

Designing a gateway to improve customer services

Local Government Ombudsman



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Hedra, a Mouchel Group company, worked with the Local Government Ombudsman to help define a new Access & Advice service to improve customer satisfaction.

What was the challenge?

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) was seeking to modernise and enhance the service it provides to complainants. The LGO wanted to provide a highly accessible, informative and immediate customer-focused service that the public expects from a complaints handling organisation.

The new 'Access and Advice' service was created from a vision and framework designed by the three LGO. For the first time, complainants are able to talk their complaint through with a trained adviser on the phone, who provides in-depth and specific advice about their complaint. This provides complainants with accurate and realistic expectations of the service from the point of first contact, delivering an efficient and effective service to the public.

The LGO engaged Hedra, a Mouchel Group company, to help build on the vision and outline framework to shape and design the service, its supporting processes, organisation and technology solution.

How did we support the LGO?

Hedra led a review of the LGO customer contact processes and developed new processes for the Access & Advice Centre, which has become the central hub of information about new and existing complaints.

The scope of the new service and associated business processes were developed through comprehensive stakeholder engagement. Workshops were held with staff at all levels within the LGO, end users were consulted at a public focus group and other stakeholders, such as voluntary groups, were interviewed as part of the project.

The new service design project developed the framework to a point where a system specification was developed in order to run a procurement for the enabling technology services. The new service design comprised all of the elements needed to develop the new 'Access and Advice centre', including:

- full customer contact process definition
- new service staffing requirements
- performance indicators
- impact assessment
- functional specification
- procurement strategy definition.

What was achieved?

Hedra's work provided the LGO with the focus and definition needed to run the procurement for the new Access & Advice service technology solution. The project created a significant period of change within the organisation and Hedra's independence helped to drive the project forward to achieve time critical milestones.

The Access & Advice service will become the gateway to provide complainants with higher levels of quality customer service. Complainants are able to discuss their complaint and get detailed and specific advice, in many cases being provided with a very early sense of their chances of achieving the outcome they are seeking. Providing more realistic customer expectations is a proven means of achieving higher levels of overall satisfaction.

The new gateway will also confer significant benefits to the organisation itself, providing opportunities for efficiencies, new sophisticated management information and an enhanced joined-up service with the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman.

"Working with Hedra brought valuable insight, technical support and expertise to our project at a critical point in its development. They rapidly understood the subtleties and complexity of our organisation and helped us look afresh at how our core business could best be re-configured to meet our ambitions for a step change in the quality of our customer service."

Michael King, Deputy Ombudsman