Allocate ER Tracker Case Study

Essex County Council speed up HR case resolution

Background

As one of the largest local authorities in the UK, Essex County Council (ECC) delivers a wide range of services to a combination of rural, urban and coastal communities. With an ambitious organisation strategy and an agenda of change, ECC is committed to improving Essex. Not only by adding more value to the lives of residents but also by becoming the leading local authority for digital transformation in the country.

As a 'people focused' business and employer of approximately 7,500 staff, ECC also developed a new workforce strategy to sit alongside its agenda for change. One that clearly defined the culture, skills and capabilities needed for its future workforce and business environment. In order to promote high performance and new, effective ways of working across the organisation, ECC sought to partner with organisations that could support its approach for transformation.

Alexander Carlton, Head of People Insight & Technology, explains: "Our people are our greatest asset and as part of our workforce strategy we wanted to maximise the value of our data – this meant moving away from our existing processes to configurable cloud-based systems. Through a competitive tender process Allocate clearly demonstrated the capabilities of Allocate ER Tracker and how the system and team could easily support our case management workload."

Tracking HR cases in the cloud

Having previously used a Microsoft Access database to capture and update HR case information, ECC's people consultants and case workers found the process to be time-consuming and complex. As the database was hosted on-premise this also presented difficulties accessing and maintaining the software.

"Our old system made it difficult to transfer cases amongst our case workers and it could be temperamental. Meaning staff were often reluctant to engage with it," says Alexander. "Since moving to Allocate ER Tracker we've had no problems. Right from the start staff have wanted to use the system, from case workers to people business partners and people consultants."

Tailored to ECC's existing HR policy, Allocate ER Tracker enables the Council to manage its absence, performance management, grievance, disciplinary and occasional case types (those instances such as ill health retirement which come up from time-to-time). With built in timelines and notifications, ECC's case workers are kept up-to-date with approaching deadlines and informed when stages require completion or are overdue. By following these streamlined workflows, the Council's case workers are encouraged to resolve cases faster which subsequently helps reduce overall case costs.

Alexander explains: "Allocate ER Tracker puts our HR policy front and centre, which is helping the team to meet the standards and timeframes we've set ourselves. All our documentation, correspondence and emails are securely stored in the cloud, in one location, giving us peace of mind that if a case were to go to employment tribunal we'd have evidence of compliance with our HR policy."

Improving self-service processes

ECC is also using the system to log and track the different types of enquiries coming into its service centre. For instance, if an employee were to ring up and ask a question about the Council's maternity allowance or request the maternity policy, this would be recorded under the 'Service Centre' case type in Allocate ER Tracker.

By doing so, ECC has been able to evaluate the questions being asked by employees and determine whether the information is easily accessible through its self-service mechanisms. Leading to a reduction in the amount of calls taken by the service centre.

"Allocate ER Tracker is allowing us to drive value into our service centre, not only is the new system enabling the HR department to concentrate on producing self-service content which is beneficial to the organisation but also ensuring that information is easily accessible," adds Alexander.

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Alexander Carlton,
Head of People Insight & Technology,
Essex County Council

Real-time case monitoring

With easy to access intuitive dashboards, ECC's senior management now have increased visibility of their teams' current caseloads. Allowing the HR department to take a more holistic view of case information rather than a focus on individual cases.

Alexander explains: "Going forward we'll use the data gathered by Allocate ER Tracker to identify and understand the causes of case delays. As well as looking at how we can best serve our case types in the future."

By utilising up-to-date and accurate HR case data, ECC is now able to begin proactively monitoring cases. Using the data accumulated in the system, the HR department has the ability to cross reference cases in order to identify trends and spot correlations. This will help ECC to drive efficiencies and continuous development around how the HR team manages cases going forward. Ultimately allowing the HR team to make strategic recommendations around how common case types can be reduced and mitigated at an early stage before they are made formal.

Continuous product development

Alexander concludes: "In my role I've come across a lot of technology providers that promise continuous development of their products but Allocate really mean it. There have been numerous updates since we started using Allocate ER Tracker and the new functionality is easily switched on at a click of a button. We've been really impressed to see that the team listens to their customers and actively want to develop the product."

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