

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
AND SCRUTINY SUB-
COMMITTEES**

Date of Meeting:	20 September 2016
Subject:	Implementation of new Youth Offending Case Management System
Responsible Officer:	Chris Spencer, Corporate Director of People
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Janet Mote, Performance Lead Member Councillor Richard Almond, Policy Lead Member
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - YOT performance summary

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the issues that arose following the implementation of the new Youth Offending Case management system. It considers the impact of the system implementation on the Youth Offending Team (YOT) practice and performance, and records lessons learned for those involved in the project.

Recommendations:

O&S Committee members are asked to note the report and invited to raise questions, issues and suggestions for further improvements.

Section 2 – Report

Background

1. A decision was taken by the YOT Management Board in 2014 to replace the Youth Offending Information System (YOIS) case management system. YOIS was nearing the end of its life and its supplier, CACI, informed all system users that they would no longer support YOIS after 31 March 2015. The YOIS system in Harrow had been performing poorly, in terms of speed, stability and user access, since the implementation of Citrix and virtual servers in 2013.
2. A large amount of work was done with our IT supplier, Capita, to try to resolve these issues, but YOIS continued to be problematic and was impacting on the YOT's functioning. The Board asked the Business Intelligence team, which had inherited the system and YOT data analyst role after the inspection of 2012, to lead on a project to replace the system as soon as possible.

Procurement

3. A procurement process was carried out with the YOT management team, Corporate IT and the Procurement team. The preferred system was Capita One YJ (YJ), which was a new module of the Capita One Education Management System (EMS). EMS is already used in the Council as the main pupil database, and for Admissions, SEN and Sensory Services and its track record gave confidence that we could successfully add an additional module.
4. This decision was made in the knowledge of ongoing issues with Harrow's IT contractor at the time, Capita, on the grounds that Capita One EMS is a separate part of the organisation and that the system is one of the market leaders for education and children's services. The procurement decision was made based on price and a detailed review and comparison of system functionality. Another factor was that YJ would be integrated with EMS, meaning that any young person who was in or had attended Harrow's schools would have existing personal details and a record of attendance, exclusions, SEN and other education related data.
5. The decision to implement YJ was also in line with the Children's Services IT strategy which is to consolidate around two main systems – the social care system (currently Frameworki) and the Education System (currently EMS). This is for reasons of efficiency and to minimise multiple and unlinked child records. There is currently no single children's services system that covers both education and social care although it is known that a number of suppliers including the suppliers of Harrow's two main systems are developing such a product.

Implementation

6. The Board approved the procurement decision and implementation project plan in November 2014. The project start was delayed by a Youth Justice Board (YJB) inspection in October 2014. This meant that the system implementation was closer to the departure of IT supplier, Capita, in October 2015 than had originally been planned. However, the implementation team felt that there was no option to delay implementation until the new IT supplier was in place because YOIS was no longer supported and was performing poorly.
7. One of the main lessons learned is that the implementation timescales were too tight, with very little contingency. Ideally, the project would have started earlier to ensure YOIS was replaced while still in support and well before the change of IT supplier. However, as well as the 2014 inspection, the timing was influenced by the continuing implementation of the post 2012 inspection improvement plan and the Board decided that no system change should be carried out until the team's performance against key indicators improved significantly. The improvement plan involved a major restructure of the service which commenced in March 2015.
8. The Board considered the impact of the ongoing use of YOIS on the team's morale and performance alongside the risks of implementing a new system. Due to the age of the YOIS system and its obsolete server and database configuration, the migration to any new system had to be carried out with significant system downtime – simply to allow data to be extracted and reconfigured into the new format.
9. It was agreed that during the migration window the team would continue to record their activity on YOIS and that this would be manually transferred onto YJ. This window was originally planned to be two weeks but ended up being a full month due to issues identified during testing.

Post implementation issues

10. The go-live was finally agreed with YOT managers at 1 September 2015. At this point a number of issues had been identified through testing of the system which were unresolved:
 - Connectivity – which is a required and integrated part of every youth offending system and provides a secure link that enables data transfer to the YJB, was not functioning
 - YJMIS (Youth Justice Management Information System) quarterly reports which extract information on outcomes such as reoffending and custody, were not operating on YJ
 - System speed was variable and often very slow
 - Problems printing documents
 - Error messages
11. In addition, post go-live, team members found they were having problems accessing the system and were being 'thrown out' of the system

unexpectedly, leading to loss of work. Efforts were focused on working with our IT partners to resolve the issues.

12. Capita One informed Harrow that there were performance and similar issues at other local authorities and that these would improve with each new release of the system. There are 3 upgrades of EMS each year.
13. Connectivity with YJB turned out to be a major issue for all users of the YJ system and with youth offending systems from other suppliers. There were previously two systems sanctioned by the YJB on which the Connectivity function was developed. As the two systems neared end of life and new suppliers entered the market, multiple issues arose with configuring new systems. In March 2016, we learned that around one third of YOTs across the country were unable to send data via Connectivity. Harrow worked with Capita One and Sopra Steria on a number of firewall and software issues and resolved them in May 2016.
14. Connectivity remains a fragile part of the system and is prone to error messages and downtime. We understand that this continues to be the case across other YOTs.
15. YJMIS reports – the reporting issues which prevented us supplying quarterly reports direct to YJB were worked upon over a similar period and were finally resolved by the version 3.59 system upgrade during May 2016. YJB understood the problems with producing the quarterly information and allowed us to update them by other channels.
16. System performance – the Corporate IT team recommended an end-to-end review of the set up due to the serious system performance issues which were apparent after go-live. This was commissioned using contingency in the project budget and involved Sopra Steria working with Capita One. The review recommended that the test and live environments were separated and that the memory on the application server was doubled. This work was carried out in January 2016 and alongside new versions of the software, led to some improvements in system stability and a reduction in access problems. However, the system remained slow and the user experience unsatisfactory.
17. The specialists carrying out the review also concluded that some of the performance issues were linked to cross-council IT infrastructure, in particular the Citrix environment, and the Storage Area Network (SAN) These had been separately identified as causing cross-council issues and were in need of upgrade or replacement. The SAN was upgraded between May and July 2016 and this again seems to have improved stability and reduced variability in speed. The system remains generally slow and this is unlikely to improve significantly before the Citrix and browser upgrades that are planned for October 2016. YOT workers have also found problems with using YJ over WiFi, so have been advised always to use a cable connection when in the office.

