CIVICA ideas into action

North Yorkshire Environmental Health team streamlines work with Cx.

Cx is built to meet the council's needs, improving efficiencies, insights and compliance.

Before becoming part of North Yorkshire Council, Hambleton District Council served around 90,000 residents (2021 census data) citizens.
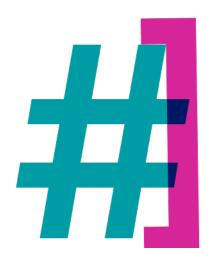
The Environmental Health team started looking for a new regulatory services solution to support its day-to-day work. Vikki Flowers, current Head of Environmental Protection at North Yorkshire Council, worked with the head of licensing to establish key criteria for the new solution that would be used by both teams.

Top of the list were two things their existing solution didn't offer. The ability to run reporting, including statutory reports, directly from the solution; and a built-in document management system for creating customer communications within the solution and storing them against cases.

> "The work you put in to configuring Cx pays off because you get a system that does what you want it to do. Now that I've used Cx, I would never want to go back to our previous solution."
>
> Vikki Flowers, Head of Environmental Protection, North Yorkshire Council, formerly Environmental Health Manager at Hambleton District Council.

1   GDPR compliance for data retention

2   Increased efficiencies for officers and managers

3   Enquiry response time cut to 5 days

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A system under control

A key benefit of Cx is that teams can add new codes and make changes to the system without involving Civica. And because Cx is in the cloud, there's no need to involve the council's IT team in solution updates. "It's our system for our service, under our ownership and control," says Vikki.

Recognising the importance of maintaining control, Vikki and her team leaders actively manage change requests. "Being able to make changes ourselves means we can do things quickly, like amending a letter on the day it needs to go out," says Peter Crass, Divisional Officer for Environmental Protection (West), North Yorkshire Council (formerly the Residential Team Leader for Hambleton District Council).

"But we don't, for example, add new codes to Cx unless there's a really good reason for doing so."

Improved intelligence

Cx stands out from other regulatory services systems because it allows the linking of businesses, contacts, and assets. This simplifies, for example, regulation of the many private water supplies across Hambleton. Each is set up as an asset with its customers linked as contacts. So, if an issue arises with a water supply, the council can generate and send letters to affected customers using Cx's embedded document management system.

"We have an audit trail of what was sent out when, and to whom," says Peter. "This gives us more certainty and saves time and effort compared with using a separate system for correspondence."

Additionally, Cx's advanced search makes it easy to create reports on the fly, while advanced panes enable the creation of more complex report formats. "Building reports with advanced panes takes time, but the results are worth it — the output is so much better than with our previous system," Vikki quotes.

Using Cx also enabled compliance with the council's data retention policy and GDPR - a critical requirement that the previous software didn't support. An automated report runs periodically, alerting Peter to data that has reached its expiry so he can review and delete (or retain) it.

Better insights for all

Cx gives everyone in the team the features and insights they need to be more efficient. Officers can record their day-to-day case work with ease, while task paths help them be more organised in progressing their cases.

It's straightforward to allocate cases to team members. "The management overview is invaluable, and everything is recorded and audited," Peter adds.

A management dashboard gives Vikki an overview of activity across the whole environmental health team, as well as at-a-glance insights into trends, such as inspection outcomes and time to respond to general enquiries and complaints.

"Cx has helped us meet our objective of responding faster to general enquiries and complaints, We're down from seven days before the pandemic (and 10 during it) to five, and from the Cx dashboard I can see it's usually much faster than that." Vikki states.

Configuration pays off

While acknowledging that getting Cx set up took time and effort, Vikki is proud of what she and her team have achieved and appreciates the collaborative working relationship with Civica. "The work you put in to configuring Cx pays off because you get a system that does what you want it to do," Vikki explains. "Now that I've used Cx, I would never want to go back to our previous solution."

Now the Head of Environmental Protection at North Yorkshire Council, Vikki needs to bring eight teams together as one. "Ideally, we'll migrate everyone onto the same regulatory services software solution to help drive integration and further increase efficiencies," says Vikki.

Hambleton District Council is one of seven former district and borough councils that merged to form North Yorkshire Council, a unitary authority, in April 2023. Hambleton served a population of over 850,000 and covered an area of more than 500 square miles, making it one of the largest UK local authorities by land area.

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