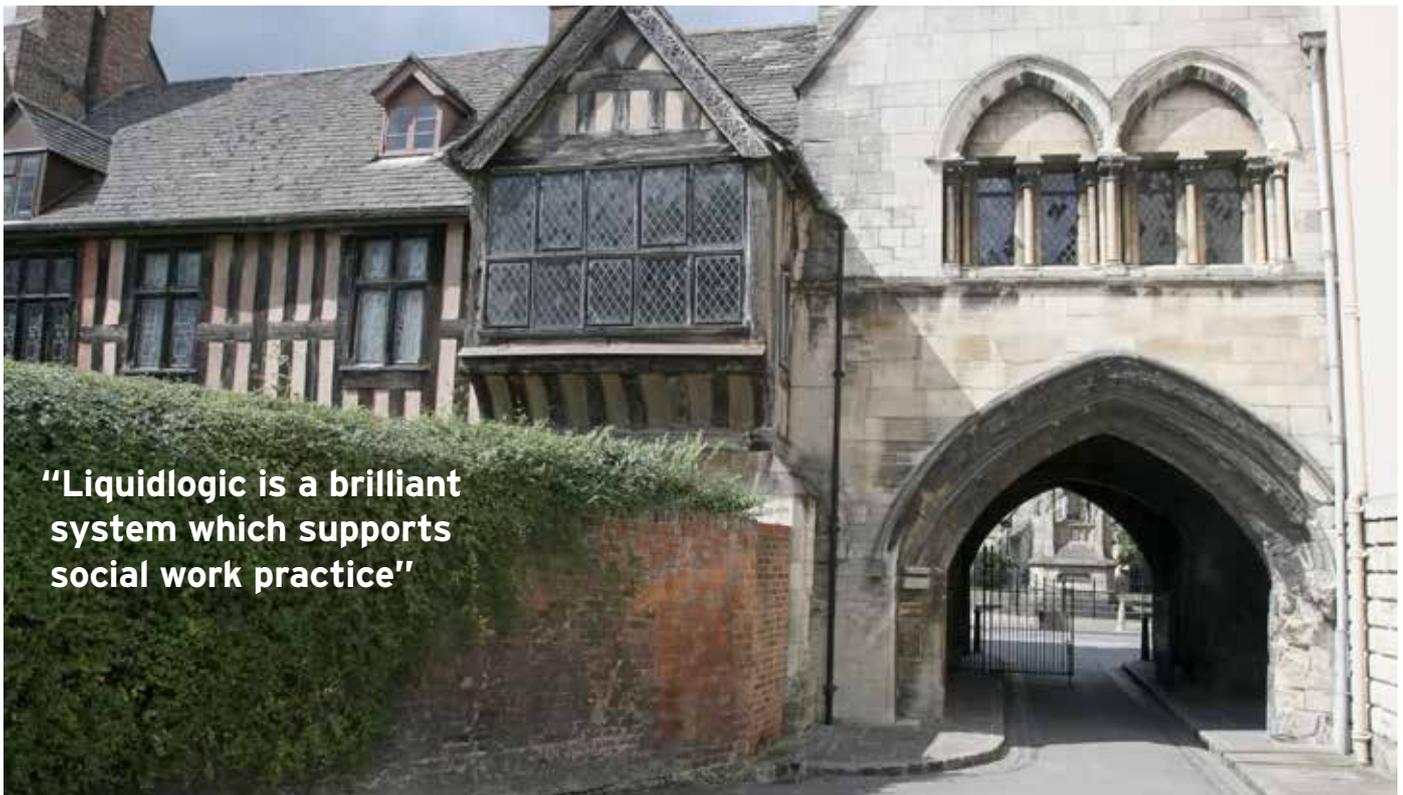


# A Closer Look



## Engaging Practitioners in Children's Social Care @ Gloucestershire

### Overview

**Situated in the South West of England, Gloucestershire covers 1,025 square miles and has a population of 593,500 of which over 20% are aged 0-19 years. During the summer of 2009 the council initiated a service improvement programme for Children's Social Care and the Children's Social Care systems were identified as part of this.**

### Driving the Change

A twin track approach to improvement was taken by Gloucestershire. The Council investigated whether it was possible to make changes to their existing social care system by changing forms and cleansing data. At the same time a team at the Council began to explore other suppliers in the market. Staff did report minor improvements to their existing system following this exercise; however poor data quality together with minimal validation rules in the legacy system drove Gloucestershire to begin soft market testing for alternatives.

