

e-news

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New learning opportunities



A NEW e-learning platform has gone live in Yorkshire and the Humber, bringing with it new opportunities for all.

In advance of a national platform, the new regional system offers greater flexibility than its predecessor and better reporting.

It will also give organisations more control at a local level and allow them to share best practice with other members of the new e-learning club.

The new technology will also help in achieving the 48-hours

working time directive, allowing health professionals to spend more time treating patients.

It will offer the same flexibility as before – meaning people can complete e-learning training modules at times that suit them – but have the added advantage of being easily adaptable to local needs for particular content.

Kath Hinchliff, associate director of education commissioning, says: “The training budget is significant and we want to get the most out

of it to modernise healthcare education and make learning more accessible. It is a move away from traditional learning methods to a more blended approach.”

The new regional platform is a great opportunity for developing and delivering a sophisticated culture of e-learning in advance of the national system.

In the months ahead, it will be vital for regional e-learning champions to help develop content for and raise the profile of this kind of learning.

Welcome

Now you can shape the future of learning

**By Tim Gilpin
Director of
workforce
and education**



THIS newsletter aims to inform you about

exciting new developments in e-learning. Moreover, it will help give you the opportunity to shape the future of e-learning in this region and perhaps even nationally.

On 6 May a new e-learning platform went live, keeping all of the flexibility of this type of learning, but bringing with it enhanced functionality.

We want everyone in what we describe as our e-learning club to be able to shape how this new e-learning system will work for them. On page 3 of the newsletter we will tell you how to give this valuable feedback.

We took the decision to procure the new system because it is vital to make the most of e-learning right now.

Further developments will be seen from the development of the ESR-based National Learning Management System.

Of course, other methods of training are still important and will continue to be exploited, but we feel e-learning has an important role to play for both clinicians and non-clinicians.



Case study

A positive experience

Pearl Jolly, Learning Management system and e-learning Manager, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and Elizabeth Mosley, senior Nurse in A&E, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

"My own experience of e-learning is very positive," says Pearl. "One course I did meant downloading and uploading materials, getting together online with other learners and communicating with a tutor in Canada. It was the most positive learning experience I've ever had."

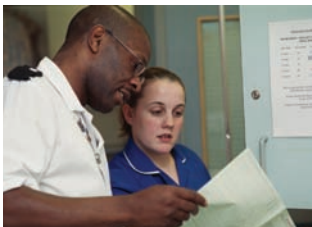
Pearl is a firm believer in e-learning and her role at the Trust is to promote this and other training methods to all staff.

She and her colleagues have developed many e-learning modules, such as trust induction, complaints, moving & handling and nutrition. "The beauty of the system is that local managers can monitor who has completed which modules," she says.

"At organisation level we can produce reports for many purposes. This data is proving invaluable."

Elizabeth, from A&E, has a large staff group who must comply with many training requirements. E-Learning supports the department in delivering this.

"The staff can complete the training at a time which suits them – either at their own desk or in the Learning Centre or library," she says. Pearl adds: "One of the latest developments focuses on using e-learning to support training around patient consent for different radiology procedures."



National priorities, local knowledge

THE NEW e-learning platform developed by the region and its partners will, it is hoped, be a precursor for a national platform.

Adam Wardle, deputy director of workforce and education, sets the context: "At present, there are two e-learning initiatives nationally – E-learning for Health, aimed at doctors in postgraduate training, and the Core Learning Unit, which covers the mandatory training modules such as health and safety, and equality and diversity.

The national platform, when it arrives, will take the best from each of these. The big advantage of the regional platform is that it is available now."

There are two governance groups for e-learning nationally, the strategy board and the management board – Adam is chair of the latter. His role is to make sure there is quality assurance, a clear plan and that e-learning is delivered successfully both in isolation and also tied into other initiatives such as Electronic Staff Records.

He adds: "Locally, there is an opportunity to deliver and develop the culture of e-learning in advance of the national

system. We are pathfinders here and are very excited about the opportunities. Of course, we realise that there has to be a blended approach to learning, but moving forward e-learning will be an important element."

