

Case study:
Berkshire Shared
Services



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"We bought a finance system and ended up with a partner."

Grant Buckley, Director of Finance, BSS

A new approach to shared services

Berkshire Shared Services (BSS) was established in 2001 and provides a wide range of non-clinical support services to the NHS and other public sector bodies in Southern England. Hosted by Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, BSS manages over £165 million worth of physical and IT assets, reflecting its ability to deliver a shared service portfolio of support functions in Finance, Estates and Facilities and Health Informatics. BSS has the strength, expertise and flexibility that clients require in the changing NHS (and wider Public Sector) while remaining cost-effective against standard outsourcing.

Grant Buckley, Director of Finance at BSS says: "We operate in ways that are fundamentally different from most shared service organisations. We view ourselves as owned by our clients, and we are extremely flexible. We know that one size doesn't fit all, and our service reflects that."

The organisation has been through three major NHS restructurings in recent years but has been able to adapt rapidly, especially since the introduction of Agresso Business World in 2006.

Today, BSS is busy rolling out the procure-to-pay programme across the Trusts it serves. This will give around 1,500 users the ability to order goods and services and authorise their invoices online, all through the Agresso Business World system.

The advanced web-functionality of Agresso 5.5 is also helping the shared services organisation deliver significant productivity and efficiency improvements, while removing paper-based processes.

Grant Buckley says: "We have been able to deliver cash savings of £3 million to our clients. We have also exceeded client expectations for service delivery."

Providing expertise to others in the public sector

In recent years, BSS has gained extensive experience implementing and adapting the Agresso financial system in an NHS context. The team at BSS are now able to work alongside Agresso to provide the benefit of that experience to similar organisations across the UK, helping them to streamline their deployment, saving both time and money.

"We have been through the whole process and understand what needs to be done," says Mr Buckley. "We have developed the reports and the targets. It is all there and ready to be rolled out. Clients will get all the benefits of Agresso plus the advantages of working with an NHS organisation that has experience of implementing the system."

BSS signed up to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), in place between Agresso and OGC Buying Solutions on behalf of UK Government. The MOU affords any other NHS or UK Public Sector organisation the opportunity to work with BSS and Agresso to utilise the Agresso solution, on an "unlimited user site licence" basis, at significantly lower costs than can be achieved through an independent implementation. Mr Buckley says this initiative is an unexpected benefit of choosing the Agresso system.



The Benefits

BSS cites the following benefits from using Agresso:

Reporting

Paula McDonnell of BSS says the reporting functions available in Agresso are very important to the partners they serve.

"You get instant, real-time reports, so budget holders always know their current financial position," she says.

"It improves management information because the data is always available when you need it. Agresso operates in real-time. Everything is instant and leaves a very clear audit trail. Agresso automates the production of spreadsheets, tables and charts therefore saving time and money."

Grant Buckley of BSS adds: "The ease of interrogating the data is a major benefit for our clients. With our previous system, the report writer was separate. Now, with Agresso, it is built right into the system - and that makes it much easier for the end-users to generate their reports."

Efficiency

Using Agresso, has enabled BSS to make significant efficiency improvements, and pass those savings on to its clients, as well as reinvesting in the systems themselves.

Grant Buckley says: "We have brought all the reporting into a controlled environment, leading to business process efficiencies, with an increase in compliance and more standardised processes."

Ease of use

BSS is rolling Agresso out to around 1,500 users across the Trusts it serves, many with little experience of sophisticated accounting packages. Fortunately, Agresso's ease-of-use will simplify this process, and Paula McDonnell says training requirements will be minimal.

She says: "People have found Agresso very straightforward and easy to use as it has a similar look and feel to Microsoft Excel and Outlook."

"People like the system and that is very important in a shared services environment."

Cost-effective

The Agresso Business World system is helping BSS and its clients achieve cost-savings and productivity improvements by eliminating paper-based processes and delivering better management information.

"We are reducing postage costs because we are emailing things a lot more," says Paula McDonnell. "The email also leaves an audit trail, which is another benefit."

"Our aim is to keep improving the system and implementing online and automated processes, so that in the end we don't have any paper at all."

Agility

Since implementing Agresso Business World, the team at BSS has been continually improving and adapting the

system so that it works just the way they want. They are able to do this thanks to the agility of Agresso. It's a system users can easily adapt to their specific requirements.

"Now that we have implemented the system, we are going forward and getting the most out of it," says Paula McDonnell. "Every day is exciting because we are realising new ways to operate and improve the way we work."

New business opportunities

Having developed extensive experience configuring the Agresso system for NHS requirements, BSS has now identified a business opportunity to partner with Agresso to implement solutions for organisations who may like to join the shared service in the future. It is hoped this will potentially lead to a joint venture type arrangement, to offer BSS and Agresso as a real, far more flexible alternative to the other national and local shared service operations in the UK.

Paula McDonnell says: "We have the whole implementation and configuration process documented from start to finish, and can advise and assist with this process. Or we can provide users with a suite of reports that have been designed to meet NHS and local government needs. This will save other organisations a lot of time and effort."

"People like the system and that is very important in a shared services environment."

Grant Buckley, Director of Finance, BSS



Berkshire Shared Services

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The ERP Market's *Definition* of Agility

Agresso has labelled a horizontal layer across multiple vertical markets as 'Businesses Living IN Change' or in short "BLINC™" – a segment that is characterised by organisations that are experiencing almost frenetic levels of dynamic business change. This is particularly apparent in the services sector, in both the public and commercial world, where Agresso has traditionally strong worldwide presence built up over the last 15 years. Agresso's post-implementation agility capabilities have been the differentiating factor for the 2600 'BLINC' organisations that comprise our customer base.

Today, Agresso's unique underpinning architecture is being enjoyed by thousands of BLINC businesses, with over 1,500,000 worldwide users, through hundreds of mergers, reorganisations, consolidations, etc. The company is focused on correcting the CXO's longstanding and expensive "re-architect-or-die" assumptions promoted by the ERP leaders, whose lack of post-installation agility is cutting deep into corporate margins. **Agresso is ERP...with no Expiry Date™.**

For more information, please visit www.agresso.com

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