



A CITY OF SEVERAL TALES – the LEEDS story

The Pacific Institute began its work in Leeds six years ago. Here are three stories from Leeds City Council and the continuous quest for excellence

Leeds is one of the UK's largest cities with a population of over 750,000. During and after the Industrial Revolution, Leeds developed into a major industrial centre for production and trade of wool before emerging as a successful centre for commerce and higher education. But like so many other English industrial centres, Leeds has a flipside to its success: despite the economic progress, some of the city's neighbourhoods are amongst the poorest 10% in the country. High unemployment, above average crime rates, health problems and low qualification levels are just some of the serious problems modern Leeds has had to face. In some neighbourhoods one in three children live in a household where no-one is working. But masses of work is being done to change things for the better.

LOOKING TO BE WORLD CLASS

Education Leeds had a big dream for young people in Leeds – a dream that is now coming true

In 2001 Education Leeds was set up with Chris Edwards as Chief Executive. The company is responsible for providing all educational support services relating to children and young people of school age. Having encountered Investment in Excellence in his previous Local Education Authority, Chris soon decided to bring The Pacific Institute on board to help.

The challenge was to boost morale and to help senior managers in Leeds create a vision for a world-class education system in the city. The end goal was to raise aspirations and achievements of young people in Leeds.

A roll-out of Investment in Excellence and STEPS programmes to over 300 staff began, and some 40 Education Leeds facilitators were trained to deliver these programmes to their colleagues.

Half way through this project a Culture Survey was carried out across Education Leeds. It showed a largely constructive culture which was hugely encouraging and clearly indicated that Education Leeds was on the right track:

“Investment in Excellence has had a profound influence and a marked impact on attitudes and expectations of my colleagues in Leeds and, most importantly, on the culture and improved performance of Education Leeds which has become a highly successful and positive company”, says Chris Edwards.



SCHOOLS INVESTING IN EXCELLENCE

Over 50 school leaders have now participated in Investment in Excellence, and many of them have begun to implement The Pacific Institute's programmes with staff in their schools. West Leeds High School is delivering programmes to staff, students and – more recently – parents. In seven other high schools, groups of staff have now completed Investment in Excellence.

An increasing number of primary schools are following suit. So far five of them have taken all their staff through Investment in Excellence, and groups of staff from many other primary schools have also completed this course.

The Pacific Institute's programmes are being run in many schools in Leeds.

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GETTING THE PARENTS INVOLVED

The most recent development in the huge project is the work done with parents which is now in its third year. As part of a strategy to help parents engage in and support their children's learning, The FAST Team (Families and Schools Together) has now trained over 400 teaching and support staff and over 100 parents to run the STEPS programme. In addition, over 500 pupils in primary and secondary schools have been through The Pacific Institute's 'It's up to me' and 'Think Smart' programmes which are used with Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 pupils.

All these programmes are achieving considerable success in getting through to some of the most difficult-to-reach groups, such as parents from black and minority ethnic groups and Traveller communities. Programmes have been delivered in community languages, one Punjabi, one Bengali. Lately, the STEPS programme is also being used in conjunction with parenting orders as part of the attendance strategy to enable parents to more effectively support their children in getting a good education.



A NEW VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The Pacific Institute has worked in the education sector in Leeds for the last six years. During that time more than 1300 people have experienced one of its courses. OFSTED inspections are showing a marked improvement in performance. For many parents, going through a Pacific Institute programme has been a real inspiration to better themselves, their families and their community.

And the good work continues. The vision is now to double the number of STEPS facilitators and to find funding which will make it possible to reach more than 3000 parents within the next three years.

Parents find that they are getting great benefit from the STEPS programme

"I am more involved with my family and friends, I see myself as a better person."

"I now talk nicely to my children, take more notice, am calmer."

"I want to bring together my neighbours and community to improve the environment. Watch this space!"

'WHAT HAVE WE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO GET USED TO?'

This is the question, posed by Lou Tice, which Commercial Services Group, (part of Leeds City Council), started asking themselves 4 years ago

With a turnover of £75 million and nearly 4000 staff, many aspects of the Commercial Services Group seemed to be working well. The group provides front-line services across the city: Catering and Cleaning, Property Maintenance and Security, Fleet Maintenance and Passenger Services. People were committed to great quality public services. Those services were generally well received. So why involve The Pacific Institute? Why Investment in Excellence?

WHAT DO WE WANT?

