



Case Study: Aberdeenshire Council

Joined-up working across the miles with assistance from Iken Case Management

Situated in North-East Scotland, Aberdeenshire is the fourth largest Scottish council area, with a population that has grown by more than twenty percent in the last thirty years. In order to effectively govern this large geographical area, the council operates from six separate bases across the region.

For Aberdeenshire's Legal and Governance Services team, which is spread over four locations, decentralisation has both advantages and challenges. Principal Solicitor, David Currie, explains: *"The benefit is that we have staff everywhere to deal with problems in the immediate locality, but on the other hand it means that teams aren't necessarily based in one location. For that reason, being able to manage workloads and information across the four offices is all-important."*

An integrated Lotus Notes solution

Faced with this challenge, in 2007 the team sought a technological solution and, after detailed evaluation of four Case Management systems, they selected Iken Case Management and Time Recording.

"We scored each system on a very large number of categories, with a view to seeing which best met our objectives. The Iken system scored highest overall, with one of the biggest factors being that, as a council, we use Lotus Notes as our email system. We felt that Iken would be best able to supply us with a package which could provide native Lotus Notes integration."

Here, David explains how Iken solutions have benefitted Aberdeenshire's legal team since the system was implemented in October 2008.

"Staff can access appropriate information, no matter their location"

Iken stores documents of all types, including emails and scanned correspondence in a central electronic repository, so that they are available to all professionals and managers working on a case regardless of where they are physically based.

"As staff are so spread out, having a single paper file in one location, as we used to, is ultimately not going to work for us. Having Iken Case Management allows us to capture all information, manage work and file it appropriately electronically, so that any member of staff at any location can work on it. This is hugely beneficial."

The council is also looking towards increasing the amount of flexible working, and is aiming to decrease the amount of paper-based work taking place in order to make this possible. The Iken system will help manage this process.



“We can answer queries on the spot”

Although the legal team is split into two functions, litigation and conveyancing, both have the same main performance indicator - turnaround time. The litigation function is measured on the time taken to raise a court action, while conveyancing is measured on the speed at which offers and agreements are completed. Time is therefore of the essence.

“The greatest benefit of Iken from my perspective is that file retrieval is almost instantaneous. With cases created since we implemented Iken, if someone asks a question I can call up information immediately, check what the situation is and give them information on the spot. It’s speeded up work quite considerably, which has been a huge boost.”

“Iken helps with managing the team’s workload”

As with most organisations, the vast majority of work arrives electronically, and the amount of paper correspondence they receive has decreased dramatically within recent years.

“We are frequently instructed by email, and having these instructions being sent directly to one individual made it difficult to monitor workload and keep up to speed with new developments. With Iken we can have complete electronic files, so when we look at a case we know we’re viewing the most up-to-date information available.”

The ability to manage workload has also been enhanced by the team’s use of Iken Time Recording software. David admits: *“Before we implemented Iken, our time recording system was paper-based, and not an ideal solution.”* Iken Time Recording assists teams to accurately document time spent on cases or tasks, and comes with a suite of reports which gives managers a greater visibility of the proportion of time spent by their teams on different activities, and allows them to report accurately to the wider authority.

“It fitted well with our existing IT infrastructure”

When asked whether he would encourage other authorities to install Iken, David responds:

“I would recommend Iken, and not only for the reasons I’ve just mentioned. It’s also quite simple to understand, as a system, and our IT staff have found accommodating it alongside existing systems quite straightforward.”

In recent years, Aberdeenshire Council has made many changes to enhance efficiency and provide an excellent service, and the council continue to be forward-thinking. *“Looking ahead, in ten years’ time, I think virtually all of our work is going to be done electronically - and we really have to have an efficient system such as Iken for controlling all that work.”*

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