

Jobcentre Plus Lean newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Jobcentre Plus Lean newsletter. The aim of this newsletter is to update you on what's happening with Lean in Jobcentre Plus, and hopefully give you a better understanding of what it will mean to you.

Featured in this edition:

Who's who? A question and answer session with Neil Couling, Director, Benefits and Fraud and newly appointed Lean Champion for Jobcentre Plus.

Lean focus A focus on one of the Lean tools – this time it's 7 Wastes of Lean.

Voice from the initiative Colleagues from the Wrexham Development Centre talk to us about the new and exciting future.

Spotlight on Jane Finn the Lean Champion for the North West.

Coming soon!

In the next edition of the newsletter we will report back from the Transformation and Product Management Directorate (TPMD) events that will be taking place in February. The events will focus on how the Directorate can support Operations during these challenging times. Lean will be a key feature at these events. A Lean workshop will be held including presentations from Martyn Craske, Tim Carter and Magi Coles, which aims to identify where TPMD can further support Operations going forward. There will also be a Lean stall where delegates can get the low-down on all things Lean!

Check it out in the next edition!

Neil Couling answers your questions about Lean in Jobcentre Plus

Neil's twenty-odd year career spans both the headquarters of the Department for Work and Pensions (and its predecessor Department for Social Security).

Neil started out working in the local benefits office before moving to London to take up a series of policy postings culminating in reforming Invalidity Benefit in the mid Nineties.

He then returned to operations in the Benefits Agency as District Manager for Cambridgeshire and then Finance Director for East London and Anglia. Following this he returned to HQ again and for the next three years was Principal Private Secretary to Alistair Darling and Andrew Smith.

In 2003 Neil returned to Operations as the Director for the South East Region for Jobcentre Plus with responsibility for helping 500,000 people in the South East find work. And in April of 2006 became the Jobcentre Plus Director for Benefits & Fraud - responsible for the delivery of benefits to around 5 million people across Great Britain and the fight against welfare fraud across the Social Security system.



Where can I find out more?

The DWP Lean Project produces a regular newsletter called leanlite, which you can access by clicking [here](#).

If you are working on one of the Lean initiatives, you should also see the DWP publication leanlocal each week. Ask your Core Team Leader if you haven't seen it.

Our aim with this newsletter is to build on the information in leanlite to show the practical differences Lean is making in Jobcentre Plus.

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Neil Couling has recently taken over from Paul McComb as the Jobcentre Plus Lean Champion.

We spoke to Neil recently about his appointment and the future of Lean in Jobcentre Plus.

As the newly appointed Lean Champion for Jobcentre Plus, what challenges do you see ahead and how do you see your role?

There is a lot of change around at the moment and there are lots of things we need to be doing, especially as we are now entering an economic slow down. We need to try and create an all-business Lean environment. I see Lean as the answer to the problems we are facing and certainly not as just another initiative. Lean can be the answer to the current pressures we are facing. I see my role as the Lean Champion for Jobcentre Plus as a dream job. I am an enthusiast about using people with the expertise to draw up new processes and policies. I see my role as creating "pull" for Lean from across Jobcentre Plus.

What do you see as the main benefits of Lean?

I think there are two main benefits of Lean. I think that Lean could be the answer to a lot of our problems within the organisation. But Lean will allow managers and people within Jobcentre Plus to reconnect with one another and this I believe will be really important for our future success.

In the situation we currently find ourselves in, we need everybody in Jobcentre Plus to be feeling part of what we are doing and to have a stake in that. I feel that Lean will do this for us.

How do you see us taking Lean forward in Jobcentre Plus?

I see Lean as being like a disease that spreads throughout Jobcentre Plus and will infect our organisation. I would like to see Lean embraced within all of our structures. I want to expose as many people as possible, as quickly as possible to the Lean virus.

I think that Lean could be the answer to a lot of our problems within the organisation

There are so many competing pressures for Jobcentre Plus at the moment, how do you think we can get our staff to give priority to Lean?

When I have been out and met colleagues who have been exposed to Lean, they ask why we haven't been doing this before! Our people want it. My worry is that in the slowdown we are at risk of over stretch if that happens, managerial colleagues will struggle to find the time to embrace and engage in Lean activities. So we need Lean to solve the day job problems then folk will embrace it.

