

# A Closer Look

**"We implemented EYES, including admissions on time and budget in a pandemic. Our go-live success is partly due to the partnership that we have with Liquidlogic."**

## A New Dawn in Children's & Education Services @ Knowsley Council

### Background

Staff at Knowsley Council were using several disparate systems to access crucial educational data about the children and families that they supported. The range of systems in place included paper records, spreadsheets, SharePoint sites, Synergy and Capita. This meant that access to real-time, accurate data was an issue and it was the key driver behind the council's decision to tender for a new education management system. Following a competitive tender process, Knowsley awarded the contract to Liquidlogic.



Knowsley Council

# Engagement

From the outset, buy in from senior management was vital.

Speaking about this, Lynn Anders, Project Lead, from Knowsley Council says:

**“ We engaged very early with the Executive Director and Assistant Executive Directors of children’s social care and education as well as other service areas and that proved to be crucial because they understood the importance of the project from the outset and communicated a consistent message to the rest of the council. ”**

The council engaged with stakeholders including schools, education services and children’s social care prior to the tender process. Feedback was that a significant obstacle to them working together effectively was the multiple records that were held across the council and education establishments and the quality of data within those records.

Following the tender award to Liquidlogic, in the early stages of the project the council presented the Early Years & Education System to schools and introduced six pilot schemes to activate Establishment Data Imports via the Liquidlogic partnership with Groupcall. This meant that the council was able to test data from schools and compare it to data within the authority’s education systems.

Lynn Anders comments:

**“ Looking at data from schools via Groupcall enabled us to compare it to data migrated from our legacy systems that had already undergone validation and matching prior to being provided to Liquidlogic and at that stage, we could see the scale of data conflicts. Following this, we took the decision to bring in all data from each establishment in the borough at the final rounds of data migration. We were able to do this by asking all schools to sign an interim Information Sharing Protocol. That allowed us to cleanse the data prior to go-live at each round of data migration. At go-live, 100% of our estate was switched on and feeding data into the Early Years & Education System. ”**

# The Plan

The Liquidlogic Early Years & Education System (EYES) project began in November 2019 and a team was selected to undertake the implementation of the system. The council chose to implement twenty modules, including admissions.

Speaking about this, Lynn Anders says:

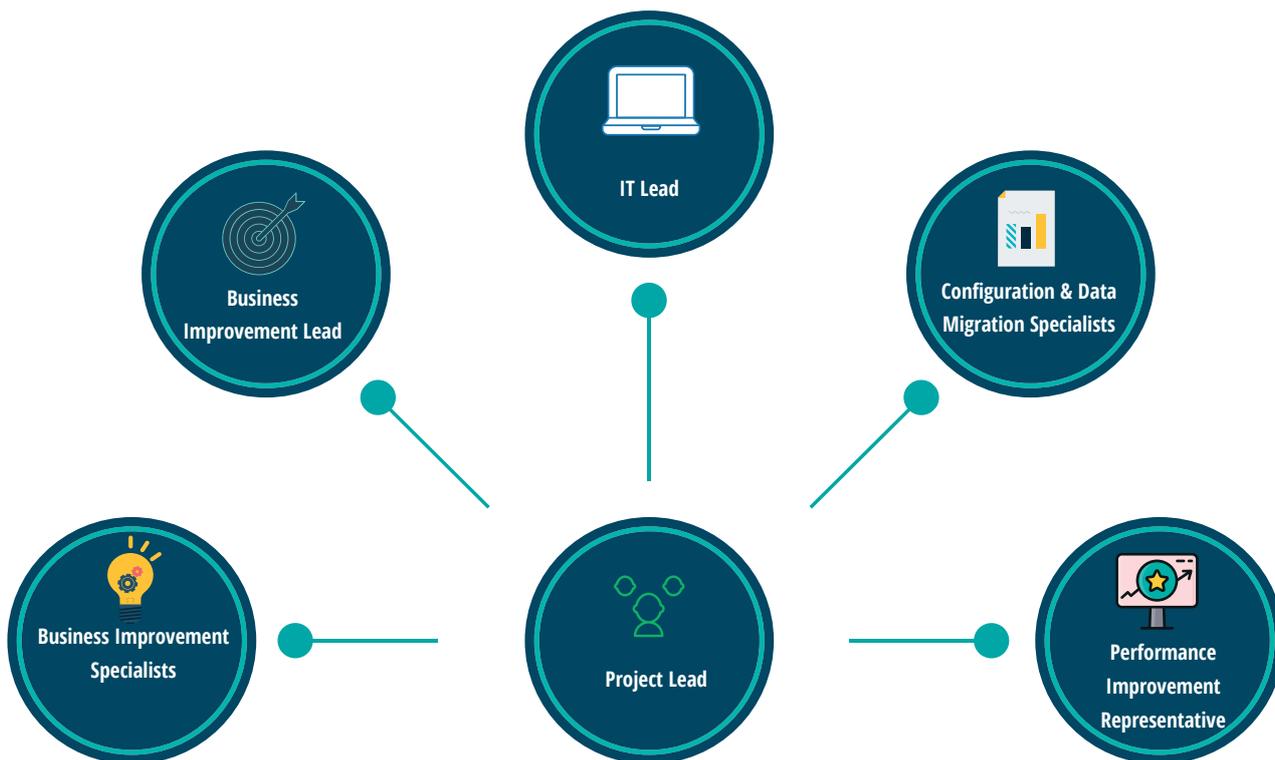
**“ Originally, we had a plan to go-live only with admissions and follow with the remaining nineteen ‘core EYES’ modules 6 months later. However, we went on to reverse the original order of implementation and Liquidlogic was very supportive of that, switching resources around to accommodate the change of plan. Of course, like many councils, we had to divert resource to dealing with the pandemic at the point of our planned first phase of go-live in March 2020. To prevent any delay, we decided to go-live with both ‘core EYES’ and admissions at the same time in August 2020, rather than in two phases as per the original plan. Again, Liquidlogic was able to support us with this approach. ”**

