

# A single view of a child's record

Digital Transformation Programme  
Case study

As part of its strategic plan, 'The Deal for the Future', Wigan Council aimed to develop a system which would deliver a single view of a child's record which is shared across multiple agencies, supporting the vision to provide a new way of working within children's services.

The resulting system delivers improved efficiencies across a range of support programmes (including children's services, Troubled Families and place-based integration) delivered in partnership across the area.

## Digital Transformation Programme

The work on this project undertaken by Wigan Council has been funded through the Digital Transformation Programme, which is managed and overseen by the Local Government Association (LGA).

The programme was set up to help councils and their partners develop digital solutions to support their work on national programmes of transformation including the integration of health and social care, Troubled Families, welfare reform and public health.

The aim is for the digital tools and solutions created through the programme to be reused by other councils and contribute to the wider work to transform local public services.

# The issue and context

In common with many other public-sector bodies, Wigan Council has to deal with an increasingly difficult financial situation as its budgets are repeatedly reduced. Wigan's approach to having to reduce expenditure by 50 per cent was to take a radically different approach, a transformation in the way their services are delivered rather than 'salami-slicing' cuts.

This approach that Wigan Council developed is an innovative asset-based approach to public sector reform called 'The Deal'. The Deal underpins everything Wigan does and defines how they work, by creating new relationships between public services and communities. The principal aim is to proactively prevent problems from arising rather than waiting for them to occur and then working to resolve them.



The Deal builds on the strengths and assets within the communities of the borough. To ensure a place-based response to implementing the deal, services have been grouped on a model consisting of seven service delivery footprints (SDFs) – each with a population of between 30,000 and 50,000. The seven SDFs each have their own individual profiles and the community assets in each SDF have been mapped. Integrated, place-based preventative services are increasingly wrapped around GPs and schools – the key building blocks of these communities.

The essence of the deal is to understand the strengths and assets in individuals, families and communities and to ensure public services work alongside service users – 'doing with' not 'doing to'. Wigan's workforce are supported, trained and encouraged to know the community they work in and to have different conversations that focus on the strengths, skills and passions of people rather than a deficit-based focus on the things people cannot do.

Within children's services these principles are encapsulated within a new 'Start Well'<sup>1</sup> delivery model. This model was designed following extensive consultation with the public. The consultation received numerous comments that service users were frustrated by spending too much time 're-telling our stories to different people' and that there were numerous delays caused by the silo-based organisation of service delivery. In response to these comments the service has now been redesigned to deliver a joined-up approach within each SDF.

The Deal also includes a key work-stream, entitled 'Transforming through technology', to improve service delivery through increasing and improving the use of technology. This principle is a key enabler to the delivery of this place-based model of service delivery because the professionals in each SDF can only work effectively if they have simple and easy access to accurate and reliable information.

<sup>1</sup> Start Well (Sure Start) children's centres, led by primary headteachers, provide support and activities to help parents, carers and childcare providers give children the 'best start in life'. These include childcare, early education and play, health services, information and advice about children's services and parenting support – and sit within a wider start well model of preventative children and family services.

Because children's services had grown up over a number of years and in response to a variety of national drivers the legacy systems in use had the following characteristics:

- multiple back office systems (eg in education, social services, etc)
- multiple case management systems
- the potential for duplicated data with the connected data quality issues
- silo working (both within the council and with partners – eg health)
- a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

These issues needed to be addressed if the service was to adopt the new model of service delivery demanded by The Deal.

# The project objectives and targets

Consequently, Wigan Council set out to develop a system which allowed a single view of a child's record. This would remove barriers by providing a single authoritative view of all relevant data. This would in turn facilitate an integrated multi-agency approach based on targeted, early interventions. Such a proactive, rather than reactive, model should improve both efficiency and outcomes.

## The benefits of a single view



To achieve this aim Wigan Council bid for a grant of £25,000 from the Digital Transformation Programme. This grant was match-funded by the council allowing it to purchase the necessary system and to provide support time from in-house staff.

The Single View project aimed to deliver a simple to use, web-based overview of data currently held in numerous council-owned systems.

It should be noted that the system will not store any case information but will provide multi-agency access to the council data based on existing information-sharing agreements and utilising two-factor authentication and industry standard encryption.