Helen Smith, associate director of workforce strategy agrees: "A lot of hard work has gone into building and shaping the new e-learning platform. But there is now such a momentum. People are eager to take on e-learning and our whole culture has shifted to a position where the online environment is a comfortable place to be for many people – not everyone of course, so there still has to be traditional training delivery.

"E-learning has so many possibilities and offers the opportunity to improve productivity and decrease the time people spend away from their day job. It also allows people to shape learning – if there is a need for a particular module then it can be commissioned. Many doctors, in particular, are excited about e-learning."

There are currently two pilots in the Yorkshire and Humber region for a new national learning management system,

at the Humber Mental Health NHS Trust and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Lorna Smith at Sheffield Teaching Hospitals says: "I am thrilled to be involved in the pilot of the National Learning management System and hope to be able to influence the system and implementation for the better."

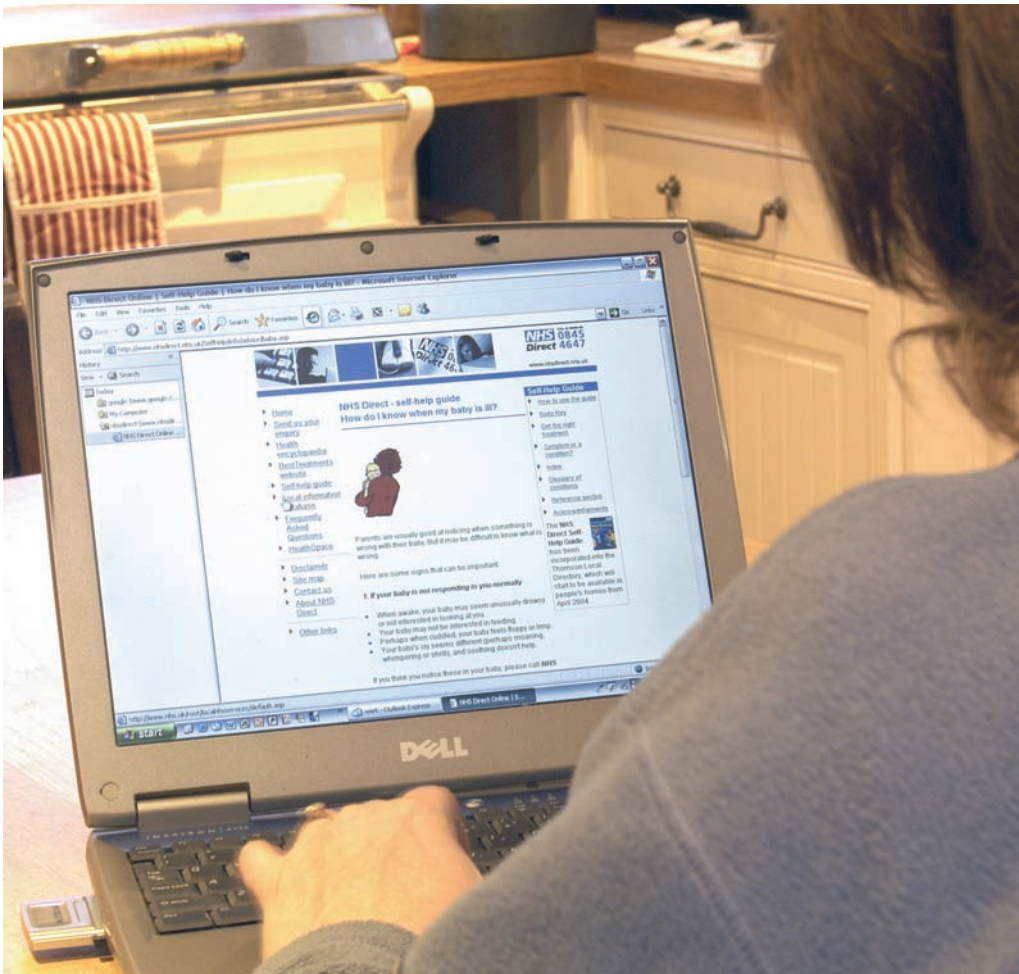
The development of the regional e-learning platform has been a good example of collaboration between NHS organisations. The North West region joined Yorkshire and Humber is the procurement process and the partnership will continue in the content development phase.

