



MHR

# **Newport City Council Enhances People Performance with MHR**



# Introduction

Newport City Council is a unitary authority at the gateway between Wales and England. It has a workforce of 5,500 people and an annual budget of circa £300 million.

It is the eighth largest council in Wales, providing all major services such as education, leisure, housing, social services, planning and highways to a population of approximately 150,000 people. Altogether it bears responsibility for delivery of more than 800 services to residents, businesses and other service-users.

**“MHR understands our needs,  
which has been hugely beneficial.”**

Rachael Davies  
HR&OD Manager  
Newport City Council

# Summary

## Organisational objectives

- Advance strategic modernisation aims
- Enhance employee performance
- Remove paper-based processes and streamline operations

## Results

- Hugely improved performance-monitoring
- Greater efficiency through removal of time-consuming paper HR admin processes
- Transformation of team communications during lockdown
- Advancement of digital modernisation agenda

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# Focused on improving performance

Committed to a policy of improvement, Newport City Council uses a series of indicators to assess its performance, which includes measures set by the Welsh Government, Welsh Local Government Association and by the council itself.

As the council's own Planning and Performance Management Policy for 2020-2022 says: "Planning and performance are intrinsically linked and are key to enable the council to achieve its vision."

It is in this context that the council constantly seeks to advance its modernisation agenda. Central to this is the implementation of digital technology to maximise people activity.



# Advanced technology delivering a coherent employee experience

Although the council had a solution for performance management assessments, it wanted to rationalise its systems and bring all HR activity into one place for a more coherent employee experience.

The council was keen to streamline processes and enable employees to use a single core product for all their HR requirements. This would build on the progress the city council had already made in moving away from the traditional, 12-month, paper-based employee appraisal towards a more regular and more effective assessment of performance.



# Selection and rapid implementation of iTrent

Having examined all the options on the market, Newport City Council selected MHR's award-winning iTrent as its core system, providing a single specialist platform for talent management, workforce planning, HR and payroll.

Scoping, building, testing and implementation all proceeded smoothly despite the restrictions at the height of the pandemic lockdown. Scoping, for example, took place in the week lockdown came into force, but implementation nonetheless went live only seven weeks later.



# Bespoke deployment and transformation of employee-manager interactions

Through iTrent's ease of implementation and using the specialist expertise of the MHR team, Newport City Council has personalised and targeted iTrent's regular talent check-ins functionality, which enhances performance appraisal process by giving employees the regular opportunity to discuss their morale, work and career progress with their manager.

Real-time check-ins have become part of everyday working, providing managers with clear insights into their employees' wellbeing and performance, along with the chance to give feedback straight away.

Support and development opportunities are provided when needed, rather than waiting for the completion of annual appraisals when employees may already be too disengaged.

The council is now able to conduct wellbeing check-ins that focus on workload pressures or challenges with relationships, nipping any potential problems in the bud so they do not become critical and have a detrimental effect on either the employee or the organisation.

