



# School Voucher Case Study

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Councils  
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## Background

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council work alongside each other supporting a total of 335 schools (255 and 80 respectively). During Christmas 2020, they purchased and assigned 66,000 vouchers to their vulnerable children with a further 33,000 over the February half term.

## The Challenge

As local authorities, it is their role to advise, support and guide their schools as to the best solution around providing financial support for their families. In the first national lockdown, schools needed urgent provision for their children eligible for free school meals. The challenge was ensuring all schools were supported, and were able to provide assistance to families.

## The Solution

Whilst aware of Wonde, the councils didn't wholly promote its service until the end of November, when the Winter Covid Grant was announced. The grant enabled a flexibility of choice and having struggled through the first lockdown with the national voucher scheme, they were aware that their schools were keen to explore alternative options.

The initial challenge with choosing Wonde was that within just three weeks, the council needed to get all their schools MIS integrated with the Wonde system, sort out processes, payments and most importantly, issue the vouchers.

Through the technical support from Wonde, training webinars and how-to guides, all schools were integrated and ready to issue vouchers by the Christmas holidays.

“It was unbelievable how straight forward it was.” says Jonathan Lewis. “To get that many schools with that many MIS systems, trained in how to use the voucher platform, then to hit the button on ordering and not have any issues - it was nothing short of amazing.” For council, they were impressed with the level of information security and the quality of thinking that had gone into building the platform. For schools, they enjoyed the level of flexibility it allowed over voucher value, supermarket choice and ultimately, the time it saved them.

Over the Christmas holiday, the council took the lead on ordering all the vouchers. They found even the least tech savvy could operate the system without any issue. On one occasion when uploading a misspelt name at 10pm at night, a Wonde tech support member contacted them to fix the issue - without even lodging it on the helpdesk. For the council, this was above and beyond expectations.

The council provided feedback over Christmas on some minor issues encountered with the system and were happy to see that improvements were implemented before the February half-term, making the platform even easier to use.

In January, the council worked with Wonde to implement group training sessions for their schools so they were fully ready to manage half-term independently, and without issue.

The simplicity of the Wonde dashboard and the functionality it allows has aided the council in its audit process and the extension of provision across Early Years where they could upload 2,000 new records quickly and easily.

Whilst there are minor elements of the flexibility of reporting that could be improved, overall, the council believes the Wonde school voucher platform has been integral in helping them support their schools, and their vulnerable families throughout the pandemic.

## **The Future**

As a Council, Cambridgeshire acknowledges there is a lot of work to do around vulnerable families and supporting their communities. For that, the type of data Wonde manages and has access to is incredibly useful for future activities.