In fact, there are plans for three combined development days this year, the first of which should be in July.

Mike Farrell, head of educational development – NHS Academy North West, explains: "The idea is for people to share their experiences and to spread good practice."

He adds: "There are two main advantages of collaborating on this project: economies of scale and the sharing of knowledge. It works for everyone concerned."





Case study

Conquering fears

Lynne Shields, Support worker, Fast Resonse Team, North Yorkshire and York PCT

Everyone has a different tale to tell about how they arrived at e-learning. Lynne admits she was never interested in computer or IT and hadn't even heard of e-learning until a change of career in May 2007 forced the issue.

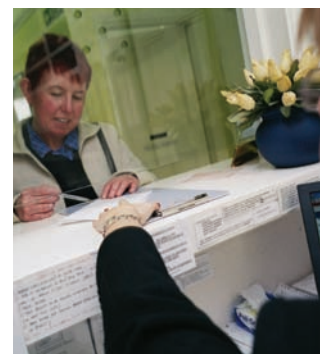
"I must admit I'd never even turned a computer on. Then I realised that in my new role with the Fast Response Team I would be asked to put clients' details on the computer as part of the Single Assessment Process.

"Luckily it was then that I met my e-learning mentor at the PCT who very carefully and patiently introduced me to computers and took me through the e-learning modules I needed."

Lynne still doesn't feel totally at ease with computers but she has worked through all of the mandatory modules in e-learning and would do more if necessary.

She adds: "I've worked in the NHS for 15 years and never had to use a computer until very recently, so I had a bit of brain overload at first, but e-learning is very straightforward and you can do it at your own pace.

"Thankfully there are e-learning mentors around with the patience to point people like me in the right direction."



How you can have a say in the future

NOW that the new e-learning platform is live, the obvious question is: how can I have a say in what content is available?

Maria Neary is chair of the regional steering committee for e-learning. She explains how people can influence the development: The regional steering committee will meet regularly and contain representatives of each organisation in the e-learning club. These representatives will bring ideas from their staff about what e-learning modules need to be developed.

"The committee will consider these and make a case for them to be professionally created and available to all."

Helen Smith, associate director

KEY CONTACTS

Jonathan.Brown@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk

Maria.Neary@bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk

A full contacts list is on page 4

of workforce strategy, believes that this approach sits well with what is now happening in the NHS at large: "We are seeking local solutions to satisfy local needs."

Kath Hinchliff, associate director of education commissioning, adds: "If people ask for particular modules then we will respond to the demand. Our role is to evaluate the effectiveness of e-learning, but I believe that it will open up opportunities for people which

they haven't experienced before.

"It's a learning community that is coming together. Now we want to promote learning champions who can influence the future, can lead by example and raise the profile. It really is the future for learning.

"E-learning does not suit everyone – we realise that – but there are all sorts of possibilities for attracting people into it. For example, we could investigate mobile e-learning."

Kath believes that statutory modules, covering such areas as health and safety and equality and diversity, will become even more important as legislation continues to change and that the beauty of the new platform is that it is easily adaptable to meet new and growing needs.



How the new system works

THE NEW regional e-learning platform offers a great deal more than its predecessor.

For example, it will give organisations the chance to share content across the system when they choose to do so.

Jonathan Brown, senior programme manager, explains: "We need to make best use of precious resources when developing content and avoid commissioning the same content from external providers but retain the ability for local customisation to suit organisational need – this is one of the main benefits of the club."

Organisations will also be able to develop their own content and present it under their own branding. In addition, the system will be configured to local demands.

Another advantage of the new system is that it will be able to host content of a local nature as well as national learning modules.

