

FIVE KEY STEPS FOR THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE NEW SERVICE



Robin Bates SS(PRAC)
is Head of LGSS Revenues
and Benefits

So, you have drafted and re-drafted business case after business case, risk assessment after risk assessment, networked with your new partners, fallen out with your future partners, re-built the same relationships and now the new shared service is live.

What next?

For me, as an employee transferring to a new employer it was an eerie silence and short lull in frantic activity. Of course there were transitional plans in place, however you really cannot account for the amount of change you will be absorbing, alongside managing the continuing operation of course.

For my team, this was a revenues and benefits service, joining a shared service led by two county councils via a joint committee.

It is particularly important at this stage to take stock of how you will be working in the future. It really is akin to starting a new job, with everything from the HR support you receive changing, finance monitoring routines switching to new systems, new arrangements for governance and of course more centralised wider support services.

The support of your direct line management is critical and I was lucky in this respect, however it is important you work hard to accept the new arrangements and ways of working you will experience, letting go and not being too precious will set you free.

However, being clear on areas that would be damaged by immediate change or convergence will also help you and your new organisation to set immediate priorities, alongside longer term plans.

Most of all be prepared to accept that in some cases you will need to step backwards, in order that all partners then move forward together.



The first 100 days...

Creating a uniformed single solution across partner organisations is of course a priority when bringing services together. Of course in some cases you will notice a marked improvement in service and in my experience a highly refreshing approach to change and innovation.

That leads me onto communication. For me, communication as part of a new senior management team was straight forward and we were all clear on the direction we were taking.

The first 100 days of a new partnership or shared service may not include much in the way of change for your teams. Bearing in mind teams are likely to have been bombarded with communications during the transfer to a new organisation, it is important to keep communication channels open, even if there is no real change to report.

Just a few minutes each week or month to outline what discussions and planning has taken place to date, can be enough.

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Of course communication with your former employees (in my case) also changed to a more formal arrangement.

Although partners need to be clear that any variation to the agreement at transfer needs some sort of formal sign off. It can be easy to introduce an over-bearing administrative process at this point.

Resist! Remember you are still working in the best interest of all partners and therefore business as normal processes or change required by new government policy should be broadly handled in the same way.

In the case of more formal change, clear monthly reporting, including analysis of workloads, issues impacting performance and even progress in meeting savings can lead to fewer problems in agreeing the need for a change as you progress.

Keeping your eyes on the prize...

Lastly and most importantly, do not take your eye off the ball in respect of your service users.

In the case of a revenues and benefits service, these customers are often some of the most vulnerable in society. A focus on continued high quality standards alongside the speed required by national and local performance indicators has been a particular area of concern.

Balancing the need to make savings vs the need to deliver the right service can be difficult. After spending your career focusing on the service, you may suddenly be part of efforts to extend the partnership and engage with prospective new partners.

This in itself needs recognising and resourcing from the outset. Additional initial expense may be difficult to justify, however the rewards of developing a wider shared service that can demonstrate consistent performance out-weighs a relatively small initial investment.

Post transfer checklist for managers during the first 100 days.....

Step 1: You must act now, any initial lull in activity or intake of air will not last:

- Establish key contacts
- Understand the local timetable for monitoring of finances, Key Performance Indicators etc.
- Take time to read and review new internal policies and processes for HR advice and support
- Ensure you have all the relevant system access – across ALL partners you work with
- If you have a new manager, take time to ask them how they like to work, what they want to see and what they don't

Step 2: Ensure your **direct reports** follow the steps above and..

- Support and resolve any barriers they are facing or they perceive they are facing

Step 3: Wider Team Communication

- Keep communicating with wider teams within your service, even if nothing has changed – silence can be deafening!

Step 4: Communicating with your **internal customers**

- Ensure change is agreed
- Don't turn change into a paper-chase!
- Provide clear regular analysis of performance and issues

Step 5: Stay focused on **external service users**

- Stay focused on the service user
- Monitor any complaints carefully
- Recognise the difference between technical officers and the need for new skill-sets – mixing the two is not always the answer