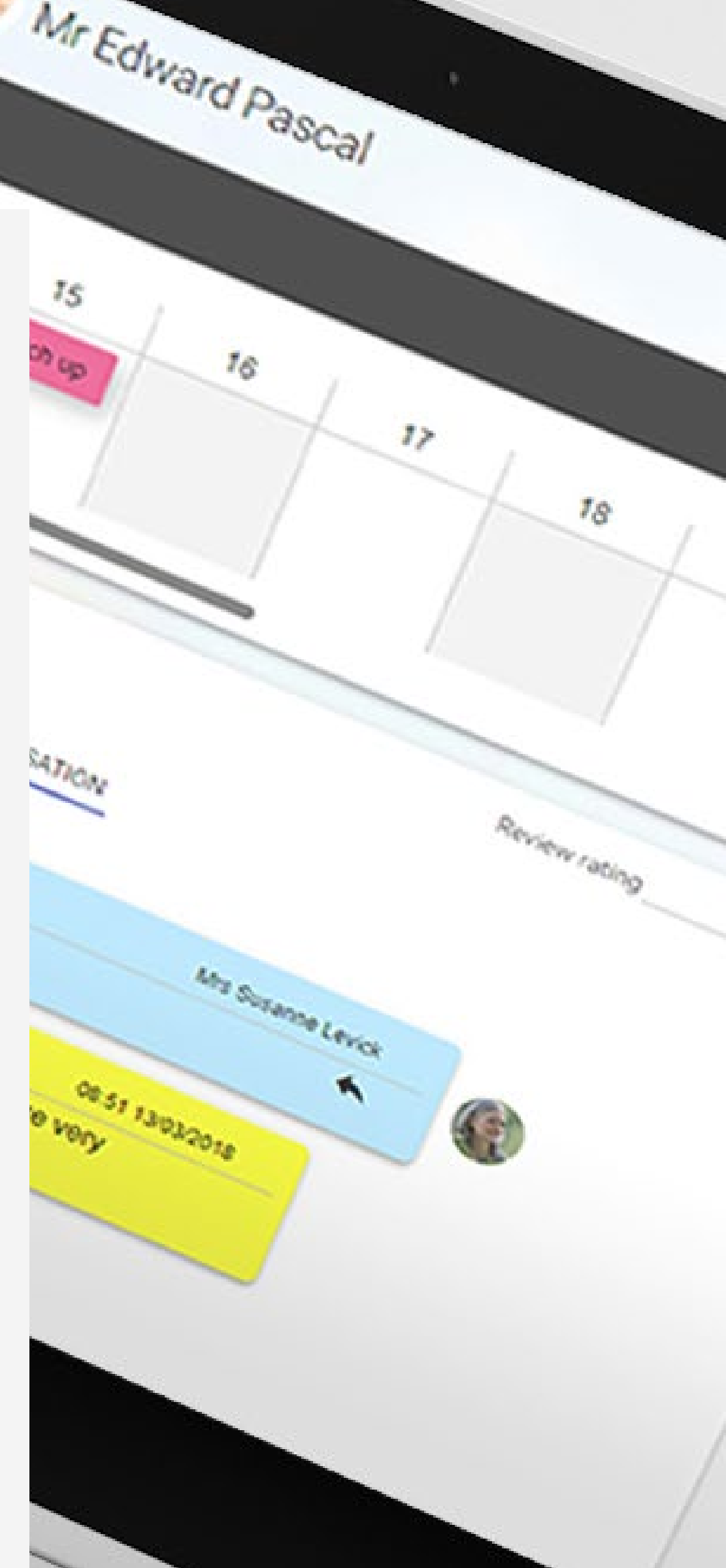
This customised use of iTrent check-ins has proved an immense advantage when a large proportion of the council's employees work remotely during the pandemic, providing both one-to-one interactions and regular dialogue with respective teams. This has enabled the council to manage performance in the same way as if the workforce were still together in one environment.



# Paperwork-reduction and bespoke check-ins for social services employees

Newport City Council has also digitised social services supervision functionality which has the potential to bring further transformative benefits through the elimination of paper-based activities. The iTrent check-ins feature is bespoke enough to create variations of check-in types, and while the social services supervision was previously a Word-based document, a specific social services-focused check-in has been designed to really meet the needs of professionals with a mandatory supervision requirement.

While probationary period and regular monthly check-ins are more the norm, Newport City Council was able to design a wellbeing check-in which allows managers and their reports to have a conversation about current challenges in the workplace and take prompt action to achieve resolution before a situation deteriorates to a position of under-performance.



# Success was founded on MHR's understanding of Newport City Council

"We had a great relationship with our MHR project manager and were able to work together to drive through the change in a timely way that was effective right from the go-live date," said Erica Gibson, Business Development Team Leader, Newport City Council.

"Our project manager Katrina was superb – being engaged and involved throughout the duration of our project, giving us the hands-on support we need from a partner. Through our on-site visits and remote meetings, she built a relationship with us that enables us to gain the build-content we need.

She has made allowances for our organisational nuances, while encouraging us to consider new options in a highly professional way. She is prompt in responding to us, gives us creative solutions and is almost like another member of our in-house team!"





# Immediate and strategic benefits

Implementation of iTrent means the council has achieved one of its key aims – the removal of paper-based processes and burdensome administrative activities wherever possible.

The deployment of regular check-ins has enhanced employee performance and reduced the risk of disengagement.

Yet the benefits will also be more long-term, advancing the council on its strategic path towards modernisation through increased use of digital technology for people activity.

**“MHR understands our needs, which has been hugely beneficial, enabling small changes to an iTrent module we might need so it works for our people and our culture.”**

Rachael Davies  
HR&OD Manager  
Newport City Council

The MHR logo consists of the letters 'MHR' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid black square.

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