"Well, for the management team of the group, the question wasn't just 'Could we do better?' but also 'Could we be happier?' We asked ourselves: 'How do we want our workplace to be, what kind of relationships do we want with our clients? How do we

want to work and how do we value ourselves and each other?'" , says Julie Meakin, Chief Officer for the Group.

The Investment in Excellence programme was chosen to close the gap between current reality and vision. Over the past four years more than 150 managers within the group have completed the programme. A similar number of people have gone through one of the STEPS programmes, which are run on a monthly basis. No-one in the organisation is required to attend the courses, but demand is high. STEPS' reputation spreads by word of mouth, as most attendees rate it the best course they have ever done. The group has its own trained facilitators. One commented wryly: "It's pressure on the first day of the course, because people have heard so much about it they come with such great expectation."

WE LOOK FORWARD AND EXPECT SUCCESS

TPI has given the group, says Julie Meakin, a joint vocabulary for creating their future and addressing problems:

"Sometimes for example, when relationships with a client get difficult, we remind ourselves to act, on our part, as we would want the relationship to be, as if it already is. Generally we look forward and

expect success, and over the past four years we have weathered major storms and every time emerged stronger."

Two years ago the loss of major building contracts threatened Property Maintenance with bankruptcy and outsourcing. Now it is making a reasonable return which is ploughed back to support other front-line services in the Council. Unions and staff responded incredibly and quickly to changes the service needed to make. Managers share resources and ideas across the group. The schools' meals service has come through a fundamental shift in improving the quality of meals and skills of staff. Attendance levels have improved. An accommodation review has generated millions of pounds worth of savings but also massively improved the quality of office and depot space across the group. Commercial Services also works to support other departments in developing city-wide solutions and has recently developed a seven-day hot community meals service for adult care catering.

150 managers and supervisors were asked to complete a short happiness survey taken from Martin Seligman's book 'Authentic Happiness'. For two years running this has shown that happiness levels have indeed improved.

'FROM GOOD TO GREAT' IN LEEDS

Leeds City Council takes on a challenge and launches an impressive event for change

Having implemented The Pacific Institute's programmes in his own department, Randal Brown, Director of City Services in Leeds, knew better than anyone the value this can bring.

Leeds City Council had a big challenge ahead. It was going from eleven directorates to only five and needed to develop these Directors to become strategic leaders rather than operational managers. This way the fifty Chief Officers reporting to the five new Directors would take on the responsibility for general operations. The Council was also embarking on a journey from good to great, and Randal recognised the enabling role The Pacific Institute's programmes could play in this transformation.

Discussions with the Corporate Leadership Team culminated in them meeting with parents and pupils, who had experienced The Pacific Institute's programmes. Dave Page, the Deputy Chief Executive of Leeds City Council (and himself an ex-pupil of West Leeds High School, where students have been completing

programmes commented: "If it [The Pacific Institute's programmes] can do this for parents and students, what could it do to support the development of our staff?"

AN IMPRESSIVE EVENT

The Leadership transformation was launched at the 'From Good to Great' event held at the Armouries in Leeds. The event was led by TPI's international associate, Mike O'Brien. Mike, of worldwide prestige on leadership, provided a stunning presentation on organisational culture change to the 300 senior staff across Leeds City Council. This event was enhanced by the glamour and glitz of a full-scale Hollywood launch with great music from Leeds artists The Kaiser Chiefs and Corinne Bailey Rae (whose mother is a Pacific Institute facilitator). The atmosphere was great and created a real buzz for change and potential, in a well rehearsed and sequenced event, managed for maximum impact. All attendees were visibly impressed and motivated by this major launch, and the concept of 'good to great' began to feel real.

PROJECTS GALORE

Three of the five Directors from Leeds City Council have now been through the Investment in Excellence programme,

and all eleven members of CLT including the Chief Executive, his deputy and two assistant Chief Executives have completed the Leadership Alignment process.

At the time of writing, 60 Youth Service and Early Years managers are undertaking Investment in Excellence, and the 15 members of the Resources Directorate Senior Management Team will all have completed the same.

Adult Social Services are negotiating on an Investment in Excellence and facilitator training roll-out.

City Development's Planning and Development Team are negotiating an Investment in Excellence and Leadership Alignment implementation and Housing Department's Senior Management Team are completing their Investment in Excellence.

Workshops are being conducted with all 50 Chief Officers, and discussions about a Culture Survey of the top 300 managers are underway to build on the new vision and values.

Leeds certainly is heading for excellence!



The 'From Good to Great Event' had a real buzz of change about it.