

TEAM OF THE YEAR

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Kier Workplace Services and Cardiff Council

Kier has provided technical service FM across Cardiff Council's diverse estate of more than 750 buildings for the last five years, increasing the amount of project work conducted and migrating much of its service provision to a self-delivery model during that time.

The contract with Cardiff Council is for a planned preventative maintenance and reactive service to key buildings in Cardiff, ensuring day-to-day operation is maintained. A 24-hour help-desk is operated on the contract, with an engineer on call for problems occurring outside of normal working hours.

Services range from mechanical, electrical and building fabric maintenance, statutory testing and annual servicing of all aspects of the FM environment.

As well as forming close relationships with their client-side counterparts, the Kier team has recruited six new apprentices and retained a further three former apprentices, thus demonstrating local job opportunities, professional development and succession planning.

Over the contract term the Kier team has built a solid, co-operative working relationship with the Cardiff Council team. It is growing in strength, taking on a greater degree of self-delivery aimed at optimising maintenance costs as well as ensuring better quality of service and the highest levels of customer satisfaction.

Recognising Cardiff's aim of becoming Europe's most liveable capital city with a focus on an economy that benefits all its citizens, Kier saw an opportunity to increase its direct labour as a way of providing improved customer service to the council and its customers, in turn improving visibility and reputation.

A technical services manager coordinates all technical engineers across the region with specific responsibility as account manager of the Cardiff Council contract. This position is supported by an assistant contract manager; there are three supervisors for the mechanical, electrical and building fabric disciplines. Each supervisor has a dedicated assistant project manager, with all engineers report to the relevant supervisor.

The team has expanded from just two contract specific engineers to the fifty-strong regional team today. There are 13 electrical engineers, 12 gas engineers and five building fabric

engineers. All are mobile, working across a number of Kier's facilities management contracts in Wales; the Cardiff contract accounts for around 75% of the engineers' workload.

Cardiff Council itself employs six engineers and many of the sites have their own premises managers or caretakers. These client-side specialists have developed good working relationships with Kier's engineers; everyone is known by name. All engineers are local and live within a 15-mile radius.

The team also works together in community engagement days and supplier events to promote local job opportunities and keep the local pound in Cardiff. For example, they recently exhibited at a Careers Wales event to encourage young people into the industry.

Kier inherited maintenance of an ageing estate, necessitating a programme of work to upgrade mechanical and electrical assets. The last four years has seen fixed wire testing safety improve by more than 50% and a 28.6% reduction in the number of boiler breakdowns.

The contract has grown significantly over the last few years. Project work includes full school re-wires, planned refurbishments, boiler replacements, fire risk assessments, upgrades and fixed wire testing.

The work is significantly reactive in nature, as evidenced by a project to address a fixed wiring compliance issue which necessitated short notice additional labour to conduct the necessary remedial works. Kier engineers also responded in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy when a fire risk assessment at a school led to a programme of works on alarm systems, emergency lighting, fire door replacements, fire break installation and a replacement boiler part.

Following the move from a contract-specific team to a wider technical services team delivering across local contracts, Kier reassessed its development policy, rotating engineers through contracts that they would not ordinarily have worked on. This has achieved more than first hoped, eliminating isolated satellite engineering pools in favour of a diverse delivery team with the breadth of skills and flexibility to offer a complete client-focused service. This change also led to the promotion of two trade supervisors and an assistant projects manager, all headed by a technical services manager. Ensuring technical people are sat within the management structure has made access to support readily available to better serve end users.

Best Practice Learning Points

- Mechanical and electrical self-delivery has enabled engineers to obtain ownership of their work, paying closer attention to quality and achieving best value for money.
- Recruiting candidates with the correct skill sets and mutual enthusiasm has proved essential to increasing self-delivery on the contract.
- Rotation of engineers across contracts can help expand overall service capabilities, boost individual morale and benefit the client in sudden reactive maintenance requirements.
- Strong working relationships between client and contractor teams can help lead to the development of good alternative solutions when required.

The judges said...

This entry demonstrated the close harmony and collaboration between the Kier team and the client team at Cardiff Council. They provided numerous instances of working together, often in adverse conditions, against the clock to resolve important issues for the community. The team were able to continue to deliver against stringent budgetary restrictions and even to grow business by leveraging all their joint capabilities and efforts – a true team effort. We loved the sheer energy and enthusiasm from the presentation team.