# Resources

The team consisted entirely of existing staff from the council, with no external consultants or new appointments made. Everyone in the team performed other roles in conjunction with additional responsibilities to implement EYES.

The team was made up of a Programme Lead responsible for project methodology and planning who took the options and recommendations on process change and major decisions on behalf of each service area to the Project Board an IT lead, configuration and data migration specialists, a business improvement lead, who worked closely with the IT configuration team and business improvement specialists who were responsible for looking at the existing processes in each education department as well as future processes following the implementation of EYES.





Lynn Anders goes on to explain:

“ We introduced transformation into areas that had previously been very admin heavy. These improvements were identified and agreed with the service. To do this, we ensured that any changes were aligned to the configuration of the system. In addition to this, we had someone from the performance improvement team who was responsible for data and statutory returns for education under an SLA agreement; this proved to be a valuable addition to the project team. Our Schools IT Manager also formed part of the team. ”

## Processing & Configuration

The business improvement representatives were invaluable in their expertise and guidance when working with the IT team and individual service areas to identify the most efficient process for use in system configuration and also to be used in robust testing schedules at each round of UAT.

Lynn Anders comments:

“ We had the business improvement specialists looking for efficiencies in configuration, working very closely with IT who could ensure maximum functionality and optimisation of the system. We also included a lead person from the service area, sometimes two in cases of significant service areas such as early years - this brought knowledge of day to day operations from a user, provider and establishment perspective. ”

## Data Migration & Cleansing

From the outset, data migration and cleansing were targeted as crucial areas by the Knowsley project team and along with experts from the Liquidlogic data migration team, the decision was taken for the council to cleanse data prior to making it available in the Liquidlogic staging database. The IT team wrote validation scripts and the council carried out some validation, cleansing and matching of data at a very early stage. At each round of data migration, the project team agreed with the service areas that they would review the errors which were returned from Liquidlogic as part of their validation scripts and go on to cleanse the data in existing systems to gradually improve data quality.

Lynn Anders says:

“ We committed to four rounds of data migration but invested in a fifth because of the delay inflicted on us by the pandemic. Following each round of data migration, we had User Acceptance Testing (UAT) which meant that users were testing the quality of their own data and could identify where data appeared to be incorrect in the early stages. By the time we reached the third round, we had resolved almost all data issues and had a very good understanding of the data sets provided by Liquidlogic by working closely with the team there. The data migration and cleansing team sat in on all UAT sessions and this helped their understanding of how the data is presented in the front end of the system. ”

# Testing

Testing was a critical element of the project to ensure that service users felt confident at the point of go-live. The business improvement team lead was responsible for testing schedules and implemented a detailed testing scheme. In the early stages of the project, the testing team was using dummy data. However, this rapidly progressed to real data which was more meaningful for testers and helped them to recognise any errors.

**“Liquidlogic really did provide a fantastic level of support and held our hands at certain points.”**



## Summary

Lynn Anders concludes:

“ Our go-live success is partly due to the partnership that we have with Liquidlogic. We implemented EYES, including admissions on time and budget in a pandemic. Throughout the implementation process, they handled our queries professionally and quickly. At points, we needed additional support and rapid responses to our change requests - Liquidlogic gave us the resources and our project was bolstered. In the early stages, we had weekly calls and Liquidlogic really did provide a fantastic level of support and held our hands at certain points.

Whilst it is early days, feedback from all areas has been very positive; schools have taken to EYES well, as has the early years team. ”

Speaking about the go-live, Cllr Margaret Harvey, Knowsley Council's Cabinet Member for Children's Services, says:

“ We want to provide all education, early years and social work teams with as much relevant information as possible to help support their work with children and families. Implementing EYES will enable users to access information about a child from a number of settings including social care, education or early years. We also use Liquidlogic's Adults' Social Care system (LAS), giving us greater access to information if adults are linked to children in our care. We anticipate an improvement in the accuracy and accessibility of data as well as reducing administration time through the implementation of Liquidlogic EYES. ”

**For further details about the Liquidlogic Early Years & Education System (EYES), contact your account manager or e mail [marketing@liquidlogic.co.uk](mailto:marketing@liquidlogic.co.uk)**