How do you think we can make Lean more visible and "real" to our staff?

I see the Lean Champions as being key in this and hope that they will take Lean out into the initiatives and non Lean areas. I would like to see Information Centres rolled out and Lean tools and techniques delivered to all colleagues. The Lean Champions will be our vicars on Earth.

Isn't Lean just another fad?

If we fail to deliver Lean then it will be written off as just another fad but if we succeed it will be the way we solve problems and the way we conduct our business. If we don't commit to making Lean work then it may well be another fad. We need to pull Lean through the organisation rather than push it through. You will be hearing a lot from me in the coming months and I hope to see Lean moving at a pace! There will be a lot coming out this year, even more the year after and more after that, plus we will have some fun along the way!

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Voice from the Initiatives

Wrexham Benefit Delivery Centre launched as a Lean Development Centre on 19 January. Their scope is benefit processing. The Development Centre will be managed by Tracey Forster, and the lead practitioner is Joe Davies. The other members of the Lean Core Team at Wrexham are: Richard Speakman, Camille Love, Craig Monk, Helen Hughes, Dave Underwood and Tina Oliver.

The main responsibilities for the Lean Core Team include sustaining Lean capability at Wrexham BDC as well as rolling out Lean activity in the other four Benefit Delivery Centres in Wales, namely Newport, Llanelli, Merthyr and Caerphilly. Lean Core Teams have already been set up at each BDC in Wales ahead of the capability build.

Development Centre (DC) work is another top priority within the Lean Core Team and DC activity is already underway at Wrexham BDC. The first area of work that is being looked at is the Employment Support Allowance Decision Making process. We are looking at the process in depth to try and sift out any waste or unnecessary delays in the process, which will result in a more efficient and streamlined process for our customers.



An area of improvement that has been highlighted within the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) process is to hand the Limited Capability for Work Related Assessment (LCWRA) decision from Band C responsibility to Band B. We are currently in the process of developing a suite of support products to aide Band Bs in this new area of work. The products will be quality assured before being extensively tested. Once authorisation has been given from Design & Change Management Division, the products will be put forward for national implementation.

There are other areas of work in the pipeline for the DC here at Wrexham and we are expecting a really busy but highly productive time ahead.

John Connolly is a telephony agent at Wrexham BDC and spoke to us about Lean, "The reason I like Lean is because it challenges the processes and questions the way we do things, which is healthy. Lean makes you look at the problem across teams, before deciding a way forward."

Lean Champions

The appointment of a Lean Champion for each Operational Delivery Network (ODN) and Contact Centre Directorate (CCD) is a key element of embracing Lean across the three operational directorates of Jobcentre Plus. Working and reporting directly to the ODN, the Lean Champions are the primary lead for all associated Lean activity and their responsibilities include:

- develop, deliver and report progress against the ODN/CCD Continuous Improvement Plan;
- line manage the Lean core team;
- lead on ODN/CCD Lean communications and messaging;
- progress identified opportunities through liaising with Design and Change Management Division Account Managers; and
- manage Employee Relations, including Trade Union communications.

The Lean Champions are:

- **North West** - Jane Finn
- **South East** - Emelyn Marshall
- **Scotland** - Barbara McManus
- **West Midlands** - Martin O'Brien
- **South West** - Philip Osborne
- **East of England** - Alison Hunt
- **Yorkshire & Humberside** - Sharon Dobson
- **Contact Centre Directorate** - Phil Edge
- **London** - Sandra Oates
- **East Midlands** - Steve Lycitt
- **Wales** - Darren Lozano
- **North East** - Lynda Cray

Jane Finn - Lean Champion for the North West

What was your role before you became a Lean Champion and was it completely different to your Lean Champion role?

I am the Regional Performance Manager for North West. The role includes responsibility for Lean as the ODN Lean Champion for North West. Clearly Performance Management and Continuous Improvement through Lean are interlinked - wasteful or inaccurate processes will impact on our ability to deliver the best service to customers and be reflected in our measures of that service, through our targets and KMIs. Colleagues may well remember Performance Improvement Methodology or PIM which we embraced fully in North West. I do think there are some similarities with Lean. Lean, however, is not just PIM revisited, it is much more than PIM, and is visible across the entire business. I firmly believe Lean will make a real and lasting difference to how we manage.



Did you know anything about Lean before you started as Lean Champion?

