



Get the Church to GDPR on time! Me Learning trains the Church of England for GDPR compliance



Clients: National Church Institutions of the Church of England; The Church of England
Activities: Administrative bodies serving the Church in England and Europe; The Dioceses and Cathedrals of the Church of England
Location: Across England and continental Europe
Courses: GDPR

About the Church of England

The Church of England has well in excess of 100,000 volunteers, clergy and employees. The National Church Institutions (NCIs) are the central bodies that support the day-to-day work of churches across England, and have around 500 permanent and fixed-term employees. Across the country, the Church's regional organisation comprises 42 dioceses, 45 cathedrals and 45 bishops' offices. And there are then around 12,000 parishes, with 16,000 churches.

Online training is the optimal use of resources

Madi McAllister joined the NCIs in November 2017 as the Information Governance Officer. Says Madi: "We needed to make a decision about GDPR training for the NCIs staff. With my background as a learning and development manager, I

wasn't keen on face-to-face training because it is expensive, and I feel that people can glaze over during presentations so it's not the most effective method of training. I wanted e-learning because, as well as being more cost-effective, I like the fact that people can choose to complete modules in their own preferred time and can return to the modules if they want, meaning greater retention of course material.

"And of our 500 employees, while most are here in Westminster, we have around 70 up in York, another 70 over at Lambeth Palace and others based across the country in Bishop's offices, so we'd have had logistical challenges with face-to-face training as well as the cost implication. I come from a local authority background where data protection e-learning is not just normal, it's often mandatory, so it was the natural path for me."

Total customisation for maximum value

In January 2018, Madi started evaluating providers. An additional requirement was the need for "tiered" learning that allows different configurations of learning and time commitment for different employees at different stages of responsibility, from basic to advanced, so that learning can be targeted to the role. This would mean learners get just the right material to do their jobs, and money is not wasted on over-licensing.

Me Learning "stood out head and shoulders" above the

competition, says Madi; courses came with five levels of role-based learning, a precise content outline and learning objectives, plus clear definitions of appropriate audiences. The GDPR courses had also been produced in conjunction with a law firm so she felt that the quality of courses could be assured. "They'd clearly done their homework," says Madi.

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Beating the clock

As with all Me Learning clients, Madi was given access to demo versions of the courses. The Church of England, as a dispersed organisation, had many localised needs, and when the course content was circulated to stakeholders, they responded with a set of changes and personalisations to target the courses directly to the Church's needs.

Not only was Me Learning able to accommodate these personalisations, this was achieved without disrupting an ambitious timeline. The GDPR legislation came into force on May 25th 2018, by which time training had to be under way. It meant that Me Learning had just eight weeks to build and personalise the NCI's portal, customise the content and carry out testing before going live. In the case of the much larger wider Church programme, deadlines were as short as four weeks. There was no room for error – but the deployment was seamless and on schedule.

The hard deadline also meant that the Church had to take every opportunity to train up its staff. Madi was correct: e-learning improved take-up and responsiveness. The tailored bite-size modules meant that staff could build training around their schedules. And being web-based, volunteers and employees could access it in the office, on the train or at home, ensuring a better rate of completion of course material. Me Learning's GDPR courses also count towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Making GDPR work across the Church

The NCIs purchased 800 licences for GDPR to cover staff as well as volunteers, trustees, contractors and agency staff. As Madi says, "usage is unlimited, meaning that

within 12 months, employees are free to use as much content as they want, provided we approve it. And if anyone wants to go back over what they have already done, they are free to do so". Access is via one of two branded Church of England portals (the NCIs and the wider Church), and 19 Church bodies (made up of cathedrals and dioceses) as well as hundreds of parishes had opted in to the portal for the wider Church by early July.

The system also allows the NCI's Learning and Development team to act as account administrators, "which is great for us," says Madi, "because they can add people such as new employees or take them off without the rigmarole of having to go back to Me Learning, as would have been the case with some of the other providers".

Through a framework contract entered into with the Church's Parish Buying service, Me Learning's GDPR e-learning was made available to the wider Church, in its 42 dioceses and 12,000 parishes up and down the country, in a first use of on-demand online structured learning on this scale. Secretary to the Church Commissioners Andrew Brown says that he and his colleagues found "having a single point of contact" with Me Learning "invaluable", and praised its "flexibility, responsiveness and patience". Madi sums up: "We've been thoroughly impressed with the breadth and depth of content, its willingness to help us personalise the feel and even some of the specifics of courses to our purposes and its friendliness and professionalism in going the extra mile."

Why Me Learning?

For the Church, Me Learning was the right choice for:

- Bespoke branding
- Tiered learning
- Administrative control

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To see how we can help upskill your team, contribute to your business and ensure that your training investment yields real value to your bottom line, call 01273 499 100 or email enquiries@melearning.co.uk.

For over 10 years, Me Learning has provided engaging learning experiences for complex and challenging professional environments. Our first class approach has seen us awarded ISO9001 status for quality management, and our commitment to customer service is second-to-none. We were recognised in 2015-16 and 2016-17 as top performers in the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 EMEA, along with receiving many other awards.

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