

# CREATING A MODERN WORKING ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS NEW WAYS OF WORKING



**DCSF's carbon footprint in London reduced by**

**50%**

*“The DCSF has saved £10 million per annum in rent and rates.”*

In 2006, the then DfES undertook a pilot project to judge the effectiveness of introducing ‘New Ways of Working’ at their Sanctuary Buildings HQ in Great Smith Street. This later became a complete renovation of Sanctuary Buildings over six floors as the DfES became the Department for Children Schools and Families.

EC Harris has been a main consultant assisting with managing the DCSF portfolio for fifteen years and there is a strong understanding of working arrangements and a partnering relationship. The project had three main deliverables:

- Reducing desk ratio to 8:10 and space to 9 sq.m per DCSF London person
- Managing the project on time and on budget
- Managing change with the people at the DCSF and introducing new ways of working.

The DCSF previously had cellular offices, fixed desk spaces and approximately 13 sq.m per person. The working environment was old fashioned and did not support the DCSF's current need.

## Creating Solutions

The DCSF's vision was ‘a workplace with accommodation that reflected people's working needs not their place in the hierarchy’ (Andy Mills Project Manager for the Flexible Workspace Project).

An initial design concept for the pilot was produced, and the DCSF Estates and Facilities Management Team worked closely with EC Harris and internal stakeholders to produce space-planning proposals for the whole of the main building.

A crucial part of the programme was decanting staff and providing continuity throughout the programme of works. The DCSF controls a budget of almost £53 billion, and is one of Whitehall's highest spending departments. With major programmes like academies to deliver, the Department's work could not suffer.

Maximum value was achieved by rolling in several planned upgrades to the programme. Budgets for ceiling replacement and the upgrade and replacement of virtually all the M&E plant were agreed and EC Harris managed the whole programme as one.

Flexibility and trust played a big part and in the spirit of partnership, stakeholders worked with the design team to save time. There was trust from the DCSF workforce too. By agreeing to short term discomfort and decant without lengthy negotiations they were promised that they would get their new accommodation and final improved workspace faster. In fact they got it six months earlier than planned.

### Adding Value

- The reconfiguration has resulted in the capacity for 2250 staff being located in Sanctuary buildings as opposed to the original 1600. The pilot proved that a desk ratio of 7:10 was actually possible enabling an increase in capacity to 2574 staff allowing DCSF to react to future business changes with minimal disruption and cost. Indeed the DCSF has saved £10 million per annum in rent and rates payments alone by vacating another office - Caxton House - which is no longer needed.
- Alongside the reconfiguration, EC Harris has been working with the DCSF to reprocure and retender Support Services term contracts resulting in an annual saving of £1 million, and vacating a complete building has reduced the DCSF's carbon footprint in London by around 50%.
- The workplace is now a bright modern office. IT systems support new ways of working and a key design feature is large murals that remind DCSF staff of their mission: 'Children, young people and families are the bedrock of our society. Our aim is to ensure that every child gets the best possible start in life, receives an excellent education, and has the support and protection they, and their family, need to allow them to fulfil their potential.'

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