

CASE STUDY

"The system has allowed us to reduce the paperwork and focus on caring for clients..."

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West Yorkshire Transport Service Improving Services for Special Needs Passengers

BUSINESS PROBLEM

In 2002, Education Bradford (Serco) was awarded a ten-year contract to manage education services for City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. As part of the contract, West Yorkshire Transport Service (formally Welfare Transport) transports over 500 SEN students to special schools throughout the city, along with over 350 adults who are taken each day from home and respite care facilities to over 20 different centres.

For years, the booking, scheduling, dispatch and client management had been handled with manual systems. "They had done the best job they could without automation," recalls Geoff Binnington, General Manager at wyts, "But the service was inefficient and had become unmanageable, particularly with regards to complex scheduling and risk management."

Services run from 06:30 to 18:30 five days per week. Scheduling for Social Services clients is particularly complicated as many are transported to and from multiple locations such as respite centres and there are high levels of short notice (24hr) variations.

In addition to scheduling and service challenges the Local Education Authority had no accurate way to track individual client movements or measure service efficiency.

GOALS

With over 220 staff and a fleet of 100 minibuses, the wyts planners are responsible for booking, scheduling and dispatching all journeys. "With respite services, a given adult or child may come to a centre from home one day and then be transported to a respite facility for several days before returning home," Geoff explains.

SNAPSHOT

Type of Operation:	Transport for SEN students and Social Services clients
Number of Vehicles:	100 minibuses
Number of Journeys:	3600 per month
Registered Users:	500 special needs children and 500 special needs adults
IT Environment:	5 Windows NT workstations, Oracle 8 platform

The organisation needed a system that could accommodate complex scheduling while improving service and reducing costs. It also wanted to coordinate and evaluate strategic level scheduling with other providers such as West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive.

"Our motto is 'Caring Rules' and that is what drives our entire contract. The goal of our automation was to effectively manage risk, improve service levels and enable staff to spend more time on client matters and less time on administration," says Geoff.

SOLUTION

In 2002, Education Bradford selected Trapeze to provide its scheduling, routing, dispatch and client management systems. "We chose Trapeze because it was progressive and could be further developed to meet unique and unforeseen needs," Geoff recalls.

The software allows the planners to book journeys with full access to client records, and to make changes to individual bookings, vehicle and operator assignments as required. Wyts is able to plan and manage the SEN transport much more efficiently using the route optimisation features, and can coordinate routes with mainstream education transport services. The solution also allows staff to generate

standard and customised reports to measure efficiency, productivity and value.

RESULTS

Since the system went into operation in June 2002, wyts has achieved a number of improvements. "The system has allowed us to reduce the paperwork and focus on caring for clients, and although we are contractually given 24 to 48 hours' notice for client changes we can generally cope with everything in real-time," says Jeanett Bateman, Planning Manager at wyts.

On-time arrivals average 98%, exceeding the original goal of 95%, and a recent independent survey showed that 90% of social service users are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall performance of the service. Other efficiency gains include a 95% vehicle availability rate and a marked decline in staff absenteeism.

BOTTOM LINE

"For the first time we have up-to-the-minute client information and we know who is on what bus, where they are going and when. We're very pleased with what Trapeze have done for us. The company has very professional staff and they support us 100%," says Geoff.