"Our advice is to start a conversation with Virtual College now and you will be amazed at how this product will add value".

Doncaster Council

Improving Communication and Saving Resource with Enable Audit

Doncaster Council

Challenges
Aimed to save time and resources by reducing the manual duties of the S175 return and improve ways of working by identifying digital opportunities.

Solution
Virtual College's Enable Audit tool was used to simplify the process of audits to capture and store data in one central place.

Results
Enable Audit significantly improved communication and saved time and resources. The Council identified further opportunities for Enable Audit and extended it's use to the wider business.

Doncaster Council, the local authority of Doncaster is changing and aims to be a modern digital authority both internally and externally, with all services on-line.

One of the key drivers that prompted Doncaster Council to search for an Audit provider was to improve their ways of working within the Children and Young People Directorate. A Transformation Consultant was contracted to work with Doncaster Council to identify digital opportunities and to collaborate with the business to manage the change towards a new way of working.

After an analysis of business areas, they identified the S175 return as being a priority. As this is a statutory requirement for all schools across the UK, it was essential that the Trust met the timelines to deliver the audit efficiently. The S175 return is a safeguarding self-assessment audit of statutory duties and associated responsibilities for schools in relation to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSiE).

Another challenge Doncaster Council faced was the coordination and documentation of responses from schools across Doncaster, as part of the S175 audit. This included progress chasing reports and collating responses into one return, which was an extremely manual process. Although timelines were always met, this process took several months and used extensive resources.

Solution

To address the safeguarding audit challenges, Virtual College provided Doncaster Council with Enable Audit. An online auditing system developed by Virtual College, designed to simplify the process of any audit. Widely used by several councils and safeguarding children partnerships across the UK, Enable Audit captures extensive information, easily into one central place.

After further analysis, Doncaster Council identified the need for an Audit tool that would significantly support the S175 process. They required the following which Enable Audit met:

- Ability to self-assess performance.
- Simple online completion.
- Automated responses.
- The ability to produce action plans relating to key themes raised and reduce the need for extensive administration processes.

Results

The launch of Enable audit for S175 was a step change for Doncaster Council and schools within the Doncaster surrounding areas. The use of Enable Audit significantly improved communication and supported all users to complete the return within the timelines, saving time and resources. The positive impact on resource was significant with one full-time equivalent over a six-month period being released to focus on other key work.

Following the successful launch of Enable Audit for the S175 return, Doncaster Council believed the system benefitted wider teams across the business. They identified areas in which Enable Audit could be implemented to improve processes. These included Information Governance such as Brexit readiness, Adult Health and Social Care, and Children and Young People Commissioning.

Further to extending Enable Audit to the wider business, Doncaster Council identified the following benefits to the organisation:

- An increased appreciation of how digital tools can support teams to do things more efficiently.
- An increased number of requests from service areas to assess how Enable Audit could support them.
- A reduction in administration time for development, implementation, response coordination and feedback activities.
- Visible data that supports service areas to understand more about the status of the work and the eventual outcomes. This provides important information for continuous improvement.

Working with Virtual College

Doncaster Council spoke highly of Virtual College describing the relationship as positive.

'it was clear at the demonstration stage that this was a system we could utilise more widely.'

Doncaster Council's Relationship Manager, Jessica Crow was described as enthusiastic around the plans to utilise the product across other business areas.

The impact

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different audits are carried out by 4 different services within the council.

100%
of schools completed their audit return out of 120.