



Trafford Council Leads in Integrated Working Initiative with Online Training

The Challenges

Trafford Council is in the process of rolling out an Integrated Working Training Programme to support its groundbreaking multi-agency service, which brings together professionals from Health, Education and Social Care. As part of this integrated approach, a review of delivering an integrated training programme was undertaken in 2008 and e-learning options were considered to be an effective training tool to support classroom training. One of the pre-requisite requirements for ContactPoint is that all practitioners will have received training on Information Sharing. Trafford saw that investing in online training would help increase the speed and effectiveness of this process.

Choosing the Right Training

Trafford Council Children and Young People's Service signed a two-year contract with Me Learning to deliver a suite of tailored online learning courses to 2,500 staff across the council, education, health, police and voluntary and community sector, covering Information Sharing, ContactPoint and Lead Professional.

Cathy Atherton, Interim Manager for Service Development at Trafford Council CYPS, manages a number of the DCSF Projects including Integrated Children's System, ContactPoint, Information Sharing, Common Assessment Framework and local E-CAF: *"We considered several products, but chose Me Learning because of its flexibility in tailoring the online courses to suit our Integrated Working training Programme. We expect 2,500 practitioners across Trafford to be using online training modules over the next two years."*

Trafford expects the Me Learning training to decrease learning time and costs while increasing learning effectiveness and consistency, allowing practitioners to work more effectively and collaboratively. The Me Learning courses are made available to all of Trafford's multi-agency partners through a hosted and managed learning portal that tracks user activity and awards certificates. Me Learning worked closely with Trafford to tailor the portal and courses to Trafford's branding and exact course specifications.

Nick Richards, Head of Business Development, Me Learning, said: *"We continuously update our courses, so as new Government guidelines and legislation are introduced, councils like Trafford can stay at the forefront of social care. We recommend a mixture of group-based classroom tuition and independent online learning. Our users can take online courses in their own time, have no need to travel and complete courses faster because they only take relevant modules. Online training also increases knowledge retention by 250% compared with classroom training because users can revisit course content whenever they need a refresher and can take the courses at their own pace, for more effective learning."*

The Results

Since the first round of training in December 2008, over 200 practitioners have taken and passed the Me Learning online training courses to supplement Trafford's classroom training sessions on ContactPoint and Information Sharing. Agencies that have taken the Me Learning training so far include: Social Workers, Health Visitors, Connexions PA's, the Police, Youth Service, Youth Offending Service, Children's Centres, Schools, School Support Service, Sensory Impairment Support, Housing, Voluntary and Community Support, Early Years, and CAMHS.

Cathy Atherton commented on the feedback already received from practitioners: *"Initial feedback has been very positive, that the system is "easy to use" and that "the interactivity of the courses generates more interest in learning". A significant benefit of the training is that users can retake each course or module until they pass, so they can be awarded a certificate for a course that they may have failed previously. Furthermore, making mistakes actually improves knowledge retention, so being able to fail without repercussions or public embarrassment results in more effective learning."*

About Trafford

Trafford is situated in the North West region of Great Britain. This is considered to be the most dynamic region in the UK (outside London and the South East). The area is a hotspot for business, jobs, leisure and education.

Trafford is part of Greater Manchester; Trafford, one of the ten metropolitan councils making up the Greater Manchester area, is a borough of considerable diversity. Industry, commerce, towns and villages blend together and affluence and deprivation sit side-by-side. There exist areas of significant social deprivation, which are linked to higher incidences of crime and disorder, health inequalities, barriers to higher education and employment opportunities. This area is extremely diverse in its mix of population, patterns of employment and levels of deprivation. Trafford's total population is 211,800 of which 52,548 are children and young people aged 0-19 years.

For more information, please visit www.trafford.gov.uk.

About Me Learning

Me Learning provides Local Authorities with online training tools to ensure all professionals involved in social care are fully informed, working together and following the latest national guidelines, protocols and legislation. Me Learning's government-compliant and engaging computer-based courses cut through the ever-changing red tape, providing an all encompassing future-proof resource to help social care professionals continue to carry out their roles effectively and cooperatively.

The ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for both children and adults with additional needs. Lord Laming conducted the Climbié inquiry in 2003 to investigate the circumstances leading to the death of Victoria Climbié and to recommend action to prevent such a tragedy happening again. However, in April 2008 Lord Laming commented: "I have yet to be convinced there is uniformly good practice across the country." Furthermore, government regulator the General Social Care Council (GSCC) has suggested social workers need further training post-qualification to deal with an increasing number of "complex and risky" cases such as Baby P, for which they needed greater expertise.

Me Learning provides both off-the-shelf and tailored courses covering key elements of the Government's 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' programme run by the DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families). It is the only provider of online training courses for two of the leading ICS (Integrated Children's System) software suppliers: OLM and Liquidlogic. 20% of the UK's Local Authorities that have a social care responsibility are already using Me Learning's cost-efficient courses, ranging from Essex County Council's purchase of the MePROTOCOL ICS suite for its own ICS roll-out to over 1,200 staff, to Manchester City Council's purchase of Me Learning's Information Sharing and ContactPoint courses to train 3000 people on the 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' programme.

More information can be found at www.melearning.co.uk or by calling us on 01273 455 194.