



## Helping the country to work

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Andy Barnes, DWP Client Partner, BT Global Services

### BT acts at pace to provide the network infrastructure to support DWP's Economic Downturn Programme

#### Challenge

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is responsible for welfare and pension policies, as well as being a key player in tackling child poverty. As the biggest UK public service delivery department its two arms – The Pensions, Disability, and Carers Service and Jobcentre Plus – serve more than 20 million customers.

DWP has a long-term network infrastructure contract with BT that covers voice, data, contact centre, and conferencing services. Under the contract, BT delivers wide area network (WAN) connectivity, manages in-building local area networks (LANs), and provides IP telephony services. It also supports a virtual IP Contact Centre across sixty-four Jobcentre Plus offices. According to Kable<sup>1</sup> DWP's IP Contact Centre is the largest deployment in the world, while its converged IP-based platform is the largest of its class in EMEA.

DWP has a duty of care to respond efficiently and effectively to citizens' needs. Take the credit crunch. Major institutions went to

the wall, leading banks sought government support, and lending dried up. Jobs were lost and UK unemployment soared. The consequences for the Jobcentre Plus organisation were clear; it needed to react quickly to deal with the knock on effect of a sizable increase to its caseload.

DWP's Economic Downturn Programme (EDP) was established to provide additional office, communications, and IT facilities to accommodate the large volume of additional temporary contract or redeployed staff required to manage the increased demand for Jobcentre Plus services across the UK.

Andy Barnes, DWP Client Partner at BT recalls: “DWP needed to respond quickly to the needs of Jobcentre Plus to provide the necessary IT systems and hardware whenever and wherever it was needed. The nature of the programme meant that the biggest challenge by far was in managing the inevitable uncertainty in terms of Jobcentre Plus staff and location forecasts, which depended on the success of recruitment activity. To deliver efficiently we normally rely on accurate stable forecasts, but here we needed to find a way to be extra flexible to meet the department's needs.”

#### Solution

DWP established a Programme Board, which included senior BT people, to oversee the project and overcome any obstacles. This first hand engagement of senior BT representatives proved critical, as they marshalled the necessary BT resources to deliver and implement DWP driven BT process changes. These included streamlining process steps and relaxing commercial constraints in order for BT to condense delivery lead times for certain services.

The scope of the BT deliverables included installation of structured cabling in new and existing buildings, and the supply and commissioning of LAN switches and IP telephones, in line with Jobcentre Plus estates implementation dates. WAN links were upgraded as necessary to support the additional people and new circuits were provided to interconnect the new buildings. Work was also carried out to extend and reconfigure the central IP telephony platform and optimise the IP contact centre to cope with additional call volumes.

Further, BT provided new PSTN lines at sites that needed additional public telephony and broadband services. Throughout, BT worked closely with the DWP project team handling estates provision, as well as other technology suppliers.

<sup>1</sup>. Kable is a leading provider of ICT public sector research. Data correct as of June 2010.

## Case study

# Department for Work and Pensions

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## Value

Over a period of 15 months BT successfully delivered these services to 430 existing DWP offices and 40 new temporary locations, many at short notice and the majority during peak times. A total of 15,000 LAN ports and IP telephones were added, and other existing services were redirected, to provide communication facilities for 16,000 additional staff. In the process, some fifty WAN bearers were upgraded from 2Mbps to 10Mbps, alongside circuits commissioned for the all-new sites. All of the work was completed without disruption to day-to-day DWP activities.

The project was not without its challenges. Initially, for example, BT and its supply chain partners had to stretch to cope with the volume of site surveys necessary, and it took a while to establish the necessary bespoke procedures between its operating

divisions. Looking back on the project, Andy Barnes observes: “I’m sure the DWP would agree that we proved to be co-operative and proactive. We had a strong project team and despite the fluidity of the programme the project was a success with the vast majority of the communications and IT implemented on schedule.”

Aided by BT, DWP’s effective response to the challenges of the economic downturn has not gone unnoticed. In early 2011 the DWP was selected as a winner at the seventh annual eGovernment National Awards. From a strong field of seven nominees the DWP Economic Downturn Programme won the Central eGovernment excellence: Take-up and usage growth category. This recognises the delivery of high and growing take up of e-enabled services through effective delivery and marketing.

With the new resources and infrastructure in place, the DWP has been able to cope with the additional caseload; supporting people with welfare payments and assistance in returning to the workplace.

Andy Barnes concludes: “The Economic Downturn Programme occurred at a time when DWP relied on BT as a key partner to do whatever necessary to keep its business operational. I am delighted that all the BT teams responded to the challenges that were presented in such a professional and collaborative way. This is a great example of what we can achieve together.”

## Core services

- BT IP Connect managed WAN service extension and upgrade
- BT One Enterprise LAN infrastructure supply and commissioning
- BT One Enterprise managed IP telephony
- BT Onsite Contact IP contact centre services
- BT One PSTN lines and broadband services
- Professional services for project management
- Structured cabling installation



## Offices worldwide

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