

The Expanded Metal Company' receives a package of manufacturing support from MAS North East.

The Expanded Metal Company was increasingly concerned about the impact of higher energy costs on the business and identified the need to cut energy costs significantly and improve productivity to remain competitive.

The company approached MAS North East, which delivers a range of Solutions for Business for manufacturing companies in the North East and an in-depth review was conducted to identify and understand energy usage and review approaches to energy management, leading to targeted recommendations for improvement.

A structured approach to energy management was implemented and staff's energy awareness was greatly improved. Specific actions were taken on compressed air, electric motors, voltage optimisation and a wind turbine feasibility study was performed. The energy support resulted in a saving of £98,800 in energy cost and CO₂ reduction of 666 Tonnes,

Site staff were also trained in the techniques required to achieve these savings and continue to improve energy management in the future.

Further support to improve productivity of the manufacturing processes was quickly found to be accessible through the same provider, MAS North East. A similar structured approach was used to analyse the existing performance of key processes and structured practical training activities are now being conducted to make improvements in quality, equipment and process efficiencies. For example:

40% downtime was identified on one forming machine due to breakdowns, resulting in around £14,000 per week in lost production. Countermeasures were taken, resulting in increased machine availability equating to £96,000 additional sales capacity per annum and 90m² of released floor space for use by another process.

Claire Weir – HR Director commented...“As a result of engaging with MAS North East's breadth of offer as part of the Solutions for Business portfolio, it has exposed significant issues in our ability to plan production through the business, causing a re-structure and jobs created”.

"The diagnostic was holistic in its analysis of our business and has been invaluable in supporting us in understanding the weaknesses in our business and in finding solutions. In the current economy we have a reduction in sales of 33% which would have caused significant losses. This has been significantly reduced by the work with MAS North East to reduce costs and eliminate waste. This programme is also supporting cultural change within The Expanded Metal Company, previously resistant to change as a profitable company with no natural competitors. The need to improve within the global market place has provided a clear focus for the support provided by MAS North East."