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## Legal Services Commission

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### Enabling Environment

#### Background

The Legal Services Commission runs the legal aid scheme in England and Wales and provides information, advice and legal representation to help two million people per year access social justice. The Commission recently took the opportunity presented by relocation to create an enabling environment for its staff.

#### Issue to be Addressed

The Legal Services Commission was planning to move offices within London. The move had the potential to cause significant inconvenience to the Commission's staff, and therefore, unrest amongst staff. It was known that there was some discomfort amongst staff regarding the proposed move, and this discomfort and possible disruption had to be addressed and minimised in order to allow the continuation of smooth service delivery.

Moving offices would result in staff having to alter their arrangements for travel, childcare and gym memberships, to name but a few. The Commission wanted to take steps to minimise this disruption, and assist staff in making suitable new arrangements.

#### What was Implemented

The Commission developed a "Journey Wall" within the current office to keep staff members up-to-date with progress of the project. This was an information board and a white board for people to write up their concerns about the office move. The information board provided updates for each stage of the project, and who was taking responsibility for it, while the white board allowed people to share their concerns about the move anonymously. The anonymity afforded by the "Journey Wall" did lead to a degree of animosity, although in the main, the questions, comments and concerns were extremely constructive and helpful, and became significantly more positive as the project progressed.

Responses were provided to the questions and messages that were left on the board, both through updating the information board, and sending a one-page weekly update out to each floor of the building, as part of the communication strategy. Representatives from each part of the business were selected to feed back to their respective teams on the progress of the project.

#### Outcome

The Journey Wall allowed the issues of concern to the staff of the commission to be addressed effectively. As the comments could be submitted anonymously, the wall provided an opportunity for the true feelings and reservations of staff regarding the proposed move to be aired, and provided information for the Commission on the issues that should be addressed to achieve a successful move, and meant that appropriate action could be taken.

Examples included concessions being negotiated on behalf of staff with shops close to the new office, and special rates arranged for memberships in nearby gyms. In some cases, this resulted in staff not having to alter their memberships at all, as arrangements were made with chains that had also been located close to the old office. A local information booklet providing details of amenities close to the new office was also produced and made available to all staff affected by the move.

Once the move was underway, there were very few resulting staff complaints, and the potential ill-feeling was actually low, leading to a successful transition to the new premises.