

CASE STUDY

# The Children's Society goes online for mandatory training solution

A Virtual College Case Study



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Nikki Clack, Head of Learning and Talent  
The Children's Society

## The background

**The Children's Society is a national charity providing an extensive network of frontline services, delivered by its own staff and supported by an army of volunteers.**

Together, they tackle child poverty and neglect head on, from helping families trapped in debt, child runaways and young carers, to stopping child sexual exploitation.

Last year, The Children's Society worked with over 18,000 vulnerable children and young people and it continues to make a difference to millions of children in the UK who would otherwise have nowhere else to turn.

## The solution

Nikki Clack, Head of Learning & Talent at The Children's Society, described how online learning courses from Virtual College contribute to their learning provision:

“The online courses cover topics including ‘An Introduction to Safeguarding Children’, ‘Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect’ and ‘Data Protection’.

“They are aimed at over 1000 members of our staff throughout the whole of England, covering a very wide range of job titles.

“They are mandatory for our new starters forming an important part of the induction programmes that they undertake prior to any face to face training.

“Around 200 of these learners are located in our Head Office in roles ranging from finance to fundraising. The remainder includes staff who could be working on support programmes or retail staff working throughout our network of shops, for example.

“The training is made available to our volunteers but is not mandatory.”

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## The challenge

The Children's Society employs more than 1200 talented and dedicated staff across England and works with the support of hundreds of volunteers.

A huge number of professionals come into contact with children and young people as a result of their various roles, and even if they have no direct involvement, it is important that they have an understanding of safeguarding.

Delivering appropriate and effective training economically to this large, diverse group is therefore a significant challenge.

The Children's Society provides a blended solution of face to face and online learning to help meet this challenge.



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# The results

## The Children's Society first started working with Virtual College Safeguarding in January 2016. Of the 2,000 courses initially allocated to learners, in the first 10 months over 1,700 were completed.

The Children's Society did a big internal push to promote the courses to learners and provided step by step guides so any less IT savvy staff, in the shops for example, would be able to access the learning without difficulty.

Nikki commented: "We ran an internal trial and assessment to determine which courses were relevant to which staff and this helped to stimulate a sense of involvement, engagement and ownership.

"Online learning from Virtual College provides us with a cost effective and flexible solution.

"Our new starters can do all of their mandatory training straight away so we know they will have covered all of the compliance topics in the first week.

"Our aim is to move eventually to a situation where as soon as the offer letter goes out to a new member of staff, they are set up with access to specific online courses which they can complete before they start their job."

The Children's Society uses Virtual College's learning management system to distribute online courses to its learners employing the self-registration system to minimise administrative requirements. It also creates its own online learning resources and distributes them via this system.

One of the most important aspects of the system is its learning tracking and recording facilities.

"As most of our work involves working with children it is important that we meet our mandatory requirements. Our managers use the system regularly to monitor learners' progress and we can prove and track training compliance quickly and easily, if required," said Nikki.

"We still offer about ten courses a month on a face to face basis, with course titles and delivery locations determined by demand. We find this medium useful for certain types of training where dialogue and interaction is particularly important.

"We would like to use online training more to deliver underpinning knowledge which would then be complemented by face to face training,

"Our aim is to move to a more learner -led approach where the cost effective and flexible attributes of online learning will be increasingly important."



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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 1000 per day across public and private sectors.

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