



Building confidence in payroll with MHR's Managed Services

Cidari Multi Academy Trust could see the potential of iTrent. The question was how much more it could achieve with the right managed payroll provider behind it.



No HMRC fines since moving to MHR



Around 90% of employees using iTrent self-service



Significantly fewer payroll errors and employee queries

Overview

Cidari Multi Academy Trust supports a large number of academies, bringing together schools with their own day-to-day HR and payroll requirements.

That creates a demanding payroll environment. Different employee groups and pay arrangements need to be managed accurately, while Headteachers and School Business Professionals need clear processes for supplying payroll information. At Trust level, the team needs visibility across its academies and the ability to spot issues before they affect employees.

Cidari wanted to build a payroll service that could meet that complexity without creating an unnecessary administrative burden for its internal team.

Its ambitions went beyond reliable processing. The Trust wanted to make better use of payroll technology, improve the way information moved between its academies and central team, and give its people more time to develop the service.

Achieving that meant reconsidering both the technology available to Cidari and the support surrounding it.



Challenge

When Cidari's Payroll Manager joined the Trust, its managed payroll service had recently changed provider.

One of her first priorities was working with Headteachers and School Business Professionals to audit payroll reports. The exercise revealed recurring problems. Casual contracts that should have ended remained active. Leavers were still being paid. Other employees had been placed on the wrong pay scales.

With multiple errors coming through each month, payroll demanded significant intervention from the internal team. Every mistake had the potential to create more correction work and employee queries. There were compliance consequences too: under its previous arrangements, Cidari had received HMRC fines for late submissions.

At the same time, another part of the story was beginning to emerge.

The Trust's existing outsourced payroll provider had moved from its previous platform, MyView, to iTrent. Cidari therefore had some experience of the technology before becoming an MHR customer. Its access and functionality were limited, but the team liked what it saw.

The challenge was no longer simply finding an alternative payroll provider. Cidari wanted to understand what iTrent could really do, and whether it could use more of that capability to create a better payroll service.

Solution

When their contract came up for renewal, Cidari decided to approach MHR for a full demonstration of iTrent. This proved pivotal, revealing functionality the team had never used or, in some cases, even seen.

Cidari saw an opportunity to make better use of iTrent alongside a managed payroll service offering the expertise and support it needed. Moving to MHR also allowed the Trust to rethink existing ways of working rather than simply transfer them to a new provider.

Today, iTrent helps Cidari standardise payroll processes across the Trust while retaining flexibility for different academies and employee groups. Information previously reliant on manual spreadsheets can now be accessed centrally, giving the payroll team greater visibility and control.

Reporting has become particularly valuable. Using iTrent alongside BusinessObjects, Cidari can analyse payroll information and identify anomalies before payroll is finalised.

Individual payroll reports have made checking and reconciliation more efficient, while up-to-date information helps management queries be answered more quickly.

MHR's Managed Services expertise provides additional support. Rather than resolving every payroll or system issue internally, Cidari can access specialist knowledge through the Service Desk and Assist, particularly when making changes or configuring the system.

The relationship has also strengthened through account management updates and regional education forums, helping the team stay informed about developments affecting its service.

Most importantly, payroll has become more dependable. Errors and queries have reduced significantly, freeing the internal team to focus on improving processes, supporting schools and developing the payroll function.

Results

For Cidari, the value of the partnership is about more than outsourcing a monthly process. MHR has helped the Trust turn the potential it originally saw in iTrent into a payroll service with greater visibility and significantly less corrective work.

- **Significantly fewer payroll errors** reducing the amount of correction work required after processing
- **Fewer employee queries** releasing time previously spent investigating and resolving payroll problems
- **No HMRC fines since moving to MHR** addressing an important compliance issue experienced under previous arrangements
- **More efficient checking and reconciliation** with reporting helping the team identify anomalies before payroll is finalised
- **Less reliance on manual spreadsheets** with payroll information more readily accessible
- **Around 90% employee self-service adoption** giving most employees direct access to their information
- **More time for higher-value work** including improving Trust processes, working more closely with schools and progressing payroll projects
- **Greater access to specialist expertise** reducing the need for Cidari's internal team to resolve every payroll or system problem alone

The impact has also created space for the payroll function to keep developing. Cidari is focused on making greater use of automation, reporting and existing system functionality while continuing to improve the quality of its payroll and pension data.



"Our partnership with MHR has given us confidence in the accuracy of our payroll, reduced the administrative burden on our team and allowed us to focus on improving the service we provide to our academies."

Lisa Burke, Trust Payroll and Pensions Manager

Looking to get more from your payroll?

A managed payroll service should do more than process payroll. Discover how MHR combines payroll software with specialist expertise and ongoing support to help organisations build a more effective payroll service.