

# From data silos to data-driven.

With schools' ever-growing reliance on third-party software creating data silos and fragmented data flows, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council launched a transformation that turned them into a unified data-driven authority, saving schools thousands every year.

## Key metrics



**111**  
Schools migrated



**8 weeks**  
Full rollout

## Direct financial savings per school



Primary / Special / PRU  
**Up to £3k**



Secondary and All Through  
**£5k - £20k**



## The situation

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCT) faced a challenge familiar to many local authorities (LA). Their schools had been using their former MIS for decades, but the system was no longer meeting their needs. Schools were increasingly purchasing third-party products to fill functionality gaps, creating data silos and driving up costs across the authority.

“ **To meet the ever evolving requirements of Schools, it was determined that a one stop shop in relation to data and systems would be the best solution.** ”

Antonia Thomas, Education Performance and Systems Improvement Manager

## The approach

### Putting schools at the centre

RCT's approach began with a fundamental principle: this had to work for schools first. Before evaluating any systems, the team visited all 111 schools over several months, meeting class teachers, exams officers, timetablers, and school clerks to understand what they actually needed.

“ **First and foremost, we acknowledged that this is a system for schools. The new MIS had to be fit for purpose for the schools.** ”

Antonia Thomas, Education Performance and Systems Improvement Manager

### Rigorous evaluation

The evaluation panel involved stakeholders from across the education community:

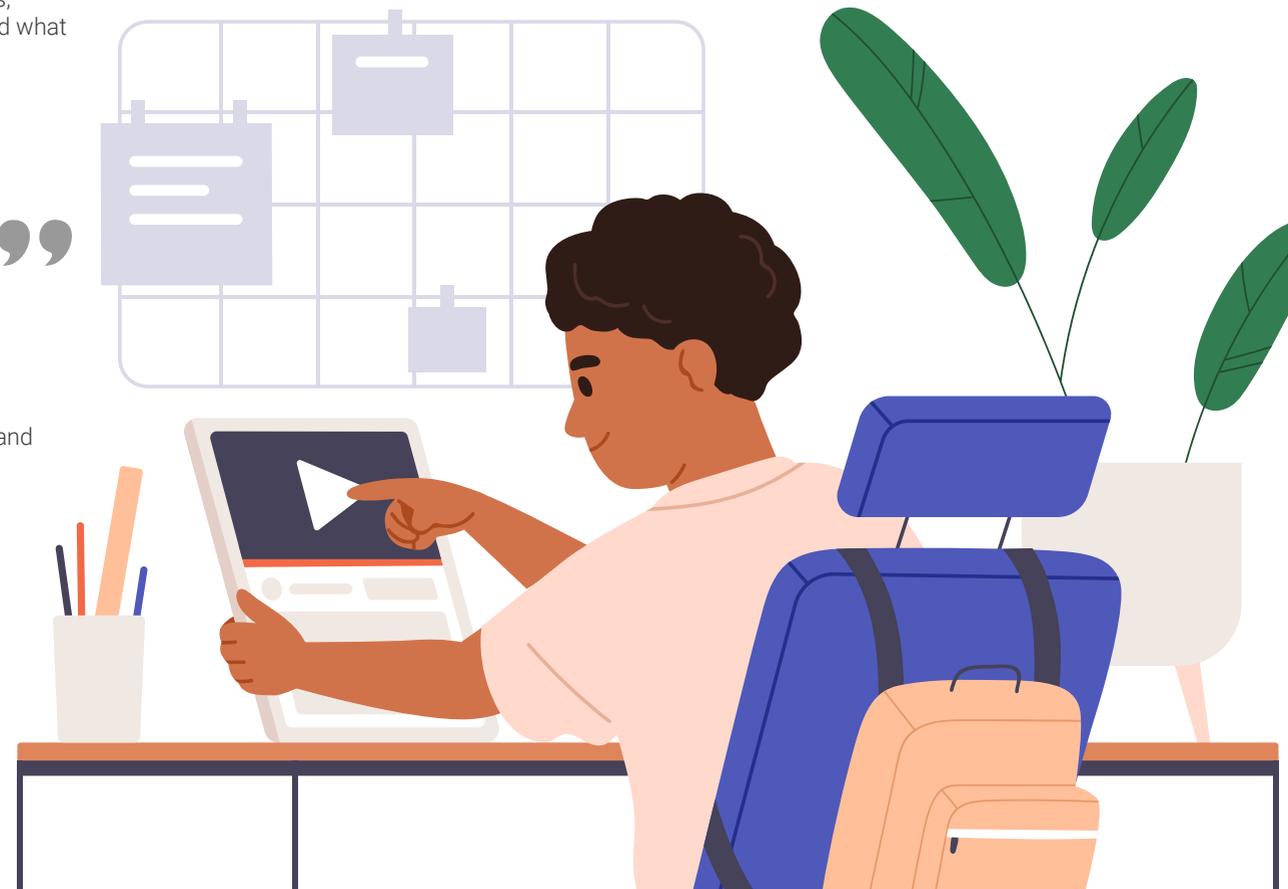
- Head teachers and staff from primary, secondary, special, all-through schools, and PRUs
- LA support team, ICT, finance, procurement, and data governance colleagues

