

A Closer Look



Providing better outcomes with early help @ North Yorkshire

Introduction

The largest County in England, North Yorkshire covers over 3,300 square miles and has a population of over 600,000 people, 23% of whom are children. The majority of the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors lie within North Yorkshire's boundaries and the Council headquarters is in the market town of Northallerton.

In the Past

Previously, three separate teams were responsible for Early Help within the Council, with each team working independently. The teams had approached the recording of children who required early help by a variety of methods, this included spreadsheets and written notes. Speaking about this approach **Lucy Darwin, Service Manager - Systems at North Yorkshire County Council** says: "There were obvious issues with our previous recording methods including security, visibility, information sharing and workflow. We were acutely conscious that we needed to address this to gain efficiencies and ensure a joined up approach with health and education."

With this in mind the Council decided to procure an electronic early help system and given that the Liquidlogic Children's Social Care System (LCS) was live and there were plans to adopt the Liquidlogic Adults' Social Care System (LAS), the decision was taken to select the Liquidlogic Early Help Module (EHM). **Lucy Darwin comments:** "We have known Liquidlogic and used their systems for a long time, so the obvious advantages in selecting them for EHM was that the system was familiar to us, we had a good relationship with them and we could have seamless integration to other existing products."

The Approach

North Yorkshire used their experience of implementing LCS in the children's team previously to determine their approach to EHM. The Council felt that mapping business processes would be the key to a successful implementation, so took a significant amount of time in doing this with the children's early help teams, ensuring that people worked together and took ownership of the project from the outset.

The Council also considered migrating historical data where possible into EHM but decided against this. Lucy Darwin explains: "Because we had previously worked in disparate ways, we felt that by migrating data automatically we ran the risk of creating duplicate records. So the approach we took was that of a semi-automated data matching exercise. Interestingly we found in the pilot area that approximately 60% of the children and families known to early help had had some contact with our children's social care teams." This approach took some time, however North Yorkshire wanted to start with the most accurate data possible and given the variety of previous recording methods, this was deemed the most effective method.

Go Live

Liquidlogic delivered a 'train the trainer' programme to a selection of users who then went on to work closely with 'Superusers' within the Council. In addition to this, the Council took the decision to engage with Me Learning to supply online training to users on an ongoing basis.

Given the geographical disparity of the County, North Yorkshire agreed a phased rolled out of EHM. The team in Skipton was first to go live, followed by Harrogate, Selby, Hambleton, Richmondshire and finally Scarborough and the Coast. Speaking about the reaction of users,

Lucy Darwin says: "Satisfaction has been high. People have really engaged and been supportive of the project."

Learning from the Pilot

The Council was very pleased that they opted for a small pilot area, because it enabled them to provide more support to staff. It also provided an opportunity to give feedback to Liquidlogic about changes needed before releasing to a larger group of staff. The staff saw this responsive approach and it helped gain their support.

Lucy Darwin comments: "We have also changed our training following the pilot scheme. We found that the Me Learning online training package that we originally opted for was too cumbersome, taking too much time and having an adverse effect on staff's engagement, so we cut back on the number of modules used. We have also changed the face-to-face training from one long session to two shorter sessions, with the second session being after they've been on the system for a few weeks."

The Future

Next steps for North Yorkshire include giving access to health professionals later this year and then the system will be rolled out to staff in schools. Planning work is already taking place with these third parties.

Lucy concludes: "Implementing the Liquidlogic EHM at North Yorkshire has played a part in our '2020 North Yorkshire' change management programme, where the Council aims to reduce costs by a third. By making our early help model more efficient, we can identify children and families which require our support before they meet the levels of traditional social care. This preventative approach, along with efficiency savings from the way in which staff now record early help, will contribute to the programme significantly. Our goal is to enable better outcomes with a compiled view of a family and we are confident that Liquidlogic's EHM will support us in this."



North Yorkshire's Top Tips:

- Be clear about the business process before anything else
- Get the right people around the table
- Think carefully about data migration and do what works for you
- Have a small pilot area to try things out
- Be flexible about how you train to meet your particular circumstances