Currently, the system allows access to data from three main systems:

- Early Help Module (EHM)
- Social Care (LCS)
- Education and Early Years (Capita One).



It is intended that this will be extended to include data from other systems and partners, such as housing and health, at a future date.

In addition to directly supporting the Start Well initiative within children's services the system will be available to support work across a range of programmes such as Troubled Families, welfare reform and intensive community orders.

In the original bid for the LGA funding Wigan estimated that the system will improve the efficiency of professionals involved in this area and provide a direct saving of £62,500 per annum. The savings already delivered are estimated at over £144,000 per annum.

In addition, the system will help to deliver targeted, early interventions which could avoid costs of hundreds of thousands of pounds per annum by enabling staff to work more effectively together, resulting in better safeguarding outcomes and the avoidance of future problems. The impact of this programme in terms of delivering better targeted interventions is detailed later in this case study.

# The approach and progress to date

Despite a few teething problems the Single View system, developed by Liquid Logic for Wigan Council, is now fully operational.

Single View was part of an overall review of Wigan Council's existing social care service delivery process and its associated systems.

Wigan like many other authorities operated multiple back office client and case management systems to deliver its services to children and young people. These different systems have emerged over time to meet the requirements of individual services and organisations. Which meant Wigan had multiple records for children and families across different services and no easy way of joining this information across services or agencies to present a single version of the truth.

A key focus of the project was to remove the barriers associated with traditional/silo working and to develop integrated services around the needs of families. As part of the Discovery Phase, the council carried out a scoping and requirements gathering exercise. From this it became apparent that there was a clear need to have a single view of demand and use across multiple service areas so that interventions could be measured, reviewed and targeted appropriately.

Experience indicates that the more complex the family and individuals, both in terms of need and the services delivered, then the more disparate the information. The change in focus and strategy, from a one-size-fits-all approach to targeted and appropriate interventions to support the Start Well service delivery, required accurate and timely information across multiple organisations. This included risk stratification to identify cohorts, integrated care records to ensure services are wrapped around the client/family, outcomes-based reporting and information sharing.

## Single View implementation plan

Month	May 17	Jun 17	Jul 17	Aug 17	Sept 17	Oct 17	Nov 17	Dec 17	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18
User workshops															
• Define view															
• Agree access rights															
• Data extract review															
Single View config workshop															
Single View UAT install															
User acceptance testing (3 rounds)															
UAT final issue resolution															
Single View live upgrade															
Single View user rollout – core group															
Single View remaining user rollout – Phase 1															
Single View future integration discovery															

The project phase for Single View implementation started during the main Early Help Case Management module rollout. However, due to issues around sign-on, the go live date needed to be pushed back to allow for issue resolution which then required an additional full version upgrade to the existing system to fix the issues identified. The above plan shows the key delivery phases.

During the implementation of the system, the major problem encountered related to the move to a single sign-on which would facilitate access to multiple systems. Previously, users had had to sign in to each system separately, whereas, with Single View, user profiles are recorded so that only a single (two factor) sign in is needed. Coordinating the historical sign-on requirements across systems from multiple suppliers proved more troublesome than had been envisaged – but this problem has now been resolved.

With the correct security clearance, a professional can use Single View to see information concerning:

- school attendance
- social care involvements
- early help involvements
- relationships
- school details
- demographics.

Single View allows users to look for information about a child using a mix of search parameters (eg names, post code, date of birth, etc). A wide range of search criteria improves the likelihood that all information related to the correct child is identified, even if, for example, an intervention is recorded at one address and then the child (and family) moves to another address.

After a search has been made the system returns an overview screen containing basic information about the child, together with a series of tabs allowing the professional to access details from the underlying systems which they are authorised to access.

The screenshot shows a web-based application titled 'SingleView' for managing children's records. At the top, there are tabs for 'Address' (set to '1 School Close Wigan T...'), 'Phone', 'EHM', 'LCS', and 'ONE'. The main content area is divided into four sections:

- Personal Details**: Includes 'Relationships', 'Professional Involvements', and 'Links'.
- Personal Details**: Shows a summary of the child's personal information: Title (Will), Forename (Train10), Surname (Train10), Gender (Male), Ethnicity (White), Date of Birth (06-Sep-2003), and Age (14 years).
- Address**: Displays two address entries: a 'Primary Address' (Shared LCS & EHM, From 26-Feb-2018) at 1, School Close, Wigan, TR1 1CL, and a 'Home Address (Correspondence)' (ONE, From 19-Feb-2018) at 10 Train Street, Wigan, TR1 1ST.
- Other Contact Details**: Shows 'None'.