## Tender Process

In November 2009 the Council invited a number of suppliers to demonstrate their systems informally. This, coupled with feedback from roadshows along with a negative Ofsted inspection, motivated the Council to issue a formal tender to replace its Children's Social Care Systems.

The tender was issued via the Buying Solutions Framework and saw responses from four key suppliers, who attended formal presentation sessions to demonstrate their systems to a selection of Gloucestershire's social care, ICT and data management staff. In addition to this, Gloucestershire also carried out a number of site visits to other Local Authorities using a variety of social care systems.

Final evaluation was based on a number of criteria. The categories with the heaviest weightings were whole life cost and overall usability, of which Liquidlogic was the clear winner.

## Implementation and Go Live

The Council's plan to implement the Liquidlogic Children's Social Care System began in the autumn of 2010.

**Commenting on the plan Pete Harwood, Project Manager, Gloucestershire County Council says,** "We were confident that we had the right system, a supplier that knew the business and high level management support and buy in from practitioners. We had a core dedicated project team, a robust high quality training strategy and held regular communications with all staff at all stages of the implementation."

Gloucestershire went live with the Liquidlogic System in 2011 and found that a combination of intensive floorwalking, rapid response helpdesk support and ongoing assistance from Liquidlogic's project management team and support desk was a successful formula.

**Pete Harwood comments,** "Our internal communications plan included establishing regular team champion support groups, issuing a regular newsletter and creating a system management and change board which was led and owned by the business."



## Monitoring Success

**Julie Miles, Team Manager in Gloucester's Referral & Assessment Team comments,** "We are all extremely positive about how Liquidlogic has assisted us to make the changes we so desperately needed. Liquidlogic is a brilliant system which supports social work practice. We have found ways to make the system work for us, rather than us working for the system."

**Assistant Team Manager for Stroud Children and Families Team, Ann Jackson goes on to say,** "The pathway maps give a clear visual overview of what has been completed and tasks outstanding, which provides direction for Social Workers and improves performance. The development in family working has been well received, with all siblings being contained in one document, making it quicker for the Practitioner to complete and easier for the family to read. Also the look of the system is slick; it's easy and quick to navigate from one screen to another."

In addition to the positive reaction from practitioners, the Senior Management Team at Gloucestershire Council report that they are satisfied with the accuracy of management and performance reporting for the first time in three years. Statutory Returns have been submitted ahead of time for the first time in many years and the number of data errors has reduced from over 30,000 in 2009/10 to just 1,800 in 2011/12.

## The Future

Gloucestershire recently went live with Liquidlogic's eCAF early intervention system which will encourage even further joined up working between the Council and other agencies.

Consideration is also being given to other multi-agency initiatives such as MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), Troubled Families and Vulnerable Children's Board. Gloucestershire is exploring the possibility of using Liquidlogic's Workspaces and Single View to support these initiatives.

### Gloucestershire's Top Tips

- Be clear about what you want from a Social Care System
- Be clear what you want from a supplier
- Talk to the people who will use the system – focus on usability
- Talk to other Local Authorities
- Involve users every step of the way
- Senior management buy in and support is essential
- Make sure decisions are led by the business and not ICT
- Success is more likely to be achieved if implementation is part of a wider change programme
- The system cannot deliver change on its own – but it can support it
- Getting the right system is important – but making sure you don't get the wrong system is vital!