

Information Compliance & Equality Team Achievements: January-December 2018

1. Introduction

During 2018 the council as a whole has undergone significant changes to create a structure and approach that enables the council to address the forthcoming challenges and opportunities. Some of the drivers to this re-organisation were:

- To develop the organisation to be fit for the future – the next five years and beyond
- To ensure we are able to deliver good services to our residents
- To ensure delivery of the council's key aims and objectives
- To incorporate learning from the corporate peer challenge
- To evolve in order to use funding wisely and to be as good as we can be.

The authority's work is determined by the Corporate Plan, which focuses on the following strategic priorities:

1. Enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives
2. Keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life
3. Support the growth of our economy and the number of people in work
4. Secure better services, quality of life and value for money

To this end the council re-organised its directorate structure as below:

Children and Families Directorate	Adults and Communities Directorate	Economy and Place Directorate	Corporate Services		
			Corporate Support Division	Finance, Legal and Democratic Services Division	People and Performance Division
Chris Baird	Stephen Vickers (acting)	Richard Ball (acting)	Natalia Silver	Andrew Lovegrove/ Claire Ward	Donna Etherton/ Tracey Sampson

For the Information, Compliance & Equality Team (ICE), change has been a constant factor over the past few years, and 2018 was no exception. By the end of 2018 the service areas had moved into the new structure and have settled in the newly formed Corporate Support Division. This has resulted in the team's name change (to ICE), and the resulting services (with Carol Trachonitis as its manager):

The teams are based at Plough Lane, HARC and Merchant House, with staff members regularly working from home and from satellite offices such as Ross and Kington.

1. **Equality** (including translation and interpreting)
2. **Children's Rights and Advocacy**
3. **Land Charges**
4. **Information Governance & Modern Records** (including information security and data protection)
5. **Information Access & Records Management** (including complaints, subject access requests, and freedom of information)
6. **Customer Services** (due to transfer to Adults & Communities in February 2019)

This document is designed to show the breadth of work covered by these service areas and some of their key achievements in the calendar year of 2018.



2. Equality

The team is comprised of:

- Team manager (whose time is divided across seven service areas)
- 1 FTE Equality Officer (50%+ of this post is focused on facilitating the Herefordshire Language Network)

In 2018 we continued to ensure that the organisation remains compliant with the Equality Act 2010, by:

1. Equality Policy and equality objectives: we monitored progress of objectives throughout the year.
2. Publishing workforce information: on 31 January each year we publish the equality analysis of the workforce, which includes diversity information on

councillors. In 2018 we published gender pay gap information for the first time as part of this document.

3. Providing advice and support to managers and staff, particularly around internal disputes, grievances, equality impact assessments, and reasonable adjustments.
4. Providing training: the team delivered 4 training sessions (of two hours duration) to foster carers, and one internal presentation about Equality Impact Assessments. We also co-presented a presentation to councillors in Telford & Wrekin about the Public Sector Equality Duty on behalf of the LGA. Training income for 2018 was £591.22.

Herefordshire Language Network

Work Undertaken

In 2018, the Network handled 4,236 assignments, requiring 36 different languages.

Face-to-face interpreting assignments accounted for 92% of jobs, translation was 5%, and telephone interpreting was 3%.

23.2% of these jobs were for Herefordshire Council services, the vast majority being for children's social care and Refugee Action.

Training

In 2018 we ran 2 Foundation Training Courses for interpreters, which accommodated 26 learners. We also ran 3 small-scale workshops for professionals who work with interpreters.

