

## Newcastle University Modernisation

### Smart Working – A Change in agriCulture

#### Section 1 About the project

##### Summary

In its drive to achieve University key objectives for space and carbon reduction, increased efficiency, effectiveness and life work balance, the Estate Support Service (ESS) set about creating modern efficient working spaces and practices. A huge cultural shift was required to bring about the change in delivering services more sustainably with less resource. Smart working is output focused working and management with flexible, appropriate working arrangements and facilities based on needs rather than hierarchy.

##### Project partners

The project had three key elements in ensuring its success; the ability to provide a variety of working spaces suited to the appropriate task with the ability to work flexibly using IT resources wherever the task was being carried out. It was therefore essential that we consulted and worked closely with the University Human Resources and Information Systems Services departments in order to achieve this.

#### Section 2 The results

##### The problem

The redevelopment of the existing offices within Kensington Terrace required ESS, approximately 80 office based staff, to move from their predominantly cellular office location to new premises. Space reduction with a new focus on providing better student areas within the University is a key objective and option appraisals were carried out to identify suitable locations. The Agriculture building's first and part second floor agreed as the preferred option providing a floor space per person of around 6.7m<sup>2</sup> with a layout of predominantly regimented rows of desks. Whilst this may have accommodated all staff, it would not have provided a suitable working environment capable of supporting an efficient customer focused service. It was decided to analyse our working practices to determine if a more suitable building layout and better working practices could be achieved.

##### The approach

A Project Manager from within ESS was appointed to lead the project. A full project delivery structure was set up with a design team, working group and relocation manager reporting through the project manager to a steering group.



##### Profile

- HE
- 21,378 (includes full and part time students)
- 5,257
- Urban

Investigation outside of the HE sector uncovered a rapidly growing trend towards what was termed, Smart, Flexible or Agile working. The main drivers were a shift to actively based work due to the same drivers as the University; i.e. the cost and maintenance of property, the need to reduce energy, the need to improve work/life balance, the mobility of the work force, efficiency in process and the availability of IT across mobile and cloud based platforms.

A number of organisations had implemented the new ways of working some time ago or had implemented phased roll outs. Others had implemented it as part of rationalization of business or property and others sought to implement it as part of a natural evolution in the work space. This provided a rich source of information to draw from in determining how the process of change could be managed, the barriers and formulating the most appropriate solution for ESS.

Workplace analysis was used to determine space and workstation occupancy requirements which was agreed with the various groups and approved by the steering group. In addition to this a set of protocols was developed to enable and empower staff to the necessary culture.

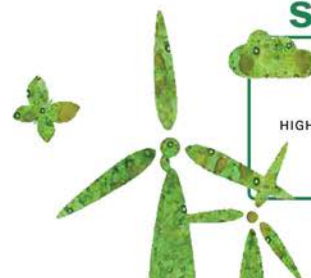
Change management and consultation was considered to be critical in ensuring project success:

- A pilot group was set up within the existing offices that practiced the new ways of working with the intention of testing, finessing and promoting the advantages to their colleagues
- The relocation working group consisting of members of each section from within ESS with the purpose of acting as two way communication between staff, the project manager and the steering group and as a vehicle for the necessary consultation
- A series of whole staff meetings was set up to initially announce the plans for Smart Working then used as a platform for reviewing progress and carry out staff consultation. As well as the relocation group, consultation was carried out within each team meeting, within the managers' meetings and within the senior management team
- Ad hoc messages, newsletters, a web page and latterly an on line blog and direct poster campaign were used to communicate messages
- Change management and IT training was delivered to staff.

### Our goals

The benefits to the University of successful implementation in alignment with a number of University strategies were;

- space reduction and improved utilisation
- work/life balance and flexible working
- recruitment and retention of staff
- VFM and efficiency of process
- healthier, happier, more motivated workforce
- reduced travel time and cost and potential scope 3 carbon emission reduction
- better service delivery.



