

Balfour Beatty Workplace and DWP

A flexible, fresh approach to service transformation

Two years ago the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) made a radical decision to move away from a service model of two in house teams and two external service providers to a progressive single national contract for office support services.

The drivers behind appointing a single service provider were to:

- Make financial savings
- Improve consistency in service provision and customer service with delivery of a single nationwide standard KPI/SLA
- Release office space.

Balfour Beatty Workplace (BBW) was appointed as the national provider of office support services to over 100,000 civil servants in over 750 sites throughout the UK with the TUPE transfer of over 2,200 staff. With BBW's knowledge and understanding of the DWP business and culture and its expertise in change management, the two organisations worked closely together to create a flexible and fit for purpose service delivery model. This is a model that can be amended to meet business demands and benefit both the customer and the supplier.

During the last two years, BBW has made several positive changes to the way in which it delivers services to the DWP by reducing the number of services delivered at site level. This transformation has created significant benefits for DWP, including:

- BBW transferred post opening from 625 DWP on site locations to 28 off site Mail Opening Units. This reduced mail costs, achieved earlier delivery times and freed up much needed office space. In addition, 7 tonnes of used envelopes have been recycled contributing significantly to reducing DWP's carbon footprint.
- Typing services have been transformed with a fresh approach and new technology. They now take place in four centralised BBW purpose built Service Centres. This freed up 250 desks and has made the service more consistent.
- Telephony services have also been rationalised into the Service Centres. This was completed on target and achieved more than £1.5m in savings, £500k more than expected. Following project completion, BBW engaged with the Public and Commercial Services Union and local office employees to up-skill the Office Service Assistants to undertake switchboard duties and provide relief cover where needed. This has resulted in further savings of £400k per annum.
- By increasing the portfolio of tasks offered to the DWP to include such duties as compiling claim packs, BBW has been able to reduce the time spent by DWP staff carrying out non core activities, enabling them to better focus on their core business. This has had a positive impact on their targets and realised some £3 million in efficiencies.
- By working closely with the customer and sharing common goals, a 'Top Ten' document has been produced which lists innovative ideas and tracks achievements. Regular joint meetings are held together with workshops to identify new ideas. A joint risk register is maintained to ensure that all projects are impacted with consideration of both businesses.

The future for BBW involves working towards a paperless office where technology advancements and integration of systems mean that business critical DWP information can be distributed quickly and efficiently in a more secure manner.

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Barry Leighton Head of Commercial Management DWP says, "I have been with the Department for Work and Pensions for just over a year now and during that time I have made a couple of observations about Balfour Beatty WorkPlace. First, relates to its sheer size. Over 2,000 people work effectively on the DWP contract alone. The second observation is how people from DWP don't talk about it, and that's a good thing because it's working. The post is delivered on time, the typing is of the right quality and standard and we are not getting emails or complaints. Balfour Beatty WorkPlace has a big workforce doing the right thing for the Department. Service Level Agreements are being met and we have trust in the contract and can work towards bigger goals - this will be the introduction of next practice which is beyond best practice principles."