



Mobile
Classrooms
Designed For
Learning

Case study: Tameside and Glossop

Limited training facilities impact on the National Programme

With the various IT initiatives being introduced under the banner of NpflIT, there is one common factor underpinning successful implementation – the ability to successfully train NHS personnel in an effective, timely, cost efficient manner.

Most training delivered for systems such as electronic care records, will be through instructor led training (ILT).

All Local Service Providers are committed to programmes of ‘Train the Trainer’, as part of their contractual agreements. Many trusts have already identified - and started - to develop the internal staff for training delivery.

However, one of the greatest challenges facing trusts is the lack of suitable training venues. Connecting for Health (CfH) acknowledges there are ‘limited appropriate training facilities’ in many NHS trusts to enable staff to use new IT systems.

A CfH spokesperson told Government Computing News (7 February 2006) that the responsibility for training staff in new technologies and applications rests with trusts, saying: "If they do not have, or cannot otherwise support appropriate training facilities, they can call on mobile training units".

Among the problems often faced when developing training plans to support implementation is the ability to complete the training close to the ‘go live’ date. To ensure that learning is reinforced and put into practice. Usually, this means the training plan must be compressed to no more than eight to 10 weeks prior to the live date.

This puts enormous strain on existing Trust IT training suites – resources already highly utilised.

Case study

Elaine Richardson is Greater Manchester South East Sector project manager for implementation of the community patient administration system (within the North West, West Midlands cluster). She has recently encountered the challenges of trying to find suitable training space for the 800 nurses, healthcare professionals, administration staff requiring training.

The trust was committed to commissioning new IT training facilities, however they would not be completed in time for the start of the training programme.

They turned to mobile classrooms.

Three PC Pods were utilised on-site (at the Glossop rural community rehab unit and Tameside offices) for training of NHS personnel on the new computer system required for introducing, and implementing, the new Patient Care Record System.

The PC Pod is a 10-seat mobile training unit containing all the learning tools and resources that would be found in a purpose built IT training suite. Featuring the newest IT facilities, each PC Pod can be connected to an organisation’s existing network. Internet access can be provided too.

Six NHS staff trainers delivered skill development modules encompassing six sessions to support the administration and patient care learning elements.

Obtaining the skills to ensure successful management of the Patient Record Care System, and achieving the right balance for the best standards of patient care, were key issues.

Elaine Richardson comments: “We had to consider several factors in undertaking the IT training to meet our needs. Community training has to be linked to the NHS N3 network, on NHS premises, or those sponsored by an NHS organisation.

“So, we were restricted as to where we could do the training.

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Off-site was therefore not possible, so using our existing network we sited the PC Pods in the car parks next to the buildings.

“The trainers were very impressed – and at home with - the PC Pods.

Each is well equipped with the essential IT systems and facilities, while delegates enjoyed the pleasant learning environment.

“The vehicle design provides comfort and a sense of space – all conducive to providing an ideal learning environment.

Being on-site, staff time away from their day-to-day tasks and disruption to daily routines was minimised.”

She continues: “Our training programme continues to support our commitment to achieving the highest standards and best practice in.

“Ultimately, the prime objective and focus for training people in new IT skills should be for obtaining the highest standards possible in patient care.”