Below these sections are 'Status' and 'Actions' buttons, along with links to 'View in EHM', 'View in LCS', 'Add to Bookmarks', and 'Compare All'.

The roll-out of the system was managed on a phased basis.

Initially a fairly small number of staff received considerable training, either in small groups or on a one-to-one basis, to ensure that the system was properly tested and used. As the system is now being rolled out to an increasing number of users the training has been automated and consists of a number of short instructional films.

Implementation began with council staff in the Early Help Hub. This was a first point of contact and played a role in triaging cases. As a result of historical developments, there was another group known as the Social Care Hub that operated alongside the Early Help Hub. In parallel with the development of this system and as part of the wider re-think of children's services these two hubs were merged into a single operation and all staff in this new combined hub now utilise the Single View system.

At the time of writing the system is being used by over 200 professionals across the council (the hub, a range of social care managers and staff, locality staff, and 30 of the 140 schools) and partner organisations (eg multi-agency safeguarding hub, the police, etc). The roll-out process is ongoing.

## Governance arrangements

The project was governed through existing structures including the Start Well programme board, the health and wellbeing board, the partnership board and the information management and technology board (all of which included members). The director of children's services acted as the senior responsible officer and the programme manager for IT reform and transformation directly managed the project.

# The outcome – successes and challenges

The Single View system allows professionals (including social workers, Start Well practitioners, SDF managers, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) practitioners, school teachers and pastoral leads, etc) a more efficient way in which to access children's records. Consequently, it not only delivers direct time savings, with the associated avoidance of increased costs, but also provides a more effective service by allowing professionals to make earlier interventions and hence improve outcomes and reduce or avoid potential future costs.

One practical example of the use of the Single View system to inform a 'huddle'.

A family was faced with eviction for rent arrears. Single View identified that a child within this family was causing some concern at school and hence representatives of the housing group were invited to the next 'huddle' at the school. This resulted in a review of the family's debt and benefits situation and the subsequent rescinding of the eviction notice.

## Operational benefits

By making accurate information easily available to a range of professionals the Single View system:

- reduces the time professionals spend searching across multiple systems – in the Hub, in the SDFs, in schools and elsewhere
- presents holistic information about a child in a useable and succinct format
- highlights any discrepancies across different systems (eg different addresses)
- gives assurance that the complete range of information has been presented from a wide range of systems
- allows professionals to make associations – eg it is easier to see siblings and to take a whole family approach
- provides valuable information during 'huddles' – when a mix of professionals meet to discuss a range of cases in a locality.

The success of the system is reflected in the following comments from users:

### Feedback from schools

**"The system has helped to speed up the early help process and make this quicker, all of the personal details are in, so no need to type them in each time."**

**"The family working has made a massive difference as I can work on more than one child in one place, with less administration."**

**"Since going live in March, the system has helped to get a very clear picture on all open cases for the school."**

## **Feedback from Start Well**

**"I absolutely love it, I can quickly do the attendance checks in one click, miles quicker than going on Capita One."**

**"It's simple, isn't it."**

**"Brilliant."**

## **Financial benefits**

The Single View system has been rolled out during this year and is already producing direct savings that equate to £144,000 per annum.

It must be noted that these savings are in fact costs avoided and not cashable savings – ie the time savings realised allow staff to do more with the same resourcing level. If the system had not been made more efficient then additional resources would have been necessary to achieve the current workload.

Staff in the Early Help Hub were the first to utilise the system. In order to measure the impact of Single View these staff recorded the time taken to complete a triage case before and after the introduction of the system. Although each case is different, they found that the time taken was reduced by around 20 minutes per case (from an average of 68 minutes to 48 minutes). This meant that an officer was able to process six or seven triages a day rather than three or four under the old system.

**"I was involved in testing the Single View system which involved comparing performance with and without the tool. Having used the tool it was horrible when I didn't have access!"**

**Kay Lowe, Early Help Hub**

The Early Help Hub processes approximately 300 triage cases per month so this equates to a saving of 100 hours per month. Based on a salary of £16.38 per hour (G8 pay band) plus 30 per cent on costs, this equates to a saving of £25,500 per annum.

