

CASE STUDY: NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

A Closer Look



Taking it Mobile @ North Somerset Council

Overview

Located in the South West of England, North Somerset borders Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, Mendip and Sedgemoor. North Somerset covers an area of around 145 square miles and has a resident population of 206,000 living in 85,000 households.

The Council went live with the Liquidlogic Children's Social Care System (LCS) in 2007 and have recently undertaken a project to introduce mobile working to children's social work teams.

A New Way of Working

The decision was taken to introduce iPads to Children's Social Care Practitioners.

Speaking about this, Justine Davies, Service Leader at North Somerset Council comments: "We estimated that by introducing iPads we would make 13.6% process efficiency savings, allowing more time being spent with children. There is also the obvious perceived benefit and kudos that offering such technology brings - something which is a key factor in both attracting and retaining good social workers."

Liquidlogic's Mobile App

A number of mobile apps were assessed but the Liquidlogic App delivers significant advantages beyond other market leaders. Leanna Manchip, Children's Services Project Officer from Agilisys explains: "All other offline mobile apps were considerably more expensive and did not provide the level of flexibility which Liquidlogic offered, nor were they integrated to the Liquidlogic case management system."

The Council took the decision to work closely with Liquidlogic to develop the LCS mobile working App, helping to define the required functionality as well as the look and feel of the App and the way it interfaces with the main system on the server.

Pilot

The first version of the offline mobile app was rolled out to a group of 15 children's social workers to test and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Justine Davies says: "We held a user group internally to obtain feedback from the social workers who had been chosen to pilot the Liquidlogic mobile app. Users reported that the app was user friendly, mirrored the Liquidlogic Children's Social Care System (LCS), was intuitive and when returning to the office syncing to the server was quick and easy."

Savings

Both time and cost savings have been reviewed at the Council as a result of introducing the Liquidlogic Mobile App. Speaking about the savings, Justine Davies comments: "The reduction in costs include the ability to make cash and efficiency savings of 13.6% which can be evidenced against cuts that need to be made and reinvestment back into services."

Next Steps

The Mobile Working Project will transform the ways of working for significant members of staff working within Children's Social Care. It will enable workers to improve the service offered, and the efficiency of that offering, being out in the community, rather than behind a desk. The deployment of the Offline Mobile App will have quantified benefits and will assist with the financial challenges that North Somerset Council is faced with. Other factors included more time with children and their families, reducing travel time; enabling practitioners to have their office at their fingertips; improving practitioner work/life balance and providing a tool for recording in situ or shortly after a visit. The enabling mobile technology platform being deployed by the project has been chosen for its ability to dynamically replicate the forms and workflow held in the back office system. The capability is an essential prerequisite to having a flexible workforce in the future and a key element of council's transformation journey to become digital.

The next phase of the project is the launch of the enhanced IOS version, which adds functionality that will enable users to access and complete all forms, case notes and assessments, upload images and capture signatures digitally.

North Somerset Council's Top Tips

- Work with your IT Colleagues to ensure your mobile device is set up to accept the App.
- Work with your Children's Social Care practitioners to explain how the App works and provide them with sufficient support so that the benefits can be realised.