18. The issues with printing documents and error messages were largely resolved through new versions of the software, which became available early after implementation.
19. The issues described above meant that reliable team performance information e.g. assessment timescales, management oversight, visits - used for day-to-day management of the YOT, was not available in the months following implementation. The first reliable system reports were produced in January 2016.
20. YOT management continued to check processes manually wherever they could, but the lack of reliable data alongside major problems with system access and performance led to deterioration in some of the performance indicators over the period. This situation was monitored at monthly Board meetings, and an action plan was put in place to resolve the significant issues that remained. The action plan was completed at May 2016.
21. However, it should be recognised that the system continues to be slow for users and also that YOT practitioners have had to work with a system that was not fit for purpose at go-live. This has caused much frustration for practitioners and managers, who face significant pressures at the best of times. It has also been highly unsatisfactory that the team, which had been progressing well with its improvement plan, suffered this setback from the implementation of what was supposed to be an improved system. The team has shown a great deal of patience in the face of this, and have worked hard to overcome the issues. They are making good use of the new system and have been positive about the system and format despite the system performance issues.
22. Despite this the YOT team continued to perform well on its outcome indicators (first time offending, reoffending, custody) during the period. The YJB has recently declassified Harrow's YOT as a 'Priority YOT' due to its performance on quarterly outcome indicators. The YOT team has worked with partners to reduce offending and reoffending alongside significant changes to local population, and has put interventions in place to avoid the need for custodial sentences wherever possible.
23. The performance appendix to this report shows the main outcome indicators that are reported quarterly to YJB and also local operational indicators. Note that the operational indicators, although based on YJB practice standards, are not nationally defined and there is no comparator data available. However, it can be seen that there was significant variability in the indicators during the period of major system problems and a deterioration in performance in some areas. Note that the new national 'Assetplus' workflow which is due to be introduced for Harrow's YOT from October onwards will be accompanied by significant changes to the set of operational indicators.

Summary of lessons learned

24. Regular reports have been made to the made to the YOT Management Board on progress in resolving the issues. A number of important lessons have been learned from the process and the subsequent review by Business Intelligence, working with Corporate IT, IT providers and the system supplier, Capita One:

- Timescales – the project timings were too ambitious when dealing with a complete system change. This was driven by the necessity to replace YOIS and then delayed by a number of factors but the project should have been started sooner, to allow more time for testing and improvement prior to go live. The departure of our main IT supplier post go-live but before the issues were resolved caused difficulties due to change in personnel and loss of knowledge. The timing also meant that the departing supplier could not be held to account on resolution and the new supplier inherited a series of problems that it has worked hard to resolve
- Go-live decision – the option of not going live with YJ should have been given more consideration due to the major system problems. These had an impact on the performance and morale of the team. It would have been very difficult to go back to the old system but it may have been preferable to moving the team onto a system that was not yet functioning at an acceptable level.
- Performance reporting – there was too long a gap with no performance reporting from the system. While this was understandable in the immediate migration period, there should have been more focus on getting reliable performance information to YOT management earlier
- The current business model is that responsibility for specification and design rests with the area in which the devolved application sits, in this case the Business Intelligence Team. Corporate IT's remit is to assure that the solution being proposed fits with the corporate strategy but not to have further involvement in the implementation. It is vital that colleagues who have the technical knowledge and an oversight of the wider Council IT are involved throughout implementation – so some issues may have been avoided by commissioning additional technical input from the start of the project. This issue was not identified by any party at the planning stage and additional input was commissioned reactively.
- Corporate IT have also advised that contracts with vendors should tie up so that there is clearer identification of implementation responsibilities. It is important that where multiple parties are responsible for delivery, contracts are cross referenced to ensure that all requirements are clearly owned by the parties best able to manage them.

25. The team will face another challenge with the roll-out of a major change in practice and related system upgrade to meet YJBs 'Assetplus' requirements. This system upgrade that is part of this project has been planned with the involvement of YOT management, Business Intelligence, Corporate IT, Sopra Steria and Capita One. The implementation team has made it clear that it will not go live with Assetplus functionality until YOT management is content that the new features of the system are functioning to a satisfactory level. The YOT Management Board supports this approach and is monitoring progress.

Financial Implications

26. The project, which came under the Children's IT capital budget, came in within budget, including the end-to-end review and remedial works, which were covered by a contingency built into the project budget. The total project budget was £90k and the spend was £88k.

Performance Issues

27. Performance issues are integral to the report. Recent performance on outcomes and operational indicators is included in the appendix.

Environmental Impact

28. There is no environmental impact.

Risk Management Implications

29. There are a number of risk implications which have been managed by the YOT Board – impact on YOT improvement, workforce, relationship with YJB, reputation.

Equalities Implications

30. There are no direct equalities implications

Council Priorities

31. Build a better Harrow.

32. Protect the most vulnerable and support families.

Ward Councillors notified:	N/A
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Section 3 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: David Harrington, Business Intelligence 020 8420 9248
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Background Papers:
YOT performance summary 2014 - 2016