The Social Care Hub was handling an average of 1050 cases per month – so with the merger of the two hubs a larger time saving has been delivered for the last three months and can be calculated as a combined annual saving of £115,000.

In conjunction with the wider changes within children's services, the Single View system will deliver an annual IT saving of £29,000 once existing licences are rationalised in the next financial year.

As well as these direct cost savings, use of the new system has contributed to the delivery of a more effective service. For example, by facilitating early intervention through bringing together information in an accessible way and freeing up professionals' time, the system has helped the council to record a drop of six per cent in looked after children between 2010/11 and 2017/18. Over this period the number dropped by 31 (from 510 to 479) and with each looked after child costing on average of £52,676 per annum the cost avoided is significant.

In addition to direct savings delivered by the Single View system it has also facilitated the introduction of other initiatives. For example, schools within the area are moving from paper-based processes to the use of IT systems and Single View is being used as a user-friendly front end to the Early Help system which is currently being introduced.

By using this new Early Help process one school, Atherton St. Georges is saving two days' work per month. With an average salary, plus on costs, of £30,000 and based on a working year of 260 days, this equates to an annual time saving equivalent to £3,250.

Atherton St Georges can now use the time saved to provide one-to-one quality support with their pastoral team focussing directly on the needs of the child, as opposed to spending valuable time on paper-based administrative tasks.

Although each school is different it is expected that similar proportionate time savings will become the norm across all 140 schools in Wigan. This equates to a potential total time saving in excess of £450,000 per annum.

This time saving is due to the complete new IT process for Early Help. However, Single View certainly helps to make its introduction easier by making the system more accessible allowing the gained efficiencies in time to be better utilised.

## Organisational benefits

The Single View system, by virtue of the fact that it enables professionals within a locality to gain easy access to accurate and timely information, underpins and enables the council's reorganisation and its move to locality working.

The system provides the practical means for the implementation of this change and hence facilitates the cultural shift required to introduce a service delivery model based upon shared responsibility within the community.

The provision of Single View as a system has directly contributed to an overall increase in wider partner engagement so that over 30 per cent of referrals are now raised directly within the system by partners.

The system has also contributed to an improvement of the relationships between the council and the schools because the latter now feel more 'in control' of their data and hence they have a better oversight of events.

**"The system has helped to speed the Early Help process up and make this quicker, all of the personal details are in, so no need to type them in each time. The family working has made a massive difference as I can work on more than one child in one place, with less administration. Since going live in March, the system has helped to get a very clear picture on all open cases for the school, for instance the school had a lot of open cases, but we found they were not actually passed to the local authority so it allowed me to address this and ensure all cases which need to be passed have been."**

**St Marks School**

# Key learning points

The main problems arising during this project related to the difficulties of introducing a single sign-on process which set out to give access to multiple legacy systems based on an infrastructure that had evolved over time. Therefore, it was necessary to work very closely with providers to resolve these problems.

During school rollout, it has become apparent that the delivery approach needs to be tailored to provide more support to the schools around the business process and to help them gain confidence in their use of the system. As a result, this is being reviewed and adapted to consider the lessons learned for the future offer.

In retrospect it is also felt that it would have been beneficial to gain a more detailed understanding of the infrastructure (both hardware and software), map these out and communicate these details more clearly during the specification stage of the project.

Subsequently, this project helped to trigger the investment programme that was needed to invest in rationalising and updating this infrastructure.

# Next steps

Throughout the year Wigan Council will continue with their roll-out programme for Single View and will continue to provide the necessary support and training for its use internally and to wider partners.

As the council builds up its experience and understanding of the new system and how it operates, it will continue to investigate what additional data could be included and whether the scope of Single View can be extended to cover other areas of work.

As a backdrop to this project, work is progressing on the Greater Manchester devolution and the associated health and social care partnership. It is envisaged that this development will allow access to a wider range of information (eg youth offending and housing) and will deliver an integrated care record. Although it is expected that this latter part will be based on another system (Graphnet), the experience gained during the development and use of the Single View system will be invaluable.

## Contacts for further Information

This is a well-documented system and Wigan Council are willing to share their knowledge and experience with other public-sector bodies.

For more information please contact:

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