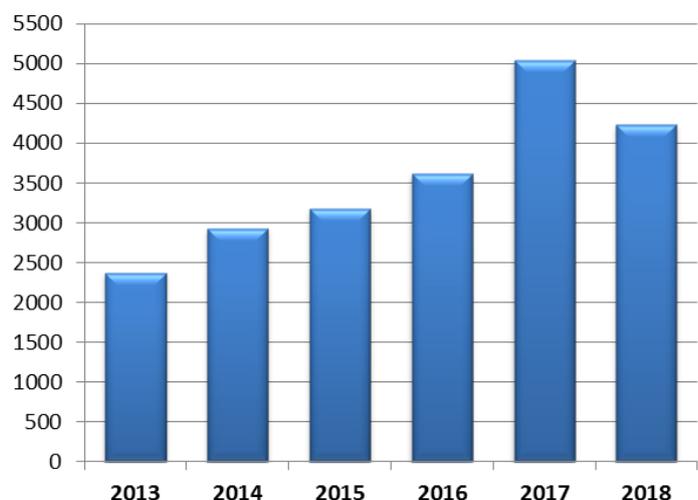
Income

The Language Network generates income by charging an admin fee for each booking. We were given an income target of £31,301 for the financial year 2018/19, and have achieved 95% of this target in the first 9 months.

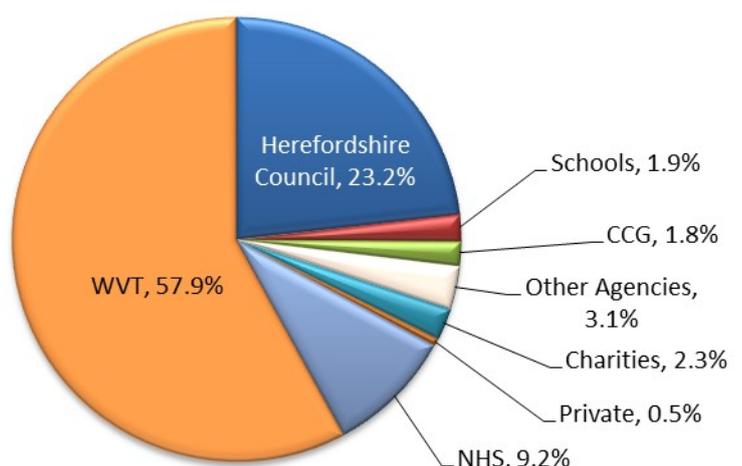
What people have said:

“A huge thank you for pulling together so many interpreters for this week. All the interpreters did a fantastic job, remaining very professional whilst being friendly and flexible in their approach.”

Total Jobs Handled by Herefordshire Language Network by Year



Translation & Interpreting Requests by Source 2018



3. Children's Rights & Advocacy ("Hear Me")

The team is comprised of:

- Team manager (whose time is divided across seven service areas)
- 1 FTE Advocacy Worker (job share role)

The Children's Rights & Advocacy Service was a service run in partnership with Connexions from 2004-2012, and then was commissioned out to NYAS until the end of July 2018. It was brought back in-house under the remit of the ICE team in August 2018.

"Hear Me" is the name given to this service, which is a confidential and independent support service for young people, hosted by Herefordshire Council. One of the two Advocacy Workers will support a young person with a particular issue, difficulty or complaint. The service is young person led and issue based.

The service provides advocacy to young people who have a specific issue with the local authority and need representation, or support to speak up, and who are:

- a young person placed in foster care by Herefordshire Council
- a care leaver aged under 19 (or under 25 years if they have a learning disability)
- aged 10-19 years old (or under 25 years if they have a learning disability) - this is specifically for representation or support at a child protection conference

In the period August-December 2018, the service handled 53 new cases, and, as at 31 December 2018, had 9 open cases.

What people have said:

“ I felt that someone was there for me. Having an advocate at the meeting meant that she made sure that I understood what was going on..... The advocate stopped them and asked them to explain exactly what they were planning to do, how long it was going to take and who I could talk to about it.

4. Land Charges

The team is comprised of:

- Team manager
- 3.51 FTE Land Charges Officers
- 1 FTE Land Charge Assistant

2018 saw a full complement of staff appointed and trained, and the local target has been reduced to 15 working days from 20 working days to reflect this improvement in staffing levels.

The office is self-funding and will hopefully continue to be so for the forthcoming year. The level of searches received is similar to that of last year and as such the workload has been consistent.

Two staff attended the Local Land Charges Conference and staff will be in attendance in 2019 as well, to keep up with the current industry changes and legislation.

The Land Charges function is due to be transferred to the Land Registry in the coming years, but no firm date has yet been fixed. The team is currently liaising with this body in order to facilitate the transfer not only of the function itself but also the data involved. This is a tremendous challenge due to the way in which Herefordshire Council holds its information. It is envisaged that there will be a lot of officer time spent in sorting the data into a format which is acceptable to the Land Registry.

