



# Press Release

## Bristol City Council practitioners welcome opportunity for joint working

**The Social Services Department of Bristol City Council, the largest Unitary Authority in England, serves a population of over 400,000. With an annual budget of almost £121m, the 3,000 plus staff work out of some ten main offices and over one hundred sites throughout the city, including eight hospitals, day centres and children's homes. Headquarters staff and the Youth Offending team are based in another two offices.**

To enable the Department to support staff and their health colleagues deliver a more comprehensive and integrated service, and to facilitate the communication between the organisations and professions involved in the delivery of care, the Authority adopted the Paris system, developed by Civica.

They have now had a successful roll out across the entire system to Adult Care Services with Health involved in the latter process. There are joint teams and intermediary teams all using Paris, which has, within the current services framework, delivered the vision.

According to Bill Venables, the Authority's Project Manager, the future expansion of the system now depends to some extent on the national agenda. "We are seeing a great many changes taking place at present," Bill explained. "In Bristol we have two Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) soon to become one and that will impact on us. Obviously we will have to wait and see what happens but it is likely that adult services will move to a closer alignment with the PCT, therefore the issue of IT systems to support that change will arise. And we will be pushing Paris to the forefront of the debate."

Likewise with Children's Services, with the implementation of "Every Child Matters" that again envisages closer working between not just health and social services but with education also. "There is clearly an opportunity within Bristol Social Services itself and with our health partners to look at ways in which we can extend the use of the Paris system to take in those partners within the Government's requirements,"

Paris is realising their vision of a shared electronic social care record and Bristol is experiencing benefits in many different areas. Bill said, "Some of our teams are remotely located for example, a lot of Family Support teams that help in family crisis are quite often located out on the edge in our communities away from a main office. They can now record directly onto the system whereas with the old system they would put their recording into an envelope and post it off to the main office where it might get linked up to the

file in three weeks time. Now being able to record directly onto the system means the social worker can instantaneously see what is going on.”

Bristol Social Services are finding too that they have a higher number than expected, over 1,500 people, using the system and at any one time there are in the region of 350 professionals using the system. “That is a pretty standard level of use for us,” stated Bill, “and we’re using it very comprehensively really. Not just as a practitioner system to support practise and not as an administration driven system, although that has its part to play, but using the system for the recording of data, putting in forms and for storing documents.”

Bill believes that the opportunity for joint working has been well received. “Certainly within Adult Care, because it has various occupational groups who have tended to work quite separately and Paris created the conditions for joint working,” Bill commented. “At the start there was some reluctance with Occupational Therapists, social workers and Homecare for instance, they had their own systems for recording however, typically any one receiving services from one of these would have their own paper file which would be separate and each supporting that specific process.

“Now they are all on one system and they are thinking about the system and how it can support practice, and how is it going to impact on Paris. It has been a very positive experience heralding a remarkable change in attitude.

“I think up to a point, in the initial implementation throughout the Department, Paris was seen as a bit of an imposition because staff had lots of more important things to do and this wasn’t seen as one of them. But now everyone is on side, thanks to the managers leading the implementation, they appreciate the benefits of thinking in a more joined up way about what Paris can offer to them. It’s quite a cultural change.”

Bristol Social Services have the vision and aspiration with regards to integrated joined up working and they have taken that forward with tenacity despite all sorts of challenges. And with regards to PCTs, should a relaxation be forthcoming in the national agenda Bristol will be ready to carry that vision forward into further joint working with Health.

For further information please contact:

Dawn Barstow

Civica UK Ltd

dawn.barstow@civica.co.uk

Tel: 0161 9415833

## About Civica

Civica is a market leader in software and services that help organisations to improve service delivery and efficiency, with specialist expertise in local government, social housing, enforcement and education.

Blending consulting, software and managed services, the group supplies more than 1,800 customers in the UK, Australia, Asia Pacific and the USA, including 94% of the UK’s local authorities, more than 200 social housing organisations and 50 of the UK’s 53 police forces.

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For further information or to book a meeting/demonstration, telephone **0161 941 5833** or email **[marketing@civica.co.uk](mailto:marketing@civica.co.uk)**

Civica Health & Social Care  
20 Barrington Road, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 1HB Tel: 0161 941 5833 Fax: 0161 941 7629  
Email: [enquiries@civica.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@civica.co.uk) Web: [www.civica.co.uk](http://www.civica.co.uk)