## Obstacles and solutions

Finding suitable premises to move into which would be sustainable in terms of space and efficiency	The approach was to undertake a full option appraisal of all available spaces within existing buildings. The option appraisal considered not only what spaces were available but the extent of environment improvements that could be realised within the project and the flexibility to re-use the space with minimal intervention across a spectrum of the University academic and service units.
Dependency with other University service departments	The success of the project relied on developing successful working partnerships within key University services, namely HR and IT. Both departments were brought onto the project delivery team at the concept stage which ensured knowledge and tasks were both shared and utilised effectively.
Change Management	The cultural change within a University department was critical. The process was handled through a combination of intensive research of practices and experiences of other organisations, change management and other training, information exchanges and feedback loops.

## Performance and results

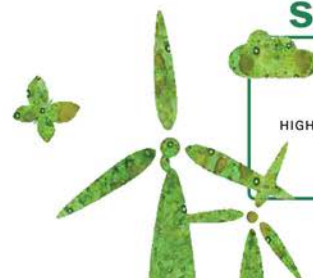
Metric	Cellular	Smartworking	Difference	% Change
Floor area (m <sup>2</sup> )	1,088	680	408	-37%
Area / per person (m <sup>2</sup> )	13.6	8.55	5.05	-37%
Capital Cost (Cellular v. actual Smartworking )	£775,000	£590,000	£185,000	-24%
Space Charge (£)	£153,500	£96,000	£57,500	-37%
Carbon emissions (kg CO <sub>2</sub> e)	125,000	78,000	46,000	-37%
Number of Staff PC's	80	64	16	-20%
Number of Printers	20	2	18	-90%
Sickness Absence (days)	257	239	18	-7%
Paper consumption (pages)	367,500	191,000	176,500	-48%
Hospitality (pa)	£5,000	£1,000	£4,000	-80%
Recycling rate (pa)	26%	55%	29%	+112%
Cleaning costs (pa)	£12,700	£8,300	£4,400	-35%
Car Parking spaces	2	0	2	-100%

Many benefits are delivered by our 'Change in agriCulture'; carbon emissions were reduced through improved space efficiency and lower energy consumption (less heated space, lighting, fewer PC's etc.). A combination of improved technology and a change in culture have delivered integrated sustainability, cost, organisational and wellbeing benefits.

### Measurable staff feedback: responses to Employee Opinion Survey questions

The table below shows estates respondents who **agreed or tended to agree** with the statements in 2013 compared to 2010 (smartworking commenced in 2012):

Metric	2013	2010
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Relationships at work are strained	18%	43%
I feel I have a good balance between my work and home life	90%	85%
There is good co-operation between teams in my service	64%	50%
People are willing to help each other even if it means doing something outside their usual activities	80%	66%
I have adequate resources to complete my work	81%	70%
I have enough freedom to do what is necessary to put students/other customers first every time	87%	76%
ESS gives a good quality service	95%	87%
My satisfaction at work is generally high	79%	72%

The following feedback was received at a recent ESS Managers' smartworking workshop: 'More effective and productive way of working', 'Excellent space utilisation', 'Better home work balance', 'Better interaction and communication across teams', 'Becoming one team', 'Enjoy engaging with other teams', 'Social interaction within the office', 'Much better environmental facilities, nice physical atmosphere, light and airy'.

## Section 3 The future

### Lessons learned

The concept of Smart Working was conceived out of a requirement for our department to relocate within the University in order to allow development of existing buildings. This in turn was the catalyst to investigate and modernise working practices within what was already a progressive organisation in terms customer services, IT and flexibility. This real opportunity is now to ensure that we analyse ourselves in terms of continuous improvements and efficiency and ensure that this is shared across the university and sector.

### Sharing your project

The project has been widely communicated within the University and has growing support from senior officers to expand the working practices more widely. We have also communicated with our NHS and Local Authority partners along with the Scottish Space Management Group and have facilitated numerous visits to the office. We responded to a recent enquiry within AUDE mail and have now had requests form 28 different HE institutions to share our case study.

### What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

This award provides independent recognition of our commitment in delivering sustainable projects and solutions. Our collaborative approach to the project, its successful objectives and our empowerment of staff is a model that can be used for others. Recognition of the benefits of smart working by the Green Gown Awards is very significant in raising the profile of an approach that integrates environmental sustainability with other organisational benefits through cultural change.

### Further information

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<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sustainable-campus>,

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/estates/>