

HR & Payroll

Housing Plus Group makes a successful transition to transformational HR

The HR team has improved reporting, reduced administration and gained more time to focus on strategic planning.

The Housing Plus Group serves 25,000 customers in Shropshire and Staffordshire by providing 12,000 homes, managing retirement living communities and delivering domiciliary care services.

Growth drives innovation

The Group was formed by the merger of Severnside Housing and Housing Plus, which brought together over 600 employees. The HR team faced the challenge of managing all HR requirements for the combined workforce across the Housing Plus Group's six companies. "Our HR software was quite antiquated: it just didn't meet our requirements with the functionality we needed," explains Helen Watkins, Senior HR Business Partner at Housing Plus Group.

100+

employees managing processes via the Civica HR mobile app

A new approach to HR

The HR team chose to replace its legacy system with Civica HR & Payroll. The cloud-enabled platform streamlines all aspects of workforce management. Among the key factors in the Group's selection of the platform were its ability to support all HR functions using a single centralised set of data and its self-service portal. Now more than 600 employees use the software to book annual leave, manage absences, claim expenses and mileage, conduct appraisals, and book and manage training.

"The portal is intuitive – everyone is able to pick it up and use it very easily. It has created efficiencies for employees, managers and the HR team."

Helen Watkins, Senior HR Business Partner, Housing Plus Group

Key outcomes:

- Streamlined HR management across a geographically dispersed group of organisations
- Ready adoption of easy-to-use self-service portal and mobile app by 600+ employees
- Reduced admin releases HR team to focus on strategic planning
- Improved insight with built-in standard reports and the option to create bespoke reports
- A successful transition to transformational HR.



Housing Plus Group continued

Improving data quality

The HR team ensured it imported only clean data into the Civica system. "To maintain this we conduct regular audits and as we add new employees, we make sure we adhere to rigorous checks to ensure the quality and integrity of the data," says Watkins.

A phased rollout for smooth adoption

To begin with, the team gave 240 people access to the Civica solution and soon extended it to support more than 600 employees in administrative, managerial, customer-facing and building services roles. They also took the precaution of rolling out features gradually, to ensure efficient access management and ease the demands on training. The rollout started with leave, followed by absence management, expenses and mileage claims and appraisals.

Training and course management

Housing Plus maintains training records centrally using Civica HR. Individuals and their managers have access to training records and can book or request training and complete post-course evaluations online.

Mobile HR

The final phase was to rollout the mobile app. This allows employees to book annual leave and access their personal data from their mobile devices.

Supporting further growth

The HR team is now planning to add the recruitment module. This will enable applicant data to populate the system automatically once a position is filled, creating further efficiencies.

Time and insight for strategic planning

Since adopting the software, the HR team has experienced a significant drop in administrative tasks. As a result, they can spend more time on strategic HR planning, supported by reports they can generate quickly and efficiently from the Civica system. In addition to the standard reports available from the Civica system — which meet most of the Group's needs — Watkins has developed bespoke reports for managers and the wider business.

"We used to be very spreadsheet based, but now we can ask the system for exactly the data we want, which gives us a big advantage — before we had to manipulate it to get the answers," says Watkins.

Transformational HR achieved

Under a five-year programme, the HR team helped all Group companies get to a position where managers manage their teams, and HR provides an advisory service.

“ The whole purpose was to move from transactional HR to transformational HR. There's no doubt that implementing Civica HR & Payroll has helped us achieve this. Everyone says how easy the system is to use — and that includes feedback from our Directors and Chief Executive.”

Helen Watkins, Senior HR Business Partner, Housing Plus Group



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