

StepStone and Enfield Council

Creating a Recruitment Centre of Excellence

Enfield is one of London's largest and most diverse boroughs, home to 280,000 people, spanning some 87 ethnic groups. Enfield Borough Council provides the education, environmental, social and other services to cater for their needs.

Under the leadership of Chief Executive Rob Leak, the Council has embarked on a major value-for-money initiative, geared towards delivering consistently high quality local services, whilst keeping Council Tax to one of the lowest levels in Greater London. So successful has the initiative been, that the council recently won three stars in the Audit Commission's Council Performance Assessment (CPA), and is now pushing for four-star status – the highest rating available.

Created from scratch during the review, Enfield Council's Recruitment Centre is responsible for its entire recruitment effort. Less than a year after its establishment, the Recruitment Centre has become one of the Council's flagship department, winning its "Award for Excellence" in the process.

Having implemented StepStone's i-GRasp solution, the Recruitment Centre has slashed average time to hire to approximately 5 weeks – shattering a self-imposed Service Level Agreement (SLA) of 10 weeks in the process – with the additional benefit of significant reductions in media spend and administrative overheads.

The challenge: each to their own?

Enfield Council employs some 5,000 staff, and enjoys relatively low employee turnover rates of 14%. In spite of this, it needs to recruit around 200 people every year – a task historically split between the council's five separate operating "arms" (education, social services, housing, environment, etc). Council recruitment was consequently uneven and inconsistent, with long times to hire, slow candidate processing, duplication of effort and poor administration.

The council's executives determined that the entire recruitment function should be centralised and run from a new department – the Recruitment Centre – and Assistant Head of HR Adrian Kerr was appointed to drive it forward. Whilst many organisations view recruitment as an administrative overhead, the Recruitment Centre is entirely self-funding – it cross-charges departments for its services on a per-project basis. Uniquely, its SLA sets a target for time to hire of 10 weeks: if it misses this deadline, it doesn't get paid.

An inclusive approach

Despite the council's long-standing use of print advertisements in local media, Kerr quickly recognised online media, supported by a solid e-recruitment strategy, as the key to identifying, engaging with and recruiting proactive, capable people. After spending some time designing the new recruitment processes, Kerr developed the business



case for an e-recruitment platform to support the Recruitment Centre's activities. This led to a tight technical specification and procurement process. After a 7-8 week implementation, the Recruitment Centre's new e-recruitment platform, StepStone's i-GRasp, went live.

"It was widely accepted that our recruitment processes were not working as well as they could be," explains Kerr. "Our media spend was too high for the results we were seeing, and performance in key areas such as time-to-hire and candidate experience left a great deal to be desired. Centralising and computerising the recruitment process was therefore a critical imperative."

"We did, however, encounter some resistance when we moved to centralise all recruitment activity. For this reason, it was vital that we delivered from day one without fail. As e-recruitment formed a critical component of our strategy, our expectations for i-GRasp were high – and it didn't disappoint," he continues.

The solution

StepStone's i-GRasp integrates the entire recruitment process, from job posting, candidate application management, screening and selection. It offers a huge range of functions "out of the box", enabling HR departments to reduce administrative overheads and accelerate time-to-hire. Additionally, its management information capabilities allow Recruitment Centre consultants to focus media spend on the best-performing channels. These functions help the Recruitment Centre reach higher-quality candidates, and bring them on board in a swift and professional manner.

"Our most frequently-announced vacancies are for Social Workers and Estate Managers," says Kerr, "so there was some initial concern that focusing purely on online advertising would unfairly exclude many capable candidates. In fact, we found that if anything, the candidates sourced online are more proactive and motivated than those we'd seen previously."



"A year ago, a staff survey showed that recruitment was one of the Council's biggest bug bears – we had a lot of complaints, and dissatisfied New Starters. Since going live with i-GRasp, candidate feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, we've made significant savings on media spend, and candidate quality is higher," Kerr explains.

The results: recruitment excellence!

With i-GRasp in place, the Recruitment Centre's operations have been transformed. Departments wishing to recruit staff send the job description to a Recruitment Centre email alias, whereupon the team creates and posts the advertisement to the relevant job boards. Recruitment Centre consultants then collaborate with managers in the relevant department to review applications, build shortlists, and hold assessments – including online psychometric testing.

From a standing start in 2006, the Recruitment Centre has rapidly become one of the Council's best-performing departments. With i-GRasp in place, overall time-to-hire has been slashed to around 4-5 weeks, versus a 10-week SLA target. Vacancies are posted instantly, compared to a lag of two weeks previously. Finally, and most importantly, the candidate experience has been vastly improved.

"StepStone's i-GRasp has been critical to the quick success of the Recruitment Centre," concludes Kerr. *"Not only have we been able to transform our candidates' experience, we have also been able to make a real contribution to the Council's value for money initiative."*

StepStone Solutions

StepStone, a pioneer in the area of online e-Recruitment products and solutions, delivers a powerful complete suite to reinforce each element of the recruitment and retention process from the initial pre-hire attraction of candidates, through on-boarding to Total Talent Management of employees post-hire including HR Management, Performance Management, Compensation Management, Skills & Competency Management as well as Career & Succession Planning, Training & Development Management and Organisational Charting.

StepStone's fully web-based software solutions have been deployed by more than 1,100 companies such as Amazon, Astra Zeneca, British Airways, Cadbury Schweppes, Coca Cola, Deloitte, Enfield Council, European Central Bank, Lufthansa, McDonald's, Statoil, TNT, Toyota, TUI, Virgin Atlantic, Vodafone, Xerox and Yahoo. StepStone's worldwide offices in Europe, North and South America, Asia and Australia, its partners and distributors guarantee customer proximity.



Contact

UK +44 1483 739450, uk@stepstonesolutions.com