Eden District Council increases business visibility and enhances flexible working culture with agile solution from HFX

Eden District Council is based in Penrith and is named after the Eden River that flows through the district. Covering an expanse of more than 2,000 square kilometres and with part of the Lake District National Park within its borders, Eden is the second largest district in England and Wales.

The council employs 180 members of staff to deliver vital public services across the region. Addressing the needs of a diverse community requires dedicated staff to often work outside of normal office hours. The council has always placed an emphasis on work/life balance and offers flexible working to its employees.

Unified solution

Although Eden District Council has fostered an agile working culture through the adoption of flexible working practices, the processes in place to track staff hours were cumbersome.

Bibian McRoy, Assistant Director Organisational Development at Eden District Council explains:

"We carried out a review of how managers were tracking their teams flexible working. The results revealed that each department had its own method of recording flexitime accrued. Some teams were tracking via an electronic spreadsheet whilst others were recording details in a notebook. All of the methods identified were difficult to manage and prone to errors."

The Council wanted a system that could unify the processes for time recording across the organisation, deliver greater visibility & improved accuracy while also being easier to manage. At the same time the Council was experiencing problems with its existing holiday tracking system that was no longer fit for purpose & was seeking a replacement. After conducting research into viable solutions, Eden Council selected Etarmis from HFX. **Linzi Gate,** Senior Human Resources Adviser:

"One of the benefits of the HFX solution is its capability in supporting a wide range of smart card technologies. It enabled us to select the right smart card to meet our needs for a single card solution without compromise."

Putting employees in the driving seat with self service HR

Since implementing the HFX solution, the feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive. The solution accurately records all working hours including accrued flexitime in a transparent and equitable way, providing both employees & managers with the required assurance that the flexitime policies are adhered to.

Employees are able to access the system via the Council's intranet site to review their annual leave entitlement, flexitime balance and make requests for annual leave and flexi leave.

Employees are able to see & request their own annual leave entitlement. Managers also have visibility of when other members of their team have authorised annual leave.

"Employees like the self service element of the solution, at a glance they can check their holiday and flexitime balance and submit requests. They are also more aware of the benefits of keeping records up to date. The previous methods used to track flexitime were laborious & time consuming, which led some employees to record details just once a week but this was prone to errors and guesswork. Etarmis is quick to access and easy to update, it has encouraged a culture of tracking and monitoring things in real-time."

Reducing the administrative burden

Alongside Etarmis, the Council has legacy systems for managing absence and tracking time sheets, which are used by the finance department for budgetary and tracking purposes. Previously HR would run reports in both systems and compare data to ensure accuracy on absence reports versus time sheet information. The process was manual, labour intensive and challenging as each system had separate reporting windows.

Since implementing Etarmis, the Council now uses reports from the Etarmis solution as the 'single version of truth' and cross-reference any anomalies against the data recorded in the system.

"The HFX solution is our single repository of information, because all employees log in and out of the solution via their smart cards, we know the information is accurate and up to date.

The automation of many processes has radically reduced the number of manual errors and any issues that do arise can be identified and corrected quickly," comments Linzi.

Managers appreciate the greater level of visibility that the new HFX solution provides which has enabled them to proactively manage absences, flexitime & holiday requests. The dashboards within the solution deliver at a glance real-time status updates on staffing levels within the team, simplifying the administrative burden and allowing managers to plan more effectively, especially during peak holiday periods.

Enhanced planning through improved visibility

From an organisational perspective, the Etarmis solution has enhanced business planning through increased visibility into working patterns. The HR team now have access to real time data, which has removed the guesswork in supporting personnel administration & broader HR strategy.

Additionally, as a small government organisation, Eden District Council is required to report on employee demographics such as gender, race and age. Previously this would be a manual task, the HFX team have tailored the Etarmis solution, adding supplementary fields to capture the information and enabling the HR team to produce statistical reports within a few mouse clicks.

Bibian McRoy says: "Etarmis has been in place for a few months and already the benefits are being recognised across the Council. The scope of the reports we can produce & the speed in which we are able to produce them has been one of many positives. Holiday year-end and annual organisational data reporting can sometimes loom like a dark cloud on the horizon, however with the Etarmis solution in place we feel better placed to deal with any information we need to produce as we have the data needed at our fingertips."

About HFX

Founded over 40 years ago, **HFX** has a proven history of developing innovative staff time management solutions. The company introduced the concept of flexible working hours in the 1970s with its Flextime® system, and has continued as a leader in the delivery of flexible working solutions.

The latest generation of products, **HFX Imperago**, provides cloud-based solutions which incorporate access control, photo ID, time and attendance recording, flexitime management, and workforce design (optimising shifts and rotas). Highly customisable, **HFX Imperago** can be configured to meet exact requirements, can support unlimited numbers of work patterns and provides seamless integration with all major HR and payroll systems.

Based in the Home Counties just north of London, **HFX** services clients across the public and private sectors throughout the UK. High profile customers include Home Office, Merck, Methodist Church, Dartmoor National Park, adidas, Buhler Sortex Ltd, The Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders (SMMT), Eaton Limited, MoD, National Farmers' Union, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, Hertsmere Borough Council, North Lanarkshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Exeter City Council, Isle of Man Government, MoJ, Pendle Borough Council, Met Police, Flintshire County Council, Office for National Statistics, UK Intellectual Property Office, NHS Business Services Authority, Pembrokeshire County Council, Science and Technology Facilities Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, and many more.

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