



“When we are tendering, we are frequently asked which systems we use. When we say we have LexisNexis, the clients know they are more likely to get value for money because it makes us more efficient.”

Debbie Paget, Business Manager, Essex County Council

Essex County Council Legal Department and their requirements

The legal team at Essex County Council is one of the largest among England's 388 local authorities. With an annual budget of more than £2 billion and 120 staff the department is not only responsible for a wide range of council business, but also has a successful private sector arm which last year brought in £1.8 million. It operates with a core staff of 50 solicitors and barristers, whose primary role is to provide support for the Council as it carries out its statutory duties.

The legal department handles many different areas of the law, including childcare and adoption, the environment, personal injury and education. As a result of this, the legal department requires in-depth knowledge of a wide range of topics. Historically, Essex County Council only had a print library, meaning paralegal staff were spending hours manually updating the loose-leaf publications and taking far too long to find the information they needed. Added to this, employees had to visit an entirely separate building to research even the simplest matter. Essex County Council needed to reduce the time staff spent finding the information they needed.

What did LexisNexis offer?

LexisNexis recommended their award-winning online research service, LexisNexis Butterworths and its Legal Library. This resource allows the user to access up-to-date legal information at the click of a button in the most authoritative online legal library for the profession. The wide-reaching information comes complete with clear links to case notes, complemented by regular alerts showing key legal developments and amendments.

How did the legal department benefit?

The introduction of the online library has helped change the profile of the department. Debbie Paget, Essex County Council's Business Manager, described the transition to LexisNexis Butterworths “The introduction to the online library at the end of 2007 gave us the confidence to make the final step to going fully online. There is no doubt we are spending less time on research and junior staff are now able to do more fee-earning work.”

“In addition to this, the department's private sector work has increased by 10% in the past year, raising their income. We are now more efficient and the time we are saving is being invested in serving other customers.” The feedback from lawyers using the system on a daily basis has been excellent, she added “they say it offers them almost everything they need.”

The number of support staff in the department has been reduced and, as a direct result of the new technology from LexisNexis, senior lawyers are now able to delegate more work to paralegals. Moreover, preparation time for cases has fallen dramatically.

Philip Thomson, the county solicitor who heads the legal team at Essex County Council, was also delighted with the LexisNexis product. “LexisNexis is a quality research tool that enhances the service we can offer to our clients. The quality of the product, which is comprehensive and well-designed, was the main reason for our choice.” Mr Thomson added, “The LexisNexis system is cost effective and offers more breadth than its competitors which is important for us because we are involved in so many different areas of law.”

“We realised LexisNexis would give us the broadest coverage. We get quick access to information at the click of a button and can be confident that the legal advice we are providing is entirely up-to-date.” Philip Thomson, Head of the Legal Department, Essex County Council.

For further information please speak to your account manager or contact LexisNexis directly on:
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