



# Gloucestershire County Council: Helping Public Agencies and Schools Do More with Less



A few years ago, Gloucestershire County Council made a strategic decision to reduce overhead and save money. Instead of relying on private contractors for back-office services, **the Council built its own service centre** based on the SAP® ERP application. Today, almost 1,000 other public entities rely on the centre for the quality of service and great value for the money it provides.

#### Organisation

Gloucestershire County Council

#### Location

Gloucester, United Kingdom

#### Industry

Public sector

#### **Products and Services**

Education, healthcare. environment, safety, and transportation services

#### **Employees**

13,500 including local education authority schools

#### **Budget**

Almost £1 billion (€1.25 billion)

#### Web Site

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk

### **Implementation Partner**

Capgemini UK plc



#### BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

#### The organisation's top objectives

- Minimise critical public service cuts by reducing cost and overhead
- Share a single service centre across agencies, schools, and voluntary organisations
- Eliminate reliance on private companies or complex contracts

#### The resolution

- Shared services using the SAP® ERP application for payroll, benefits. recruiting, background checks, temporary staffing, and so on
- Intuitive self-service HR forms using SAP Interactive Forms software by Adobe
- Flexible back-office support matched to each organisation

#### The key benefits

- Substantial cost savings and award-winning service
- 33,000 employees and pensioners supported
- 404,000 payroll payments annually
- Back-office costs shifted to fund front-line services.

Read more

#### TOP BENEFITS ACHIEVED

~1.000

Public sector customers

97%

First-call resolution for SAP support

On-time payroll, pensions. and 3rd-party payments

See more metrics

"Our use of SAP Interactive Forms and SAP ERP has been recognised by the Payroll World Awards. We are a finalist both for technology development and best use of self-service."

Cheryl Chambers, Head of Business Service Centre, Gloucestershire County Council

#### **Organisation objectives**

Resolution

Business transformation

Future plans

# Fulfilling the public mission as public funding dries up

Local governments everywhere are feeling the pressure to deliver critical public services while budgets shrink. For Gloucestershire County Council, delivering critical education, fire, police and elderly care services is supported, in part, by its business service centre, which is responsible for payroll and benefits processing, recruiting, pre-employment background checks, and temporary staffing. "Every pound we can save in the back office means a pound we can spend on serving people," says Cheryl Chambers, Head of the Business Service Centre at Gloucestershire County Council. "And we want to share those services with other agencies beyond the County Council so they can get the best value for the money, as well."

Chambers and the rest of the services team are building partnerships with local government, schools, and other public sector organisations to promote self-service and collaboration and offer the same shared services that have benefitted the

County Council. "Public sector organisations don't have to rely on private companies or large teams of in-house staff," says Chambers. "We share our services with them – and we can do it cheaper and with less people – thanks to our fantastic professionals and world-class software from SAP." It's a model whose success is already proven within Gloucestershire County Council. "Within our own organisation, we've already saved a half a million pounds annually in back-office services," says Chambers.

"Delivering employee services takes a big chunk out of public budgets, and it was no different with us. So far, with the service centre, our budget for these services is down almost 40%."

Andy Palfreyman, Shared Service Manager for Employees, Gloucestershire County Council



Organisation objectives

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# Fast, flexible, and paper-form free

Soon after its launch, Gloucestershire County Council's shared-service centre was supporting different outside agencies including schools, police, fire, and several smaller voluntary agencies. "They see the immediate advantages," says Chambers. "There are no up-front costs and processing fees. With our temporary staffing services, for example, we can provide organisations with the right people without having them pay the 25% fee charged by private staffing agencies."

Another advantage is the self-services enabled by SAP ERP and the SAP Interactive Forms software by Adobe. "We help schools and agencies get rid of paper HR forms by building customised, intuitive online forms," explains Alex Robinson, shared service manager for systems at Gloucestershire County

Council. "And we are supporting almost 1,000 other organisations, some with a staff as large as 13,000 and others with as few as 40. The services are all tailored specifically to the individual organisation, and employees have no idea that they are using the service centre."

Up-to-date knowledge is another key advantage, explains Robinson. "Our people stay on top of things like the new pension benefits requirements, as well as all of the various tax and statutory returns, which helps our customers stay focused on their own core mission," she says. "We also get them up and running fast, with services usually deployed in about two months. And agencies get the flexibility they need through a variety of billing models and customised services."

"The transfer of the City's payroll service to the shared-service centre went really smoothly, and we are already reaping the benefits."

Peter Gillett, Corporate Director of Resources, Gloucester City Council



Organisation objectives

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# **Proving the value of shared services**

Today, the shared-service centre supports 33,000 employees and pensioners across almost 1,000 different local governments, schools, academies, and voluntary organisations. Most recently, Gloucester City Council joined the shared-service centre for payroll and other services. "We are now processing over 404,000 payroll payments a year," says Chambers. "And when you compare performance metrics for our services to our peers – we're doing better."

Ninety-seven percent of calls to the SAP help desk are resolved on the first call – compared to 70% nationally – and 98% of employee background checks are successfully completed the first time, compared to 90% nationally. Invoice payments and debt recovery is faster using the service centre. "Every day, we're proving that our model delivers more savings and higher-quality service," says Chambers. "We even have organisations come back after trying private contractors."

#### **KEY BENEFITS**

404,000

Payroll payments processed annually

95%

Job offers issued within 3 working days

98%

First-time background-check completion

100%

On-time payroll, pensions, and 3rd-party payments

100%

Invoices paid within 2 days

**20**%

Staff with business improvement qualification



Organisation objectives

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# Further reducing taxpayer costs and back-office burdens

More and more public and voluntary organisations are seeing the advantages of using Gloucestershire County Council's shared-service centre. "Our recent success with Gloucester City Council has gotten a lot of positive attention in terms of better service and releasing more funds for front-line services," says Chambers. "And we will continue to find more ways to reduce costs and improve."

Chambers and her team are leveraging the service centre's SAP software infrastructure to scale up and improve the quality of services across the board. "The beauty of the Gloucestershire model is that it allows public sector organisations to share in the benefits of a world-class service without the loss of control and contractual inflexibility that would be offered by a traditional outsource or bureau service," says David Lowson, Vice President – SAP, Capgemini UK plc. "This truly is a new operating model for excellence in UK government."