Yes, I was very much aware of Lean and the initiatives already underway across the country. I did not have any knowledge of the tools and techniques and how they can be used by staff and operational managers to manage our processes more effectively. We also are lucky to have the Fraud & Customer Compliance Tranche 2 initiative here in North West. I will be working closely with the Core Team Lead Elinor Dodd to ensure that the capability and expertise already developed by colleagues involved in this initiative is helpful in building further capability within the Region.

What do you see as your biggest challenge?

Encouraging front line teams to embrace Lean during a period of increasing business volumes. I know that one of the key principles of Lean, "Respect the Frontline" will assist in convincing everyone to embrace Lean. Respect the Frontline underpins the philosophy that we support the front line to deliver to the customer. Lean supports a bottom-up approach and inverts the traditional management triangle. This allows us to seek and act where we can on the views of our front line people. More than ever our people delivering front line services will have a voice in reviewing how we do things.

How do you see the role developing?

I am delighted to have been asked to champion Lean in North West and look forward to the challenge of leading people through the transitional period. My priority will be to engage with operational colleagues to agree a realistic approach. I will be working with colleagues from DWP Change Programme - they are the experts after all! - to share their knowledge and build our capability across North West. I know we all have heard about Lean and talked lots about it in terms of process changes emerging as a result of Lean initiatives elsewhere. However, I am now looking forward to leading Continuous Improvement through Lean in North West.

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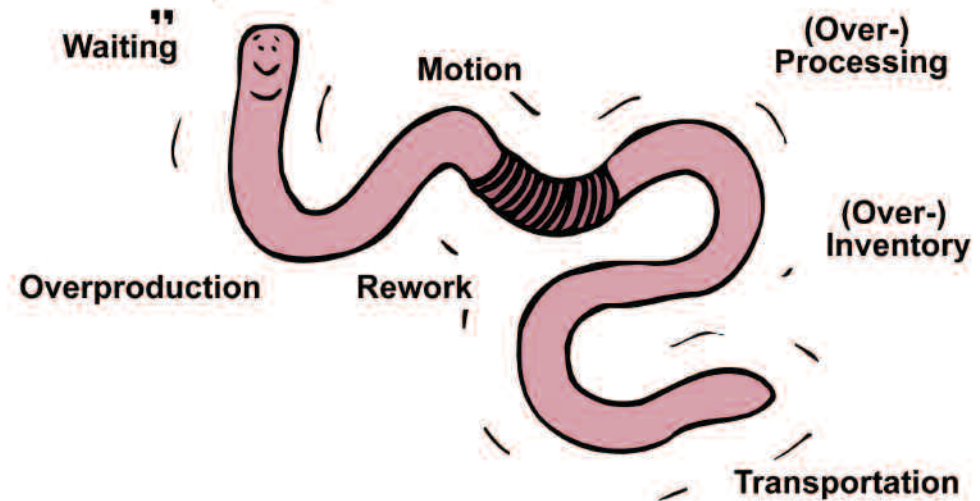
Focus on a Lean technique – 7 Wastes of Lean - WORMPIT

Lean is about eliminating waste from our processes to improve customer service and to increase capacity. Waste is defined as an activity that does not add value for our customers - i.e. anything that we do that does not add to our output or service is waste.

There are 7 categories of waste:

- **Waiting** - people are waiting for work and doing nothing or completing non-value add activities whilst they wait for work
- **Over-production** - doing more of something or doing it faster than is required by the customer
- **Rework** - any thing that is not right first time. Any time dealing with rework and failure is waste
- **Motion** - all movements that people have to make to perform their jobs, e.g. going to the photocopier or printer
- **Processing (over)** - any activity that is not required e.g. duplicating work completed by someone else
- **Inventory** - any item not being worked on is counted as inventory, e.g. work in in-trays is inventory
- **Transportation** - any movement of the item being processed is waste, unless it's a customer requirement.

“Wormpit



Good Practice

Many good practices are identified using Lean tools and techniques. It's important that we share our good practices across the organisation and work is currently ongoing to develop a process to help us do that. We'll keep you posted via this newsletter.

In the meantime the COO Driving Performance Intranet site provides hints and tips related to performance across all delivery strands. There is a Good Practice A to Z on the site and links to useful tools and products.

Click [here](#).

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