Four suppliers were evaluated through demonstrations, test systems, and a formal 21-question specification. The process was meticulously documented and Bromcom emerged as the clear winner.

## The migration

With infrastructure deadlines looming, RCT had just eight weeks to migrate all 111 schools. The team developed a carefully structured approach:

| Phase             | Approach   |
|-------------------|--|
| Early adopters    | Four schools (through, primary, special, secondary) went live two weeks ahead to identify any issues |
| Secondary first   | All secondary and all-through schools migrated in weeks one and two to ensure exam readiness         |
| Geographic groups | Primary schools grouped by location for efficient support visits                                     |
| A-to-A migration  | Schools replicated existing MIS functionality first, then expanded features gradually                |



## Supporting the support team

A critical success factor was recognising the impact on the LA support team. Staff who had known the former MIS inside-out for years now faced learning an entirely new system whilst supporting schools through the transition.

“ **Don't underestimate the amount of energy it takes to move from one system to another on the support team. For some of my staff, the thought of it was a little bit overwhelming. But every member of the team rose to the challenge. I am so proud of them.** ”

Antonia Thomas, Education Performance and Systems Improvement Manager

RCT outsourced their former MIS support to a third-party during the transition, freeing the team to focus on learning Bromcom. Every team member achieved full Bromcom accreditation for both primary and secondary.

## The outcomes

### Impact on schools

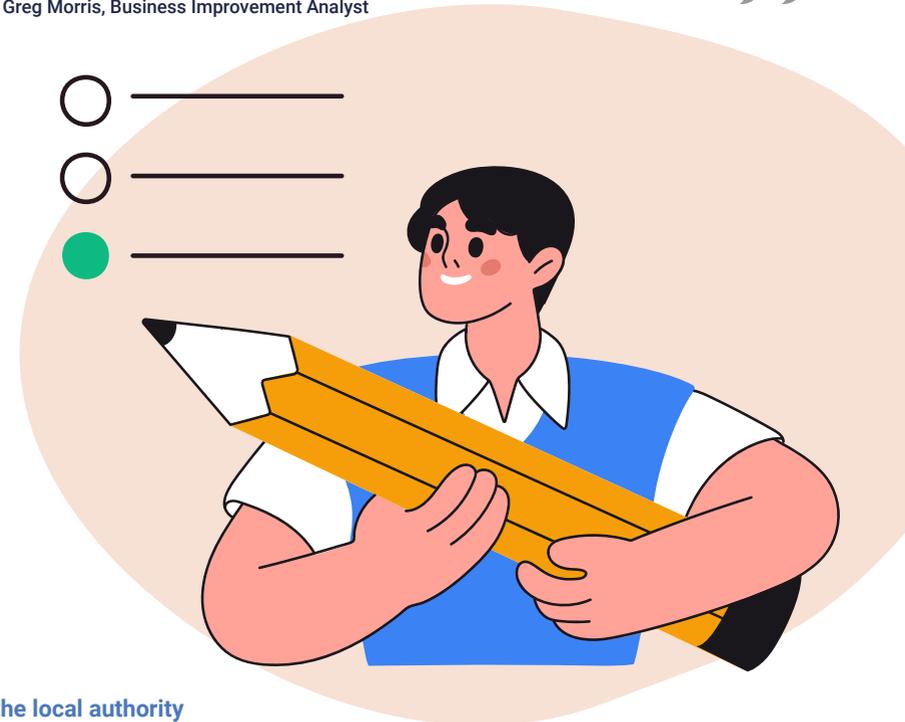
Schools have embraced the new system far faster than anticipated. Many are already using functionality that goes well beyond their previous MIS setup:

