

A photograph of the North Lanarkshire Council building, a modern structure with a glass facade and a curved roofline, set against a blue sky with light clouds. In the foreground, there are vibrant red flowers.

North Lanarkshire Council improves staff morale and productivity with flexible and mobile working managed by HFX

North Lanarkshire Council is the fourth largest council in Scotland, responsible for an area covering over 47,000 hectares and serving a population in excess of 326,000 people. The local authority operates across 44 locations, as well as remotely and in the community. Implementing a mobile and flexible working initiative required system and process change.

The council had been using HFX's legacy flexitime solution WinTime for more than 10 years to meet the its scheduling and time recording needs.

In 2011, the council faced two challenges: to introduce a flexible - and mobile-working initiative, which would also support the UK Government's new flexible working legislation and move the organisation's technology from Windows XP to a fully supportable Windows 7 platform.

Moving to a centralised system

John Carlin, Analyst/Programmer at North Lanarkshire Council

"We had installed more than forty versions of the HFX system but they didn't talk to one another. We needed to bridge the gap for employees who operated between multiple offices, create a centralised view of people's movements, leave or absence and reduce reliance on paper processes for reporting."

The North Lanarkshire Council needed to migrate from XP to a fully supported Windows 7 64bit-platform to reduce maintenance, upgrade and backup overheads.

Flexible working legislation

Following the UK Government's decision to introduce new flexible working legislation, giving all employees with 26 weeks of continual employment the right to request flexible working North Lanarkshire had to meet its objectives by the 30th June 2014 deadline.

"Supporting workers with a flexitime recording and absence management system was the first step to achieving mobile and flexible working. Workers covering a wide geographic area, roads inspectors, for example; needed an effective and integrated mobile solution."

An upgrade path

HFX's next generation flexitime system Etarmis offered a fully integrated Workforce Management system that was capable of being linked to third party HR, access control, finance, photo ID, time recording, job costing and other key business systems without compromising functionality.

"We chose to stay with HFX and move onto Etarmis because it had the functionality we needed and gave staff some familiarity. We knew the HFX team, the upgrade was very cost effective, and we were able to use our existing hardware."

Implementing flexible working patterns

HFX's Etarmis solution has given North Lanarkshire Council flexibility in more ways than one. The solution can manage more than 770 work schedules and rotating shift patterns to suit the organisations' wide variety of workers. It is also available to workers in any location and via a number of methods.

"This was a key element. We wanted everyone to be able to access their own information from anywhere. With Etarmis, they do this via fixed terminals, web browser or desktop used by about 90% of staff."

Mobile working reaps benefits

Mobile workers log in through mobile Access Point Names (APNs) to connect across the 3G/4G network using Windows 7 enabled tablets to login. They don't need to return to an office to clock in and clock out, saving time & increasing productivity.

Increased productivity and a sense of ownership

"The benefits of flexible working have been two-fold. We have found people work more conscientiously and productively and in some cases were able to move to a compressed or reduced hours working pattern. Employees enjoy the flexibility and are keen to make it work, so they work hard to meet their objectives."

Productivity has also improved thanks to a reduction in paperwork. Staff are now more in control of their own time, submitting holiday requests, clocking in and

out and making shift pattern change requests directly into the system before reviewing the approvals status without the cumbersome, time-consuming paper processes.

Staff have increased visibility of their colleagues' availability and how best to contact them, whilst managers have a readily available big picture view of staff movements.

“People feel a sense of ownership over their working life. They are encouraged to make the best working choices for them, which can also often mean a better work / home life balance.”

Impressive time savings

In addition to setting full and part time flexible working schedules & rotating shift patterns, the Council now use Etarmis for active authentication login, time recording and absence planning and management. For John, this is as much of a benefit as flexible working.

“People who would previously have been managing this area, are now freed up to do other work. Office administrators in larger offices are saving at least one day a week as a result of this automation - a significant saving. In addition, we calculate this in itself may be saving an average of 15 minutes per person per week. Across 5,000 employees, that's quite a saving! Staff now feel more empowered and are happier as a result.”

A standardised system for all

Today, Etarmis is being used in various different ways depending on local requirements. At the larger sites it is still cost effective to have the terminals at the front door & sometimes on each floor of the building. Where the Council had some terminals in other locations, these too have been upgraded to Etarmis and standardised to allow for mag-swipe clock in and out right across the estate.

Beneficial Management Information

Centralisation has been a big benefit in terms of joining up information and giving managers totally visibility of workers who are moving around. Management reports covering services, departments and locations can now be run at the click of a button. The HFX system also provides information to other Council systems, such as HR.

“At North Lanarkshire Council we have realised that many benefits can be achieved through centralised workforce management. It has been an intensive project but the benefits speak for themselves. We have happier employees, are legislatively compliant & are making impressive time savings. From a technology point of view, we have simplified upgrades, maintenance, back-ups and staff training.”

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 Flexitime® 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.



Flexible Working Solutions

Apply any flexible working policy securely, transparently and with consistency.

To find out more about **HFX** and our solutions please call **01438 822170**, visit **www.hfx.co.uk** or email **sales@hfx.co.uk**