HMRC Makes IT Systems Accessible for All Staff

Customised IT systems and support for disabled staff

> "I achieved a promotion and moved away from typing finding myself in the big world of Self Assessment. I found myself being completely supported by the accessibility team, listening to my 'wants' and 'needs', together achieving access to the applications I had to use with the help of scripts."
>
> **HMRC User**

> "I do not have the appropriate language skills to say exactly how important the accessibility team are – in fact I think that the appropriate words just do not exist!"
>
> **HMRC User**

> "The team worked tirelessly to get me onto systems necessary for my job and, as changes happened to my job and those systems, the team were there every step of the way to make it possible."
>
> **HMRC User**

The Situation

As one of the UK's largest government departments, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has strong employment and disability policies which support their aim to make systems accessible to everyone who needs to use them. The specialist technology and tailored services which help HMRC recruit and retain staff from the widest possible pool, equally including people with specific needs, are made available by the Department's Information Management Services (IMS) Directorate working closely with Capgemini and their Aspire contract infrastructure partner Fujitsu.

The Solution

An Accessibility Team, which is dedicated to helping staff with long-term particular needs, tailors HMRC's standard IT services. The team deploy specialist equipment and software such as voice control to help staff with motor disabilities minimise use of computer keyboards and the mouse, and software that reads onscreen text instructions for visually impaired staff. HMRC implements current best of breed IT and works with other large employers to influence international standards bodies' and suppliers' future improvements.

The Result

HMRC staff with particular needs have specialist hardware and software to help them work effectively. Achievements include:

- Integrating IT services with HR policies to meet the needs of disabled people
- Making accessibility part of the requirements definition for the design of new systems
- Unsolicited thanks from many staff who consistently rate the service as outstanding or life changing

The 'assistive technology' market is still relatively immature. Neither HMRC nor Capgemini underestimate the amount of work required, but believe much has already been achieved and are committed to further improvements.

How HMRC and Capgemini Worked Together

HMRC's corporate responsibility and diversity (CR&D) policies are designed to ensure staff with particular needs receive the right support from across the organisation. Capgemini's Aspire contract for IT services includes an Accessibility Team which works closely with IMS and other HMRC departments to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act, learn from users' experience and satisfaction surveys and evaluate new and emerging technology - all with the ambition to ensure that IT accessibility services adapt to continuously improve customer experience. New equipment and software goes through Accessibility Testing to make sure systems always meet HMRC standards to be accessible to users.

Staff with particular needs benefit from a personalised service, starting with a medical assessment conducted by an Occupational Health Nurse who makes recommendations for specialist IT to alleviate discomfort. Once requirements are confirmed with the individual and their line manager, the right equipment is procured and Capgemini deploys software and installs new hardware with infrastructure partner, Fujitsu. When staff move to new jobs, or if their disability gets worse, the Accessibility Team continue to adapt software and make changes.

Set-up is often carried out remotely, or by the Accessibility Team sitting with users. The range of assistive technologies includes voice activation tools, screenreaders, magnification tools and support for dyslexia and related conditions.

When day-to-day problems need solving, staff with particular needs phone the same IT helpdesk as everyone else in HMRC. Recognised from their staff numbers, tailored scripts are used by service centre operators to direct queries to staff who are specially trained to understand the requirements of users of particular needs equipment and the limitations of the accessibility technology.

Looking forward HMRC and the Accessibility Team work with IT suppliers and users to help find and improve solutions to the core accessibility software the Department uses, and the accessibility of the systems it builds and buys.

> **Being one of those to benefit from the team's hard work means that I am now engaged in a quality job working cases as efficiently as a sighted member of staff.**
>
> **HMRC User**

About Capgemini and the Collaborative Business Experience™

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Capgemini UK
Outsourcing Services
Public Sector
Application Development & Integration

Approved by

Sean Smith, Information Systems Management, HM Revenue & Customs

Ham Hewitt, Accessibility Support, Capgemini Aspire

In collaboration with

HM Revenue & Customs

HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) collects tax and duties to make sure money is available to fund the UK's public services and makes payments to over seven million families, providing targeted financial support. Capgemini is HMRC's partner for IT and related services delivered through the Aspire contract. Capgemini is prime contractor for Aspire, and manages key partners and HMRC's Ecosystem of preferred suppliers.

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