



ICS Assessment Services

Increasing system capacity through a full end-to-end managed service

UK public sector organisations are coming under growing pressure to manage the increasing demand for social care services. Local authorities have been tasked with creating a service that is fit for purpose despite facing significant external pressures and funding constraints.

Our customer was a large city council in the North East of England who had identified issues across their Children's Services department with growing demand in conjunction with internal staff retention challenges. The council approached Bloom to identify a supplier who could deliver an output-focussed managed service to increase the capacity of the social care system.

Following a mini competition, ICS Assessment Services (ICSA) were awarded the project and began to work on a tailored solution to specifically match the needs of the council.

"Our end-to-end managed service enabled us to provide the council with a robust response to the growing pressures they were under. This increased capacity helped the council shift their focus towards recruiting permanent members of staff and wider strategic transformation work".

Simon Whitaker, Head of Strategy and Performance, ICS Assessment Services

1,200
cases held

95%
statutory visits
within timescales

52%
of all cased closed

The challenge

The council had experienced significant growth in demand for front door social care services. This was compounded by issues with recruiting and retaining staff and agency workers, creating increased pressures on longer-term teams across Child in Need (CIN), Child Protection (CP) and Looked After Children (LAC) who lacked the capacity to meet demand.

The resulting backlog of work for the council necessitated the appointment of a supplier with the ability to increase the capacity of the system through a full end-to-end managed service. The supplier would be required to undertake statutory duties and work with children and their families utilising a significant project team of experienced, qualified social work resource to manage demand across the council's front door and long-term services.

This included service level management, case auditing, quality assurance and management oversight and weekly reporting to the council's Directorate.

Through the selected supplier managing the recruitment and onboarding of a social work project team, the council avoided the time and resource consuming recruitment of temporary agency workers, in addition to freeing up the council's management team, as quality, oversight and governance was handled by the supplier's management team. This enabled the council to focus their resource on a wider strategic move to a new operating model.

The solution

ICSA worked in two phases over an 18-month period, delivering extra capacity to progress over 1,000 cases of Child in Need (CIN), Child Protection (CP) and Looked After Children (LAC) within the city's localities, whilst the council progressed their own recruitment and retention programme.

The overall aims of the programme were to ensure the council's statutory responsibilities were met, provide high-quality front door assessments and progress long-term plans to closure or transfer to Early Help/signposting to universal services where required. Emphasising high quality social work was key in ensuring the voice of the child and families were met whilst maintaining a high profile for the council Children's Services.

ICSA embedded five teams of qualified and experienced social workers each with a focussed Team Manager, Service Manager and a Head of Service into the council's resource pool. Further operational and business support was provided remotely via ICSA's experienced Head Office team.

ICSA worked to a number of key performance indicators set and agreed between Bloom, ICSA and the council.

This increased capacity, along with improvements in staff retention, enabled a high turnaround of cases and a significant number of cases progressed to closure in a timely and efficient manner.

Social workers received capped caseloads allowing ICSA to progress cases efficiently and to a high standard, whilst reducing the caseloads of council staff and supporting system flow through a reduction in front door requests.

ICSA's team of qualified and experienced social workers go through a stringent compliance and vetting process to develop their existing talented, experienced team that quickly assimilated into the existing policies and procedures of the council.

As a result of the increased capacity and improved flow, the council shifted their focus from temporary agency workers to recruiting permanent members of staff and wider strategic transformation work.

The outcome

ICSA progressed over 1,200 cases in an 18-month period, supporting the council to meet its statutory duties. They utilised a team of over 65 social workers, team managers and service managers through the life of the project, which in turn contributed to the project closing 52% of all cases at assessment with 98% of all assessments completed in less than 8 weeks.

ICSA completed over 8,000 statutory visits, with 95% of meetings held within timescales, in addition to managing a number of LAC placements through the council's new children's placement processes. This ensured they had met the set monthly management KPIs, relating to statutory reporting, assessments, visits and placements to the council.

About Bloom

Bloom offers a dynamic supply chain providing the public sector with a marketplace to buy and manage services. We ensure delivery of quality outcomes from our pre-approved and ever growing network of suppliers and consultants. Our fully compliant open access marketplace is outcomes based meaning the public sector only pays for what is delivered.

We provide an OJEU compliant managed procurement service covering specification development, supplier identification & onboarding, full contract management, and lessons learned upon successful delivery of outcomes.

We'd love to talk to you about your social care requirements.

Call: **020 3948 9400** | Email: **hello@bloom.services** | Online: **www.bloom.services/social-care**

About ICS Assessment Services

ICS Assessment Services is one of the largest commissioned providers of managed health and social work services in the UK. We work with Local Authorities, Health Trusts and the private sector to deliver outcomes-led statutory services, consultancy support and return on investment programmes utilising over 250 experienced practitioners nationwide. Our bespoke projects provide clients with the expertise, resource and support, specifically tailored to each organisation to make a positive, lasting impact on people and communities nationwide.

Since 2015, we've delivered projects to over 45 Local Authorities and 16 CCGs, working with over 40,000 recipients of Adults or Children's Social Care support and community health packages. In respect of health and social care's response to COVID-19, we are delivering a range of contingency solutions to meet the demands across the statutory services we support.