



ICT HUB CASE STUDY – GETTING A DATABASE

Organisation name:

Carers Centre for Brighton & Hove

Summary:

The Carers Centre for Brighton & Hove is a local charity which exists to support anyone caring for a partner, relative or friend who needs help because of any illness or disability. The Carers Centre was established in 1988 as a drop in centre in Hove. Since then it has expanded to cover Brighton & Hove.

The Carers Centre commissioned a new internal information system to support and track its work with carers across Brighton & Hove. The Chief Officer, Debbie Charman, led the initial research by talking to other charities and suppliers of off-the-shelf software.

What happened?

A database was researched, commissioned, designed and implemented. *“It took me about a year to look into our options,”* explains Debbie. *“I had used other packages in previous posts and I talked to colleagues in similar roles about their experiences. Quite by chance we were left a legacy and the Board agreed that we should put it aside to commission what we needed.”*

Debbie worked with colleagues to identify the specific requirements and although there were a number of possible off-the-shelf solutions, chose to commission a bespoke system.

“Working with carers means we have added complexity – we need to record information about carers as well as linking it to the details of the person or people they are caring for. I understood the risks in going this route but decided it was the best way to get what we needed.”

A number of contractors responded to the invitation to tender and a supplier was chosen on the basis of an interview. The company chosen, TiNiT is based in nearby Hove.



What difference has ICT made?

Twelve months after the interviews the database system is live and staff are successfully using it to record information about clients and manage contacts with the people who support carers. It is also beginning to produce the reports that are key to the ongoing work of the organisation.

“We’ve spent almost £9,000 but we now have a system which is designed specifically to meet our needs. Given that our turnover is £600,000 this is a good investment in our future development. As well as having a more effective and more efficient team I see it as a means of generating income. We have much better information at our fingertips to prove the value of what we are delivering.”

What was learnt?

The main lessons were:

- Importance of thorough research and planning
- Working with colleagues to ensure organisational requirements are captured

FIND OUT MORE:

Organisation’s web address

www.thecarerscentre.org/

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Knowledgebase

A Quick Guide to Planning Your Database

www.ict hubknowledgebase.org.uk/planningyourdatabase

Implementing a Database – Practical and Strategic Issues

www.ict hubknowledgebase.org.uk/databaseimplementation

Using Your Database

www.ict hubknowledgebase.org.uk/usingyourdatabase