- Secondary schools saving up to £20,000 annually by replacing a third-party system with Bromcom's built-in behaviour management.
- Half of the secondary schools have already adopted Bromcom's wTimetable, moving away from the timetabling software that they had used for many years.
- Assessment setup reduced from three months to approximately two days.
- Primary schools now have access to a parent communication and engagement app (MCAS) that many couldn't previously afford.
- Single sign-on via Hwb (Microsoft 365-based platform) means two clicks to access the system



“ **I went to visit a school to determine how the implementation was going as we hadn't received much communication. When I arrived, they'd already moved to wTimetable, created all their assessment, setup the behaviour module, and rolled out MCAS. There wasn't a lot left for them to do!** ”

Greg Morris, Business Improvement Analyst



### Impact on the local authority

The transformation extends beyond individual schools. RCT has fundamentally changed how they work with education data:

**Centralised configuration:** Define settings, panels and user-defined fields once, then push to all schools instantly. Previously, any change required logging into each school individually.

**Real-time data access:** Vision provides a view of school data, updated every 24 hours, supporting the current integration to our central system.

**Automated reporting:** UPFSM data now flows automatically instead of requiring 111 schools to email reports every Tuesday.

**Service integration:** Custom panels for Attendance and Wellbeing Services mean referrals are completed directly in Bromcom, eliminating paper forms.

### Transforming data into intelligence

By integrating Bromcom with Power BI, RCT has built live dashboards that give leaders actionable insights:

| Dashboard     | What it enables   |
|---------------|---|
| Pupil numbers | Daily PAN vs roll tracking, automatic highlighting of classes over 30, capacity planning by year group                              |
| Exclusions    | Trends by reason, NCY and gender; drill-through to identify repeat exclusions; school-level summaries for improvement conversations |
| Attendance    | Attendance bands, code analysis, targeted identification of pupils below 85% for intervention                                       |
| UFSM Uptake   | Daily automated reporting by location for catering planning, trends analysis to improve uptake                                      |

“ **Data-driven solutions are not based on Excel. Instead of running reports and sending spreadsheets back to schools, our schools will be able to just run the reports themselves, see what we’re looking at, and understand why we’ve highlighted things within their school.** ”

Aled Rees, Education Data Team Manager

### Looking forward

RCT continues to expand their use of the platform:

- Every school now has a dedicated Link Officer visiting twice yearly to maximise MIS usage.
- Working with Bromcom on Wales-specific ALN functionality.
- Rolling out Power BI dashboards to schools with row-level security so everyone works from one data source.

### Lessons for other local authorities

Based on their experience, RCT offers this advice to other authorities considering a similar journey:

1. **Visit every school before you decide.** Understanding what schools actually need, not what you think they need, is essential for selecting the right system and securing buy-in.
2. **Support your support team.** They face the biggest change. Consider outsourcing legacy support during transition to give them time to learn.
3. **Communicate relentlessly.** Talk about the new system at every opportunity, at every meeting, to keep it on everyone’s radar.
4. **Start with A-to-A.** Migrate like-for-like first, then let schools expand functionality at their own pace.
5. **Trust the training for implementation.** Bromcom’s online training resources are comprehensive. Schools that engaged with them needed minimal additional support.
6. **Document everything.** Meticulous procurement documentation prevented challenges from unsuccessful bidders.

“ **The whole point of us taking on Bromcom was to limit the amount of work that clerks and school staff had to do. If we’re able to automate all those processes, it saves work for schools and selfishly save all my staff work as well. If I can improve their efficiency, they can be re- directed to other priorities.** ”

Aled Rees, Education Data Team Manager, RCT



# Want to learn more?

Contact Bromcom to discuss how we can support your authority's MIS journey.

**020 8290 7171**

**LA.team@bromcom.com**

**bromcom.com**

