

# Kier Group Reduces Costs, Speeds Efficiency and Centralises Payment Processing with D+H's Bacsactive-IP Web Enterprise

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kier Group's self-hosted Bacs payment system was slowing progress down. Changing to D+H's Bacsactive-IP enabled the company to reduce costs, speed processing time and lower risk by moving to a centralised bureau model based on a proven Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform.

From housing construction to property development, highway maintenance and management to utilities services, Kier Group impacts people's lives around the globe. The company combines the latest technology with the brightest people to deliver advanced solutions across numerous diverse industry sectors.

To this end, Kier Group had acquired many businesses over the years, allowing each to run as it did prior to coming on board. As a result, finance was decentralised – split up over hundreds of organisations operating on different software with different processes in place.

Its existing, self-hosted Bacs payment system was unstable and required significant manual intervention to move payments through the process. When the provider announced that support for that system was coming to an end, Kier leadership decided to take action.

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**Janice Marchant**  
Senior Analyst  
Kier Group

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Benjamin Keogh  
Treasury Manager  
Kier Group



## Company Profile

### Kier Group plc

**HEADQUARTERS:** Manchester, England

**LOCATIONS:** 55 key office locations in the UK, with additional locations on ongoing construction sites

- 21,000 employees

Kier Group plc is a leading property, residential, construction and services group that invests in, builds, maintains and renews the places where people live, work and play. The company operates across multiple sectors, including defence, education, housing, industrials, transport and utilities. It employs more than 21,000 people in hundreds of offices throughout the UK, the Middle East, Australia and Hong Kong.

The goal? Find a new Bacs payment solution that could improve efficiency and take the company into the future.

“We put together an internal group of individuals from payroll, finance and other impacted areas; assessed our needs and, based on capabilities, were able to narrow our selection down to five companies,” explained Janice Marchant, senior IT systems analyst-BACS SME, for Kier Group. “We went to an RFI (Request for Information) and began talking to prospective providers.”

### THE RIGHT SOFTWARE. THE RIGHT PROVIDER.

From that initial meeting on, D+H stood out.

“D+H was professional, knowledgeable and gave an excellent presentation. They also listened to what we had to say. They wanted to understand our environment and our needs,” Marchant said. “They won us over from day one.”

Of course, the Kier team wasn't going to make a decision based on first impressions alone.

“We went on a number of site visits to get the customers' side of things, and to look at demonstrations of D+H's Bacsactive-IP Web Enterprise in action. We saw how efficiently the software worked and how the transactions moved through the workflow,” Marchant said. “Everywhere we went, we got positive feedback.”

Although Kier leaders didn't originally set out in search of an outsourced, hosted solution, they quickly recognised the value of this model. Software could be easily deployed to joint venture operations around the country without on-site visits. Just as important, this model was highly scalable, so Kier could add capacity quickly as it acquired companies, without investing in servers and software upgrades.

After looking at Kier Group's service numbers and existing processes, D+H had a recommendation that would save the company even more time and money: move to a centralised service bureau model for financial processing.

### A NEW, CENTRALISED SERVICE CENTRE APPROACH

“D+H enabled us to bring payment processing to one, centralised point. Instead of 400 business units doing things different ways, we could have one shared services centre in Manchester doing things in one, consistent way,” explained Benjamin Keogh, treasury manager for Kier Group. “By centralising, we reduced headcount, decreased cost and improved efficiency.”

The pilot program began in May of 2016, with three, carefully chosen business units going live in July.

“We started with three units with different kinds of payment cycles—high volume, low value; low volume, high value; and a small, low value, low volume operation—to make sure the system and processes would work with all of these scenarios,” Keogh explained.



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Phase II went live on the February 6, 2017, increasing the amount of financial transactions handled through the centre to 42 percent. By September 2018, 100 percent of the organisation will be transitioned.

In addition to improved consistency, significantly reduced headcount, and saving £6000 on HSM certificates by moving from seven instances to one; the move to D+H, also helps Kier reduce risk.

"We have unattended file delivery now, whereas this was a manual process before, with many human hands touching the paper files," Keogh said. "The more human hands involved, the more opportunity for fraud. Now the files are emailed and uploaded directly into the bank software."

At any given moment, Keogh can track where those files are in the process.

"I think one of the biggest pluses of Bacsactive-IP is the front end. Alternative software providers did a lot of the same things on the back end, but none had the quality on the front end like D+H," Keogh said. "I can log in and see an uploaded file, and confirm that it went to the bank. With other solutions, you have to trust that things got there, or wait for a report. Now, I can see things in what feels like real time. I don't have to ring anyone up; I don't have to contact Bacs. We never have to wait for information."

## **EASY. EFFICIENT. RESPONSIVE**

D+H's Bacsactive-IP, in combination with the HSM and Workflow models for automation, have delighted Kier Group's end users as much as its management.

"Our users keep telling me how intuitive and clean the software is, and how much faster they can do their jobs," Marchant said. "Our other software was unstable, and made it a chore to sign on and authorise payments. So much so, that it often took an hour and a half to complete the process. Now, with all of the interfaces and automation, that same transaction happens in minutes."

The users push a button, and a notification is sent, alerting the appropriate parties that a Bacs payment awaiting authorisation is in the queue. The HSM module enables the authoriser to securely stamp the file, adhering an authorisation signature or a "no." The file is then validated and securely sent to Bacs.

"I think it's important to say that we rolled out all over the UK with little if any disruption of business, which goes to show you how well the software works," Marchant said. "The software is so intuitive that all I had to do was create a training document and do some brief, one-on-one sessions to give people a feel for using the software. It's so much simpler than what we were doing before that everyone has had an easy time adjusting."

In addition to being sold on Bacsactive-IP software, Marchant is equally impressed by the company behind it.

"D+H has one of the best service desks I've ever worked with. You're rarely on hold for more than two minutes," Marchant said. "You get good answers from knowledgeable people so, by the time you hang up the phone, you're confident that the problem is solved."

According to Marchant, when Kier's accounting and payroll departments unexpectedly changed their workflows shortly after rollout, D+H was ready to make the change.

"They are so easy to work with. You sit down, you talk to them, they roll up their sleeves and they get the job done," she said. "This is my third Bacstel-ip software installation, and it's the best one I've experienced to date."

Kier Group's experience with D+H has been so positive that leaders are also discussing adding more products in the future.

"I already like the D+H products we have in place. Because of that, it warrants me to look to them for other things as we go forward."

It looks like this success story is only just beginning.

D+H

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