It is as yet unknown how this transfer will affect the dynamics of the team.

5. Information Governance & Modern Records

Information Governance

The team is comprised of:

- 0.6 FTE team manager (whose time is divided across 2 service areas)
- 1 FTE Information Governance Officer (Schools DPO)
- 0.8 FTE Information Governance Officer (SPOC)

2018 saw the launch of **IG Schools** – a dedicated traded service (cost recovery) providing a named DPO and information governance advice to schools. The Information Governance Officer (Schools) joined the team in May 2018 and has been busy helping schools understand the recent changes to data protection legislation and evidence their compliance. The service delivered 80 data protection training sessions between May and December, reviewed countless standard documents and assisted with information requests. By December 2018, the service had 39 schools signed up.

In 2018, the team's actions included:

- Preparing for the GDPR to come into force
- Reviewing and updating all policies and procedures
- Carrying out information audits across the organisation to understand the flows of data
- Updating contracts to ensure that relevant clauses were present
- Issuing providers with information processing instructions
- Developing standard templates for staff to use when completing Privacy Notices and Impact Assessments
- Training staff and presenting to management teams

In addition, the team:

- processed 76 requests for information from the Police to support criminal investigations
- responded to 62 requests for information from other organisations such as local authorities
- investigated 155 incidents which resulted in 10 data breaches being reported to the ICO
- processed over 500 IT service requests, with subjects ranging from setting up a secure e-mail account to approving third party access

Modern Records Unit

The team is comprised of:

- Team manager (whose time is divided across 2 service areas)
- 1 FTE Modern Records Officer

Work to scan further documents in the Modern Records Unit was completed during 2018. This created space which allowed back-office library functions to be located to the unit.

Retention of paper records has been reviewed in line with new data protection legislation.

The MRU processed 3,074 new files producing 394 new boxes in 2018.

There were a total of 1,946 files requested by departments; these represent paper files at MRU or at HARC or arranging for scanned documents to be sent to the requester.

There were 623 files returned to the MRU for refiling in boxes at Modern Records.

There were a total of 1,388 boxes destroyed in 2018: 672 were destroyed by our off-site storage providers, and 716 boxes were processed for destruction on-site at Modern Records.

6. Information Access & Records Management

Information Access Team

The team is comprised of:

- Team manager (whose time is divided across 3 service areas)
- 3.6 FTE Information Access Officers
- 1 FTE Freedom of Information Officer
- 1 FTE Records Manager

The Information Access Team (IAT) is based at Plough Lane and deals with hundreds of requests for information and complaints every year. The graph to the right indicates the number of queries dealt with by the team in the calendar year 2018, which is significantly higher than in 2017.

Our work consists of:

- Receive and log formal complaints (apart from children’s social care complaints) and arrange for the relevant team manager to respond. We also cover standards complaints, which are related to councillor conduct
- Receive and log requests made under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)
- Act as the point of contact for the complaints regulator (Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - LGSCO) and the Information Commissioner’s Office

