

CASE STUDY

Online training resources and systems help South Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board make significant progress

A Virtual College Case Study



**South Tyneside
Safeguarding
Children Board**



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The background

The South Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (STSCB) oversees arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in South Tyneside

STSCB has 20 partner agencies including the police, council, health, the local college and schools and works closely with its member agencies and other partnerships in South Tyneside to ensure that all children and young people can reach their potential.

The challenge

Virtual College Safeguarding was formed in 2006. It specialises in the creation of online safeguarding learning resources and systems, working in partnership with over 60 local safeguarding boards.

STSCB has worked with Virtual College from its formation, recognising the important role training plays within safeguarding and the potential opportunities to use online learning as part of the training solution.

By 2014, child sexual exploitation was becoming recognised as a significant issue, nationally and locally, and STSCB took the decision to make training in child sexual exploitation mandatory.

Within the STSCB area, there are literally thousands of people who come into contact with children and young people regularly and therefore need appropriate safeguarding training.

The safeguarding children board does not receive central government funding but relies on contributions from amongst its partner agencies. In the current climate, each of these agencies is being squeezed financially.

The STSCB's funding is also under pressure and it has experienced a decrease in total partner contributions for several years.

Within this fiscal environment, training thousands of people rapidly within a restricted budget created a significant challenge.

The solution

All of the STSCB partners could see the important role online learning could play in rolling out appropriate safeguarding training to large numbers, rapidly and cost effectively, and signed up to its implementation.

STSCB now has access to a substantial menu of over 13 safeguarding courses which are made freely available to its partner agencies' staff.

Introducing self-registration has helped to encourage training engagement and completion.

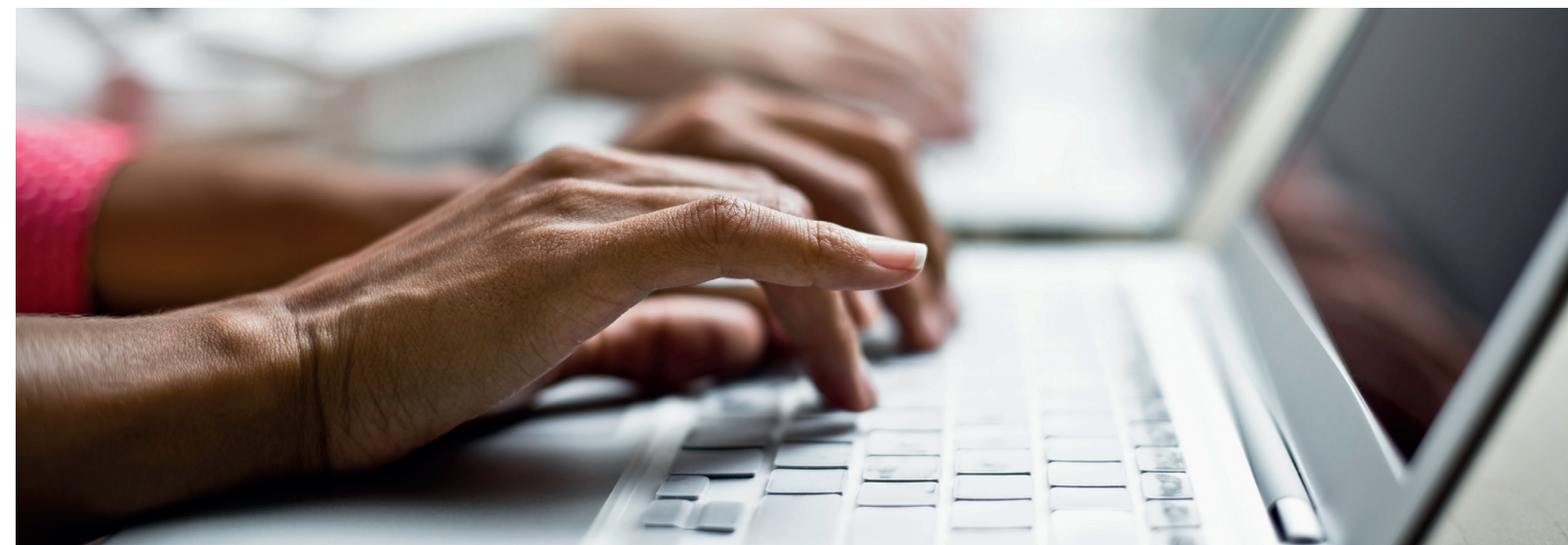
This function of Virtual College's learning management system allows learners to access their suite of online courses immediately at any time and so overcomes any delays through internal 'red tape' which could slow uptake and act was a barrier to course completions.

