

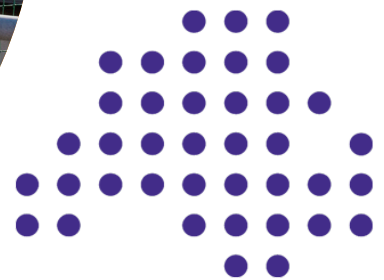


Totalmobile

CASE STUDY

Thames Water

New shift patterns deliver over £10m in savings



We delivered a demand-led shift planning, rostering and workforce management system for Thames Water as the utility company needed to make significant savings within the business to remain efficient and meet strict regulatory demands.

Implementing Annualised Hours meant that the company saved over £10 million in additional overtime payments, reduced excessive working hours for shift workers and helped to increase the work-life balance of front-line teams.

Key Challenges

- Too many different and outdated T&Cs for shift workers.
- Over 100 different shift patterns, rotas and rosters.
- Over-reliance on costly overtime.
- Large number of stakeholders.
- Business faced a multi-million pound saving challenge.
- Regulatory pressures to stay efficient in all areas.
- Investment in new technology demanded new shift work system.
- Discord between internal and external demand and service offered with customers demanding later appointment times and weekend working.



Key Outcomes

- Reduced 100 shift patterns to 23.
- Extended appointment slots for customers.
- Improved customer service out of office hours.
- Standardisation of T&Cs across all teams.
- Creation of a larger reserve of bank hours.
- Reduction in overtime.
- Variable hours for shift workers - extending the day to 19.00 if required.
- £10 million saving (over 5 year AMP period) in overtime and shift pattern payments.
- Standardised longer working week, start and finishing times and annual holiday.
- Introduction of winter shift patterns to increase resources at peak times.

Key Learnings

- Set-up dedicated working group to own and drive the project.
- Start with an open mind.
- Take time to identify the challenges.
- Communicate clearly, consistently and constantly.
- Be open to suggestions and willing to listen.
- Expect the process to take longer than you think.
- Involve representatives from all areas of the business from the beginning.

Our Customer

Thames Water is the UK's largest water and sewerage company operating in a number of different local authorities in the South East of England. It employs 5,000 people in total and has 13.6 million customers across the region dealing with four million customer enquiries annually and attending 2,000 customer appointments per month.



The Situation

The existing shift patterns and T&Cs had not been reviewed formally since 1993 and the organisation had over 100 different ones in place making shift planning, rostering and workforce management difficult and onerous. Thames Water was also relying heavily on costly overtime as the outdated shift patterns weren't meeting the current demands of the business nor its customers. It was clear that the organisation needed to overhaul its shift patterns, rotas and rosters for a great number of reasons.

Thames Water was facing cost pressures to ensure they provide value for money to customers. It couldn't demonstrate it was operating efficiently in all areas and the business needed to make a millions in savings in this area.

Another key driver was the investment in new technology and to secure the best ROI from the new systems, it needed a consistent set of working arrangements across the board for its operational staff. Another key challenge was the number of stakeholders who needed to be involved in the projects and how to effectively communicate with them all. The workforce was also heavily unionised and it was important to ensure all parties were involved and engaged in the process from the outset.

Our Role

To tackle the challenge, 13 main working groups were set-up representing the many different roles and areas within the business. Further minor sub-groups were formed too. The complexity of the project required detailed planning from the beginning with a dedicated team running the programme from start to finish.

The process was kicked-off with an all-encompassing situation analysis in conjunction with us to identify all issues and opportunities faced and to design initial proposals for discussion with the larger working groups. What followed was an intense, comprehensive and inclusive programme of workshops, 121-meetings as well as negotiations with trade unions and communication roadshows over an 18 month period. This ensured each individual employee understood why the changes were required, what the options for change were and were each given the opportunity to vote on the working pattern that would apply to them through union ballots.

Changing shift patterns

Following the comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced, detailed communications with staff and close negotiations with the unions and other stakeholders, Thames Water reached an agreement to introduce a number of key changes across the organisation. Due to the complexity of the organisation and the great number of teams with different challenges, demands and needs, the business opted to introduce a combination of standardised shift work changes while recognising the need for limited tailor-made shift pattern options for some teams. The company standardised its T&Cs across the organisation including holidays, start, finishing and lunch arrangements and reduced the number of working patterns from over 100 down to 23.

Opening a 7-day operational window

Most people working within Operations also moved from a Monday-Friday shift pattern to a 7-day week to meet customer demands and reduce overtime. Thames Water also included a standardised longer working week at 38 hours across operations to provide increased productivity and some of the teams introduced 'variable hours' to extend the day until 19.00. However, staff are only required to work these additional hours one week in six and only when necessary. Other teams introduced a 'Winter Working Pattern' to increase resource at peak weekends during the colder months, and the business created a larger reserve of bank hours for certain roles, which rose from 273 to 444 to reduce the need to pay extra overtime.

From the employee's point of view, the changes meant that their T&Cs were standardised and 'fairer' across the board. Some employees had to sacrifice some weekend working in exchange for time off in the week to provide flexibility and cover to meet customer demand. Individual circumstances, such as the need to care for children or other family members, were also taken into considerations and, where possible, met and incorporated within their contracts.

Outcomes

The shift work optimisation at Thames Water has made the organisation industry leading in this arena with the latest and most efficient practises in the sector. The programme has also earned third party recognition with Thames Water winning the prestigious HR Excellence Award in the 'Change Management Programme' category. The changes made have allowed the business to streamline its operations and significantly reduce its overtime reliance-while improving the work-life balance for its employees and standardising contracts and T&Cs.

Thames Water can now also better meet customer demand during evenings and weekends and has also been a necessary step to enable a new IT based shift planning system to map consistent shift patterns, rotas and rosters to manage availability. This has provided a great platform for the introduction and implementation of shift patterns that match resources to the demands of the business and its customers. It has also enabled the organisation to make essential cost savings and aid the work to meet the required regulatory spending plans agreed by Ofwat.

Benefits

- Reduced 100 working patterns to 23.
- Extended appointment slots for customers.
- Improved customer service out of office hours.
- Standardisation of T&Cs across all teams.
- Creation of a larger reserve of bank hours.
- Reduction in overtime.
- Variable hours for employees extending the day to 19.00 if required.
- £10 million saving (over 5 year AMP period) in overtime and working patterns payments.
- Standardised longer working week, start and finishing times and annual holiday.
- Introduction of winter shift pattern to increase resources at peak times.



What's Next?

To learn more about our products & solutions , visit

<https://www.totalmobile.co.uk>

or contact us via the details on the back of this document.



Totalmobile

Totalmobile is market leader in field service and mobile workforce management technology, helping organisations deliver more service, of the highest quality and at reduced cost.

Our SaaS based software provides a range of innovative products that deliver a step change in field service performance, mobile worker empowerment and management control.

This unlocks transformative cost savings, capacity gains, productivity improvements and empowers allows mobile workers to focus on consistently delivering the best service.

Belfast HQ

Pilot Point

21 Clarendon Road

Belfast

BT1 3BG

+44 28 9033 0111