

Care Quality Commission – Intelligence Hub Case Study

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care services in England. CQC's role is to ensure the care provided by hospitals, dentists, ambulances, care homes and home-care agencies meets government standards of quality and safety, and to protect the interests of vulnerable people, including those whose rights are restricted under the Mental Health Act.

CQC are providing increasing amounts of intelligence data to Providers, and operational teams - utilising a risk based approach to inspection, Data Packs, CQC Insight – as well as for Thematic and National Reports and Analyses.

There were a large number of different systems that the CQC used within the Intelligence directorate (now called Digital) to support the provision of these Data Packs, CQC Insight and other Reports.



The Problem

The existing processes, tools and approaches for updating and exploiting intelligence data were inefficient, not scalable, lacked auditability and were prone to human inconsistencies and unreliability.

The analysts were doing a remarkably good job with the tools they had available, but were having to spend too much time on non-value adding (manual) activities.

The business environment was constantly changing, so the workload and complexity were increasing, compounding existing issues.

CQC used these manual tools to produce indicators; complex statistical functions that measure relative performance of regulated organisations. The manual effort and fragmented sources resulted in "multiple versions of truth", conflicting values for certain sets of data as well as significant effort.

Why Altis

The Altis team had delivered a number of other projects successfully for CQC and consequently we had a good understanding of the organisation, its processes and data challenges. The CQC had a range of technologies available to them and therefore wanted independent advice over the best utilisation of the tools they already had – as Altis is independent of vendors we were able to provide this clear unbiased advice.

Our Solution

Altis was engaged by CQC to design a metadata driven ETL system to populate the "Intelligence Hub". Additionally, Altis were required to provide guidance regarding SQL Server hardware and software specifications, train the team in Dimensional Modelling techniques and provide training in SQL Server integration Services (SSIS) and the Altis SSIS Templates. During development Altis coached and mentored the team in design and development activities.

Altis were responsible for leading process and framework design activities for Data Governance and the Intelligence Hub request and change processes

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The Results

This work culminated in an 'Intelligence Hub' being designed by Altis and developed by CQC staff. The hub is being built in phases, the first of which is in production and being used by intelligence analysts serving approximately 1500 inspectors. It currently automates the production of 300+ indicators based on over 200 data sources.

Previously indicator calculations were dependent upon a single MS Access database. Now the intelligence analyst uses a browser based front end, known as 'Hubble', to specify the data source and to select the relevant indicator(s). This metadata is automatically picked up by the data transformation routines and all indicators reliant on the data source are updated by the same process.

The functionality of Hubble and the Hub combined replaces 6 Access databases and their associated (largely manual) maintenance and operation. This has resulted in huge time savings that allow analysts to focus on analytical tasks rather than data processing. For example, a typical data set used to take between 3 hours and several days to process: This is now done in about 3 minutes. Complex data sets (that would typically take over a week to process) can now be set up in 15 minutes.

Additionally, data accuracy has improved due to the near elimination of manual processing. Having a single central Intelligence hub ("single version of truth") has enabled integration and centralised reporting initiatives thereby improving overall communication in CQC.

The internal team is now fully equipped to further develop the hub and the next phase is under way with further phases planned.

About Altis

Altis is the most experienced, vendor-independent information management consultancy in Australia and New Zealand.



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Providing Business Intelligence solutions to a wide range of industries since 1998:

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- Altis partners with acknowledged world experts that provide training and direct access to thought leadership in: Data Warehousing, Data Management, Business Intelligence and Analytics.
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Established in 1998, Altis Consulting is a 90-person privately-held Australian company offering specialist consulting expertise in all aspects of Business Analytics, Business Intelligence, Data Management and Data Warehousing. The company's services include strategy, planning and architecture, solution delivery, and managed services.

While the company has experience in almost every industry sector,

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Altis is also the Australian New Zealand partner for Kimball University and Stephen Few - the foremost authorities on data warehousing and data visualization. Altis Consulting has offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Auckland and London.

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