Jonathan adds: "Perhaps one of the biggest strengths of the new platform is that it has a much better reporting interface. That means that organisations know exactly what e-learning has been carried out and by whom.



"The reporting is also administered at a local level which will help organisations immensely."

Finally, the new e-learning platform is compatible with existing national IT systems such as, for example, Electronic Staff Records (ESR).

Jonathan concludes: "The new system offers so many opportunities and will be straightforward to use. We also hope that because it is so good, the transition at some future point to a national platform will be all the smoother.

"Listening to organisations and responding to their needs is the key to progressing the utilisation of e-learning across this region. The collaboration with organisations on the procurement of the system has been exciting and demonstrated the desire for people to work together in this area – reinforced when the North West area joined the tendering process."

Diary of events

6 May: Serco software release

For information on steering group dates email lucy.proud@yorksandhumbersha.nhs.uk

For information on forthcoming events email jonathan.brown@yorksandhumbersha.nhs.uk

E-learning contacts

Organisation	Name
Airedale NHS Trust	viv.naven@anhst.nhs.uk
Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	kevin.palmer@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Barnsley Primary Care Trust	jeremy.robbins@barnslepct.nhs.uk
Bradford and Airedale Primary Care Trust	liz.allen@bradford.nhs.uk
Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	maria.neary@bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk
Bradford District Care Trust	Matt.oconnor@bdct.nhs.uk
Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Trust	bev.france@cht.nhs.uk
Calderdale PCT	liz.butterfield@kirkleespect.nhs.uk
Doncaster and Bassetlaw NHS Foundation Trust	neil.pease@dbh.nhs.uk
Doncaster and South Humber Healthcare NHS Trust	sue.sparks@dash.nhs.uk
Doncaster Primary Care Trust	carlene.holden@doncasterpct.nhs.uk
East Riding of Yorkshire Primary Care Trust	pat.garcia@erypct.nhs.uk
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust	claire.fozzard@hdfnhs.uk
Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust	barry.mellors@hullpct.nhs.uk
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	colin.melville@hey.nhs.uk jacqui.smales@hey.nhs.uk
Humber Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust	paula.bulmer@humber.nhs.uk
Kirklees Primary Care Trust	liz.butterfield@kirkleespect.nhs.uk
Leeds Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust	maria.warner@leedsmh.nhs.uk
Leeds Primary Care Trust	june.goodson-moore@leedspect.nhs.uk
Leeds Teaching Hospital	maxine.morris@leedsth.nhs.uk
Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	karen.vella@midyorks.nhs.uk
North Yorkshire and York PCT	lesley.cavanagh@nyypct.nhs.uk
North East Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust	hazel.owen@nelpct.nhs.uk
Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust	john.kemp@nlg.nhs.uk dorothy.colquhoun@nlg.nhs.uk
Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust	fiona.ibberson@rothgen.nhs.uk
Rotherham Primary Care Trust	mary.curtis@rotherhampct.nhs.uk
Scarborough and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	trudie.fellows@acute.sney.nhs.uk
Sheffield Care Trust	karen.dickinson@sct.nhs.uk
Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust	alison.dubbins@sch.nhs.uk
Sheffield Primary Care Trust	shelley.holden@sheffieldpct.nhs.uk
Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	veronica.burley@sth.nhs.uk Lorna.smith@sth.nhs.uk
South West Yorkshire Mental Health Trust	maggie.bell@swyt.nhs.uk
Wakefield District Primary Care Trust	susan.moloney@wdpct.nhs.uk
York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	sue.holden@york.nhs.uk
Yorkshire Ambulance Service	john.pawelec@yas.nhs.uk
NHS Yorkshire and the Humber	helen.smith@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk
NHS Yorkshire and the Humber	jonathan.brown@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk
NHS Yorkshire and the Humber	kath.hinchliffe@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk
NHS Yorkshire and the Humber	helen.pottinger@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk
NHS Yorkshire and the Humber	Carole.sheard@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk

