Home to School Transport Service Update

Education & Children's Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee
13th October 2021
V1.0

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Agenda

Approximate timings

| 1 | Welcome and Introductions | 🕐 2 mins |

| 2 | Return to School Performance & latest SITREP position | 🕐 5 mins |

| 3 | Ensuring safeguarding – enforcing contractual compliance | 🕐 5 mins |

| 4 | New Provider (HATS Group) Mobilisation | 🕐 5 mins |

| 5 | Mobilisation Lessons Learned | 🕐 5 mins |

| 6 | 365 Implementation Update & Current Position | 🕐 5 mins |

Return to School Performance

Start of new Academic Year 2021 - 2022 Headlines

- Intense Mobilisation and Operational Readiness activities undertaken throughout summer

- Some letters and communications were sent out later that we would have wanted due to problems with data

- Schools returned through staggered starts from 3rd Sep; all schools are now returned

- Operational readiness and existing compliance checks identified the need to terminate a transport provider and then commission a new provider just weeks before start of term to safeguard our service users

- Mobilising a new provider at short notice led to a downturn in performance which is now stabilising

- Overall service performance has continued to improving daily and has been operating within tolerance for the few weeks

- The HTS service has mobilised successfully (**week ending 24th Sep**):

  - 1052 daily routes operating (99.17%)
  - 3517 pupils who needed to travel were transported (99.82% - note that not all pupils travel every day)

Performance Against Summary KPIs

Summary of Key Progress

- **Safeguarding** – there are **5 safeguarding cases:**
  - 3 relate to incorrect drop-off details; all were resolved at school and pupils were safe at all times
  - 2 new safeguarding issues raised identified this period are under review

- **Complaints** – **34 complaints with none overdue as at 24th Sep**
  - As is usual at this time of year, there is an increase in complaints and these are dealt with as part of normal operational service and tracked through the Complaints process following which a Complaints Response is issued

- **Telephone calls**
  - **95% of calls answered on Fri 17th Sep,** for the whole of the week 88.5% of phone calls were answered (**831** answered out of **939** received); on average the service receives 600 calls a week.
  - Week ending **Fri 24th Sep, 93.59%** calls answered throughout the week (**over 96% achieved each day Tues to Fri**).
  - The service doubled its call handling capacity for the start of term, which included both service resource and also support from other areas of the council

- **Routes – 99.17%** of routes were **delivered** and **99.82%** of **pupils transported**, that needed to be. **99.13%** of routes delivered were delivered **on time**.

- **Bus pass applications** – As is normal for this time of year and despite encouraging parents to apply early, the service is receiving an increase in applications for mainstream Bus Passes after the start of term.
  - Significant work undertaken to eliminate outstanding bus passes, including late applications and the current number awaiting assessment is 291 (at the same time last year this was 1106).

Ensuring safeguarding – enforcing contractual compliance

Providing safe, reliable travel options

- Participation in Safeguarding Stocktake forum

- HTS Safeguard Review

- Establishment of the Compliance team and processes

- Clear Governance & Controls

- Regular gateway reviews to check and challenge DBS status

- Our systems and processes work to safeguard our service users

- Termination of non-compliant transport provider

- **The service does not run until we are appropriately assured**

- **If issues are highlighted following mobilisation then compliance action is taken**

Service Delivery Model

Functional Processes

Customers and Channels

People

Our vision is to provide safe, reliable travel options for eligible children and young people to arrive at school ready to learn.

IT Infrastructure

Data & Reporting

Communications & Engagement

Governance & Control

HATS Group Mobilisation
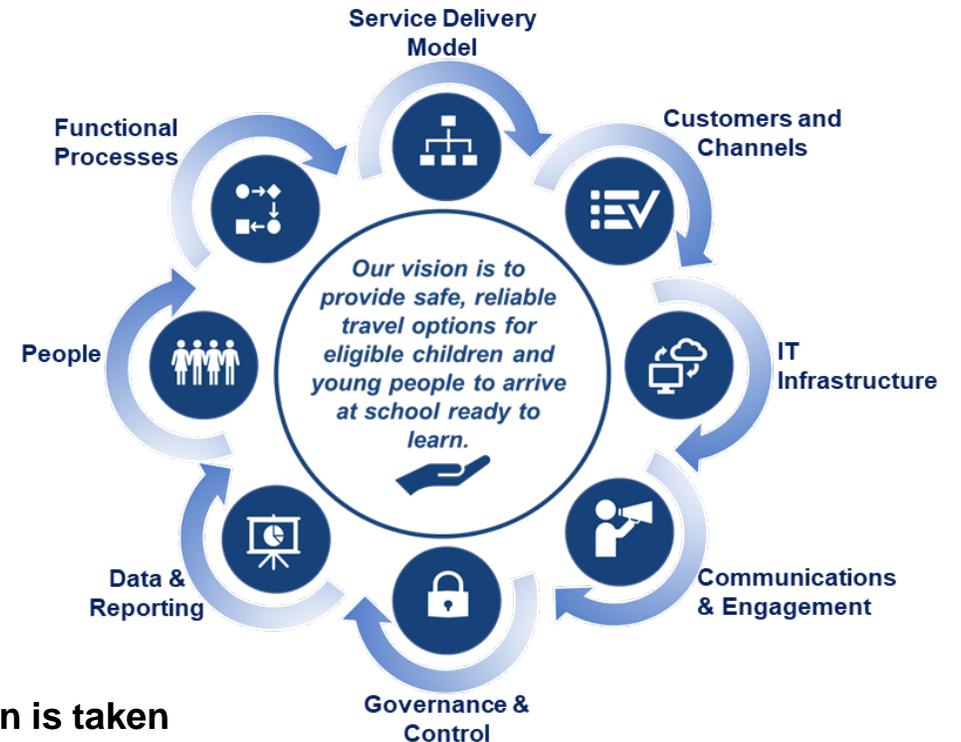
Providing safe, reliable travel options

- Compliance team identified issue with existing transport provider during review of Operational Readiness/ Management information.

- Decision taken to terminate this contract to protect safeguarding standards

- Immediate and robust procurement exercise undertaken - HATS Group awarded contracted just over 2 weeks before start of term

- Expediated mobilisation of vehicles, staffing, and route information undertaken – HATS have undertaken this process numerous times without issue (but this time had to proceed with an uncooperative predecessor)

- However, due to compressed timescales a number of challenges emerged:

  - 55 trained drivers did not arrive for work on Day 1 and 2 of the new operation

  - Current contact information for all parents/carers needed to be checked and where not available supplied by schools to be able to advise all parents of new arrangements (not all families share this information with the Service as a matter of course)

- Impact of these challenges led to pause of HATS mobilisation on Wed 8th Sep

- Daily calls commenced with HATS Group to resolve issues and check progress of phased reintroduction of service

- Impact of these issues did have some impact on the ability of parents using other contractor services to immediately contact the Service in first few days (which improved in the days after the mobilisation pause).

- Ongoing improved service levels and transition to operational BAU

HATS Performance Fri 24th Sep:
100% routes ran to 6 schools: 123 routes with 756 pupils transported

Providing safe, reliable travel options

- HTS is on a journey to improve its services and we've already commenced an internal review of how we performed

- We have recently sent out a survey to schools to ask them about the service last year to help us improve the service this year

- We held an event for parents impacted by the mobilisation of the new provider

- Head of Service is engaging with schools directly to review and support resolution of issues

- Staff have two sessions planned from October to review lessons from this period

- We will use the knowledge and understanding from this experience to inform continuous improvement, key actions include:

    - Improving our annual service plan

    - Developing annual communications and engagement plan – to mitigate unclear or inaccurate information via social media channels

    - Improving our data and functional processes

    - Ensuring sufficient staff available for call-handling

365 Implementation Update

Post-Testing Decision Point

Autumn 2021 **Early 2022** **Summer 2022**

| Data Correct & Complete | Project plan | Introduction of 365 for routing | Integrated Risk assessment | | School portal available | Parent portal available |

Forecast Timeline
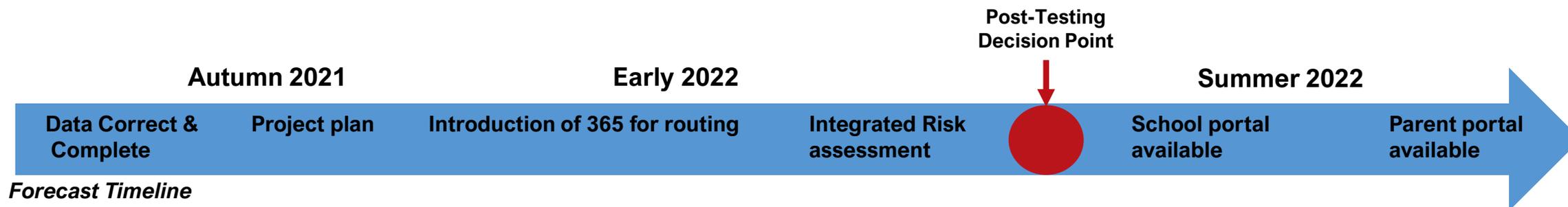
Benefits of 365 Implementation:

- **Safeguarding** of our children at the centre of all activities on 365

- **Better information** for leaders and senior management teams

- Single source of the truth

- Joined up working practices

- Real time data on transport of children and operators transporting our children for parents and schools

Current Activities:

- Formal Decision Points introduced which evaluate testing take place before next activity can start

- Validation of new academic year pupil and route information prior to transfer into 365

- Implementing a route change control process to ensure the information remains accurate at all times

- Correct data is being loaded and maintained in 365

- Operators and their drivers are being engaged about use of 365

- Monitoring system performance to ensure it delivers BCC contracted requirements

365 Project – Current delivery position

Providing safe, reliable travel options

- Review and refresh of original implementation plan undertaken

- Constrained resources were redirected over summer to support the start of academic year

- Significant data validation undertaken and upload to the system progressing to support extended pilot

- Whilst this impacted project delivery timeline, it has also provided opportunity to understand upstream dependencies for 365 on data quality

- Regular engagement activities now scheduled with supplier

- Project undertaking assurance checks against available functionality and its performance to support HTS service requirements

- Phased release of functionality subject to rigorous testing

- Exploring opportunities to harness other product modules to exploit system fully