

Success Story

How Sage keeps Tranmere Rovers running after the final whistle

Giving Tranmere Rovers FC the clarity and visibility to spend less time focusing on admin and more time making decisions that matter



The challenge

Managing multiple mismatched systems that couldn't communicate together was becoming increasingly challenging for the finance and HR teams at Tranmere Rovers FC. With hundreds of casual workers alongside 50 full-time staff, multiple business entities, and a community charity to manage, the admin burden had become all-consuming, eating into time and adding pressure to even the simplest of tasks.



The solution

By implementing Sage Accounting, HR and Payroll, Tranmere Rovers replaced manual admin with tools that actually worked together. That meant eliminating time-consuming tasks like multi-system data entry and having clear visibility across a single system, freeing the team to focus on strategy rather than getting stuck in admin.



Results

With Sage Accounting, HR and Payroll combined, Tranmere Rovers has managed to half payroll prep time, identify clear revenue drivers, and use data effectively to inform decisions on and off the pitch.

- Payroll prep cut by 50%
- Less time spent on admin, and more spent on strategic planning
- Visibility over revenue drivers with more scope for evaluating spend
- Identifying extra income
- One harmonious system to replace manual admin

Sage

Company

Tranmere Rovers Football Club

Location

United Kingdom

Industry

Leisure, Media & Entertainment

Sage Products

Sage Accounting, HR & Payroll



About Company

Tranmere Rovers Football Club are a professional association football club founded in 1884. The team competes in EFL League Two, the fourth level of the English football league system.



“We use Sage to take reliable information and make the best decisions that we can for business.”

Greg Clayton

Head of Finance & Company Secretary, Tranmere Rovers FC

The business beyond 90 minutes

For a team like Tranmere Rovers, every decision carries weight. Every signing, every fixture, every shift in revenue has an impact. On the pitch, the players carry the pressure. But off it, the responsibility falls to the finance and commercial teams, who keep the club running and direct funding to the club's charity, Tranmere Rovers in the Community (TRIC).

Behind every fixture is a combination of casual timesheets, variable pay, multi-entity transactions, and HR administration, all of which must be accurate. Managing that at scale, across a team wearing multiple hats, requires a system that can keep up.

Before using Sage HR, the pressure of managing this was relentless for Ellis Parr, the club's HR Officer. New starter forms were completed on paper and manually uploaded, admin had to be batch-processed weeks in advance, payroll preparation was taking 10–14 days and the risk of human error was a constant.

“I’d leave myself a couple of months to do it”, says Ellis, “it was so time consuming that you needed to put it aside”.

Greg Clayton, Head of Finance and Company Secretary, carries responsibility for every financial decision the club makes. These are decisions that directly shape what happens on the pitch, the community programmes from TRIC, and affect the livelihoods of everyone at the club. Getting those decisions right demands a system he can rely on.

Tranmere Rovers FC needed a combined solution that would alleviate the administrative burden from HR and give Greg and the finance team total visibility to make the right decision, not just for the club but the community too.

An integrated platform across a united team

Recognising the need for a unified system, Tranmere Rovers made the switch to Sage Accounting, HR and Payroll.

With everything in an integrated platform, the team was able to easily navigate through holidays, timesheets, payroll and personnel records, spending less time on admin and more on supporting the club.

Using an integrated Sage platform has simplified the day-to-day for Tranmere Rovers. Payroll preparation has been cut from 10–14 days down to around seven.

Matchday and casual staff now clock in via the app with built-in location controls. New starters can easily complete their own onboarding directly in the system. And managers across the club review and approve timesheets without HR having to follow up.

Paper forms, manual scanning, and multi-system data entry have become a thing of the past. And for the first time, every team—from commercial to finance to matchday operations—has visibility through a single system.

“I’d probably cry if Sage was to disappear tomorrow”, says Ellis. For her, Sage goes further than just admin efficiency. Features like the custom holiday year (set to July-June to align with the football calendar) and the built-in HR advice function are things her previous systems simply couldn’t support. Audits that once caused Ellis anxiety are now approached with total confidence: “It’s so much simpler to do when it’s on a system, rather than the time it takes to go and physically check someone’s files”.





Supporting decisions on and off the pitch

From Greg and the finance team's perspective the value of Sage is in the data. Sage turns historical financial information into forward-looking strategy. The finance team now uses Sage reporting to track management accounts monthly, identify revenue drivers, and evaluate spend.

"Now that we have visibility in Sage, we've found extra income and been able to take costs out", says Greg, "things like that have actually enabled us to go and sign better and bigger players in the transfer market".

Sage has also helped Head of Commercial Matt Houghton and Commercial Manager Debbie Quaile work with their budget for TRIC community funding and identify opportunities for new programmes.

"Having Sage reporting helps us to identify the areas where we can diversify our resources", say Debbie. That data accuracy underpins the commercial team's work, and ultimately the support they're able to provide to the wider Wirral community.

Powering an anchor institution of the Wirral

With the right systems in place, Tranmere Rovers' finance and HR teams can move beyond administration and play an active role in how the club operates. The team now uses Sage to inform the decisions that matter, from casual staffing costs on matchday to multi-year financial planning.

As Tranmere Rovers continues to develop its commercial operation and expand community programmes through TRIC, the ability to make fast, evidence-based decisions will only become more important.

For a club that prides itself on doing more with less while being an "anchor institution" of the Wirral, that kind of reliable, joined-up infrastructure is not a luxury. It is what makes everything else possible.



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