

ICT work with Preventative Services

Case Study: Parenting Programme Evaluation System

Unity ICT has implemented an individually tailored system to aid preventative services in their administrative activities. The system is geared towards assigning parents of children with behavioural issues to training courses and as such has removed a logistical nightmare for the team in managing this end to end process.

Background

To recognise and promote the importance that parents and carers have in the lives of our children and young people Oldham Children's Trust has produced a Parenting Support Strategy.

The Oldham Parenting Support Strategy aims to help all organisations that work with children, young people and families to provide parenting support that is proactive, accessible, well coordinated and of good quality.

The strategy has been put together by Oldham Children's Trust. It covers parenting from pregnancy to when a child is aged 19 and focuses on supporting parents as they do one of the hardest jobs in the world. Parenting is not an easy task and where children have been identified with certain behavioural issues then support becomes even more important. Oldham has many excellent parenting support services available for parents and one of the available facilities is to assign parents of children with behavioural issues to specific parenting courses and to suit their needs depending on the ages of their children.

The Problem

The issue that the Early Intervention and Prevention Department – Preventative Services, had was that a single person was maintaining a spreadsheet of data to record the parents of children with behavioural issues and who had been referred to them by teachers, doctors or social workers. From this list, it had become a logistical nightmare to match parents to suitable training courses and to manage and record the status of the parental assessments that take place before and after the training courses. The aim of the whole process being to see improvements in parenting which in turn is expected to improve the behaviour of their children.

The Solution

Unity ICT were commissioned by Preventative Services to undertake the development of a system that would take the manual labour out of their processes, automating matching of parents and courses and producing correspondence at the touch of a button.



Unity ICT worked in collaboration with Andaleeb Saeed (Parenting Programme Coordinator) from

Preventative Services, to establish a set of business requirements.

The new development comprises 3 parts:

- a) A web browser application developed in ASP.NET. This resides on a secure data encrypted server due to the confidential nature of the information and allows external agencies such as doctors, teachers and social workers to enter referrals to the parenting scheme.
- b) Windows based administrative application. This system allows review and processing of referrals, generating automatic emails to both the referrer and course leader and a letter to the parent(s) with course details.
- c) A web browser application developed in ASP.NET. This part of the system is for use by course leaders and holds details on course leader profiles. It allows them to see who has been assigned to their courses and records attendance. The future intention is for this application to be operated via a laptop whilst liaising with the parents in their home.

Andaleeb Saeed (Parenting Programme Coordinator) within Preventative Services is pictured below right with Andy Thackeray (Software Applications Officer) from the Unity Partnership ICT department.



The system has been live since February 2010 and is already realising benefits.

The Benefits

The system automates what has been a manual process and the benefits of the system can be summarised as delivering:

- Greater efficiencies of working
- Less manual and paper processing
- Automated emails to improve communication
- Automated letters to improve communication
- Easy access to Information
- Improved data validation & Quality Checks
- Improved security with data held on secure system
- Increased time to assess individuals & trainers
- Increased time to focus on reporting requirements

Andaleeb is totally satisfied with the Parenting Programme Evaluation System and is keen to advance to the next stages for introducing reporting and statistics and she has the following recommendation:

"This system is absolutely fantastic – it has improved our efficiency and allows us to focus on the tasks and service that matters rather than shuffling paper and spreadsheets"

- Andaleeb Saeed

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'.....The ICT division has made many improvements, and we plan to continue to improve the services we deliver in Oldham and for other customers.'

- Trevor Slade (Unity ICT Services Director)

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