



Inland Revenue & the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)

This pilot project, run in three Inland Revenue offices in the Brighton area, builds on the government objective to be more responsive to the needs of the customer. This pilot has revitalised the relationship between the local Revenue and its staff union, and provided customers with more flexible services.

No. of employees: 70,000

Business sector: Public sector

Business activities: Administration of direct taxes, plus tax credits, national insurance and National Minimum Wage

Stakeholders: Employees, their families, managers, Inland Revenue, PCS, customers

Location: UK-wide

'OurTime' – A Work-Life Balance Project

The Inland Revenue needed to extend its opening hours to the public to provide a more accessible service. The Revenue also wanted staff to have a good balance between work and personal life. The answer was 'OurTime' - a partnership between the Revenue and the PCS which gives staff options about their working hours and allows Revenue offices to open outside 9-5 and at weekends.

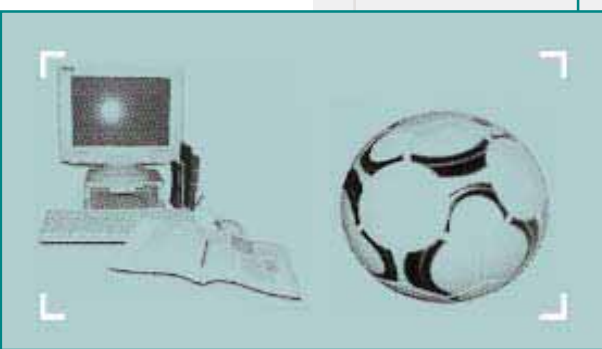
"A decent quality of working life, where people have some choice and autonomy over their working hours, is an essential prerequisite for any effective, modern organisation"

Jo Morris, Project Director



BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Customers benefit from longer opening hours, with increased coverage at peak times
- The 3-office pilot has provided a process model for the rest of the Inland Revenue and other organisations
- Increased trust between the Revenue, the union and its workforce
- Better use of IT systems and accommodation, leading to lower unit costs
- Wider pool for recruitment by becoming a more flexible employer

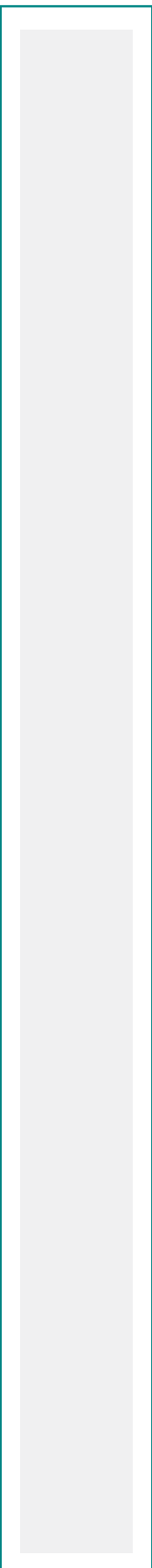


HEALTH & SAFETY BENEFITS

- Improved management and staff morale
- Staff are better able to balance their work and personal commitments, leading to better stress management

"I haven't got any childcare problems this summer, and I won't have to pay a childminder"

Employee of Inland Revenue Corporate Services who collected flexi-credits by working Saturday mornings



THE COST-BENEFITS

Meeting customer needs

Various benefits have been quantified during the pilot:

- 543 customers assisted in late hour opening
- Highest caller rate recorded on a Saturday

Additionally, the staff benefits have rejuvenated expectations around working patterns within the organisation acknowledging that “one size doesn’t fit all”. The Revenue hasn’t been able to quantify these intangible benefits. To date, the Revenue has primarily invested £60,000 covering salary, travel and subsistence costs of the project manager.

A DIRECTOR’S VIEW

Demonstrating commitment to staff

The Government had expressed its desire for public services to respond quickly to the needs and wishes of its users and to produce innovative solutions.

WORKER INVOLVEMENT

OurTime was a partnership between the Revenue and the PCS. PCS representatives were part of the project team and were key players in communicating the benefits of the scheme to their colleagues.

Jointly with the TUC*, the PCS also provided the services of the Project Director.

* Trade Union Congress



What did the Inland Revenue & PCS do?

- Found out what staff wanted, through surveys and focus groups

- Piloted new ways of working at three offices

- These included compressed working weeks, variable core time and ‘banking’ time

- Trained managers and staff in organising work for flexibility and security, and for team members to work together more effectively