a Senior Customer Support Engineer at Crawshaw School, which is a specialist Humanities College that was refurbished as part of the Leeds BSF programme, commenting: “After working for RM for 19 months now, originally with a TUPE contract, I have been promoted twice: once to a customer support engineer and more recently to senior customer

support engineer! Working for RM has given me the chance to develop my skills and abilities and to advance my career in such a way that I wouldn't have been able to whilst I was employed by the local authority.”

The success of the transfers is evidenced by the fact that all of the staff that TUPE transferred to RM as part of the Leeds Managed Service project are still working there and enjoying the wider range of opportunities now available to them.

Top Tips

- **Start the process as soon as possible, communicate all stages clearly and provide opportunities for feedback and questions.**
- **Using a blend of new and existing management, have strong and effective leaders in place at the start and ensure the management team is large enough for the scale of the project.**
- **Define and map out processes.**
- **Ensure there is a technology roadmap in place for all phases.**

Further information

For more information about this project go to:
www.rm.com/futureeducation

Or email: futureeducation@rm.com
 T: 08450 700300