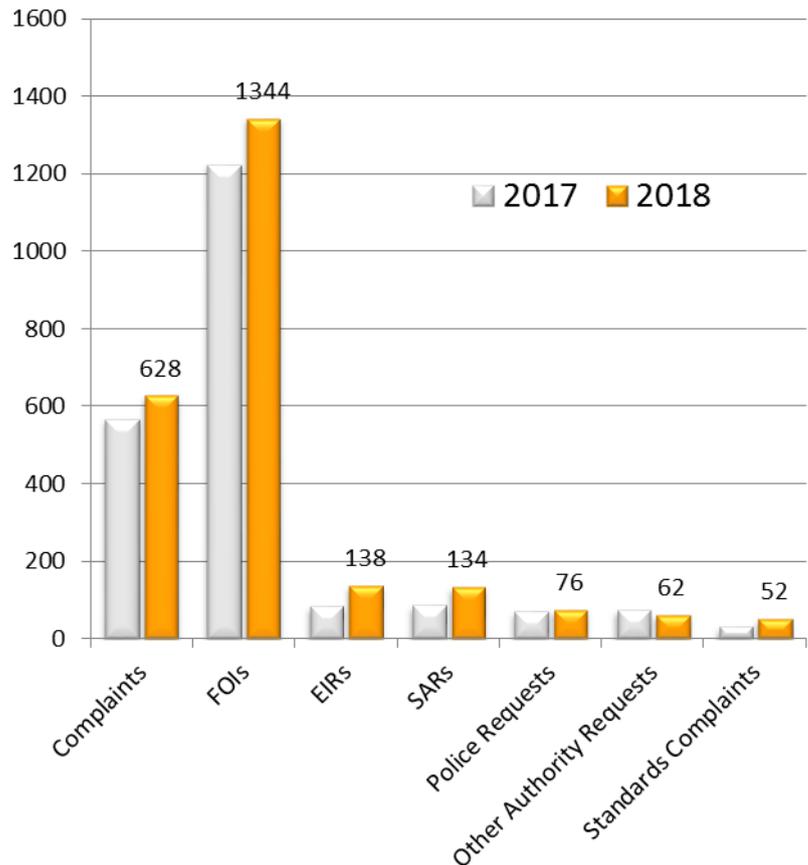
In 2018, we met our target to respond to 95% of our information requests within the statutory deadline of 20 working days, and have started to publish statistics showing how well we are doing with responding to FOI and EIR requests on the council website.

The IAT assisted the LGSCO with 50 cases accepted for consideration.

Records Management

Work has been carried out to review and update the council’s retention schedules to ensure that information is only kept as long as is necessary for the purpose that it was collected for under the GDPR. The council’s records management system for electronic records has been supported and a contract for some further document scanning work has been procured.

Total contacts handled by the Information Access Team



What people have said:

- “ Thank you for such an efficient resolution.
- “ I very much appreciate the rapidity and professionalism with which my complaint has been handled.
- “ I would like to take this opportunity to thank both you and Claire for your assistance and professionalism in dealing with this matter promptly and to a satisfactory conclusion.

7. Customer Services

Due to the council's restructure, this service area is moving to the new Adult and Community Directorate. There has been a delay in this move and it is envisaged that this will be completed by February 2019.

A new blue badge system has been procured in line with changes to the central database used by the Department for Transport. The new system is due to go live on 4 February 2019.

During 2018, the Customer Services team worked in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), who share the offices at Blueschool House, to offer support to people using council computers to apply for Universal Credit (UC). The UC service has been used in Herefordshire for 495 appointments from April to December 2018.

What people have said:

“Just a quick mail to express my deep gratitude to the team at Blue Badge Hereford. From inception of the application to approval has been an absolute pleasure. The team have been beyond helpful. I have to say that your team goes above and beyond.”

8. Information Compliance (Corporate Support Function)

The team has responsibility to ensure that a number of statutory functions are complied with by the whole organisation. These include functions relating to the Equality Act 2010, and the General Data Protection Act 2018. In particular the team has to ensure that all of the council workforce have had adequate training in Information Governance, Information Security and Equality. Mandatory training is an on-going event and, as the subject experts for these key areas, it is up to the team to ensure that we have up-to-date e-learning modules in place, and a minimum completion rate of 95%. In 2018, 98.7% of the workforce completed the

mandatory training in information security and governance.

The team also hold the responsibility to ensure that councillors are briefed and aware of their responsibilities and the requirements of the Equality Act when making decisions. This is done through a process of training and Equality Impact Assessments. In 2018, the team scrutinised over 500 decision papers to ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty was fully adhered to.

The Head of Information Compliance & Equality is also the Data Protection Officer for the Council.

9. Looking forward to 2019

2019 will no doubt be another year of change, but we go into it better prepared. We have built a solid foundation in 2018, stabilising the team and building capacity, knowledge and expertise. In 2019 we will build on this strong platform and raise the confidence across the organisation to see the benefits of getting things right first time. We will continually raise awareness and offer support and advice as services develop and use new ways of doing business. We will continue to expand and develop individuals within the team to maintain and improve their expertise in all areas of our business.

Herefordshire Council Information Compliance & Equality Team

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