Jackie Nolan, LSCB Business Manager, explained: "It's important that we use our resources effectively, so when learners are given access to a course we need to ensure that they are given every incentive to complete it.

"Our LSCB agreed to introduce charging so that if a learner is assigned a course and does not complete it within four weeks, their agency is charged a nominal amount.

"The aim of the exercise is not to generate revenue but to encourage the uptake of important learning and this has really helped to encourage course completions."

“ Introducing self-registration has helped to encourage training engagement and completion. ”



The results

Learners can now log on when they want and access a wide range of relevant safeguarding courses.

“Our learners love the fact that they can start and stop their learning and the system saves where they are up to, so they can learn in bite-sized chunks,” said Jackie.

“Schools, in particular, find the flexibility of online learning really useful as it would otherwise be difficult for them to attend off site classroom based learning.

“Sometimes we run face to face sessions, with interpreters, for people who do not have English as their first language.

“We have also run sessions for foster carers in how to use the online learning as we thought they may struggle with the IT but they soon picked it up as it is so intuitive.

“Our face to face sessions are either a full or half day. The beauty of e-learning is its accessibility and ability to reach large number of people quickly.

“If you factor in the cost of taking people out of work for classroom based learning, we would never be able to deliver to all of these people face to face – e-learning is a key solution.”

STSCB also uses Virtual College’s Enable Audit tool which was developed in association with safeguarding boards. This new online auditing tool is designed to simplify the process of any audit - making the whole system quicker, easier to manage, administrate and report on.

STSCB has a duty to undertake audits of its partner agencies to ensure organisations are complying with their safeguarding responsibilities and requests evidence to support their responses.

A selection of ready-made audit templates is provided with Enable Audit or safeguarding auditors can build their own by adding questions, placing them into individual categories and developing grading systems. Multiple users

can logon and upload information, evidence and action points that are recorded and integrated instantly into the centralised audit tool.

Enable Audit’s central storage tool keeps all of evidence in one place. As well as saving agencies time, this can be of vital importance when members of staff change.

For STSCB, auditing is a massive task and includes 63 schools and every GP practice, for example.

Jackie commented: “We used to have to print everything and the analysis of the responses was really difficult and time-consuming.

“Some of our partners found the process really difficult but using the audit tool, we have had a 100% return from all agencies – a brilliant result!”

Partner agencies are learning to use Enable Audit as a self-assessment tool so they can see any emerging issues more quickly and adopt continuous improvement practices.

Jackie can also see recurring themes and developing concerns and provide relevant support more quickly.

“Enable Audit has really helped to speed things up. The visual representations make analysis and reporting much easier,” said Jackie.

“We only have 2 members of staff dedicated to working for STSCB but expectations and requirements are really high.

“If we had not introduced Enable Audit, we may have had to put some other initiatives on hold and other activities would have suffered.

“The early action we took to introduce online learning resources and systems means we now have everything in place and feel on top of things.”



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About Virtual College

Since 2006, we have provided training to every NHS Trust and now work with over 60 local safeguarding boards. Over this period, we have donated more than £200,000 to healthcare and safeguarding charities.

We are part of Virtual College, which has over 2 million learners and is growing at a rate of 1,500 per day across public and private sectors.

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