

Award winning eLearning motivates staff at the Aldingbourne Trust

At the Aldingbourne Trust, a West Sussex based enterprising charity which supports adults with learning disabilities, eLearning isn't just saving valuable charity resources, it's also directly helping to engage and retain staff. Declaring the Trust a winner of a top Charity Learning Award 2012, judges said they were particularly impressed with the impact of eLearning on staff motivation.

Return on investment from using eLearning at the Aldingbourne Trust

- **Cost:** The Trust saves £25 every time someone completes a course online, compared to sending them on an external course. In addition, the cost of covering their absence with agency staff is approximately £70 per day.
- **Time:** If someone can top up their CPD in an hour or two, this allows them to provide better support to others - and more of it.
- **Retention:** Offering free eLearning 'anytime, anywhere' has been recognised as a benefit by staff and volunteers in recent surveys – particularly courses where qualifications can be achieved.
- **Evidence:** As the system is online, the reporting evidence it provides allows managers to interpret staff strengths and development needs, and to demonstrate learning to external stakeholders such as the local authority or Care Quality Commission.

The Aldingbourne Trust supports adults with learning disabilities across West Sussex to develop independence. With 220 staff, and additional support from 70 volunteers, the charity values inventive and creative thinking, as it helps it to come up with alternative, sometimes radical, new directions for its clients.

When Martin Botting joined the Trust in January 2010 it was using a conventional approach to L&D, mostly delivered by internal managers and external providers in workshops. Having introduced eLearning at a previous employer, Martin realised the potential for mixing technology into the L&D blend and was keen to demonstrate this to the organisation. Key internal stakeholders were impressed with the project and his thinking, and the introduction to eLearning was quickly signed off.

A learning library, where all courses can be accessed by all staff and volunteers, was launched in 2011. It's been an unqualified success – helping to engage and retain staff, whilst saving valuable charity resources. Inspirational case study presentations and networking with other charities at Consortium members meetings has helped with ideas for keeping engagement levels high.

According to Martin Botting: [“After the initial burst of enthusiasm, there was a drop off in use. But I picked up some ideas to reinvigorate use at a Consortium members meeting and haven't looked back since!”](#)

Judges of the Charity Learning Awards 2012 were particularly impressed by the clear evidence of a return on investment from using eLearning at the Aldingbourne Trust, especially the impact on staff motivation.

According to Martin Botting: “As general economic conditions have toughened, holding on to well trained and engaged staff is paramount as it enables us to continue our mission. eLearning is enabling us to keep moving forwards - together.”

Three top tips to eLearning success from Martin Botting, Organisational Development Manager, the Aldingbourne Trust

1. **Get the reporting system working right.** Every month, each manager (and their line manager) gets sent an email showing who has learned what. This is an incredibly powerful way to encourage managers.
2. **Take the time to show it off.** A great number of people won't find the time to look around your eLearning offer. Get to their staff meetings with a laptop and internet access, and then show them what it can do. This boosted the users in some of my projects to 50% of staff.
3. **Reward engagement:** If people use the system, share their learning and achievements: give out prizes; shout about teams that get behind it. It will encourage other people to find out what the fuss is about.



Notes for editors

The Aldingbourne Trust was awarded the Charity Learning Award 2012 for Getting Started or Restarted on Your eLearning Journey (small charity).

For more information, photographs and/or interview requests, please contact Susie Finch: email sfinch@charitylearning.org or call 01453 768855 mobile 07938 632057

About the Aldingbourne Trust

The Aldingbourne Trust is an enterprising charity based in West Sussex that really engages with its supporters and visitors. The Trust support people who have a learning disability to have the same opportunities as everyone else to live independent lives and wherever possible, gain useful employment in the local community.

For more information about the Aldingbourne Trust, visit www.aldingbournetrust.co.uk

If you want a better understanding of how the Aldingbourne Trust eLearning scheme works please visit <https://charitylearning.mediacore.tv/media/elearning-at-aldingbourne-trust-4>

About The Charity Learning Consortium

The Charity Learning Consortium (CLC) enables cost effective eLearning within more than 100 Third Sector organisations, making online learning available to countless volunteers and well over 100,000

staff. We're the largest group of charities, housing associations and not for profits working in the voluntary sector in the UK, collaborating to make eLearning affordable. Organisations join us to save money, but also benefit from networking with others with similar aims, learning from each other and sharing resources, ideas and best practice. Members also enjoy special discounts and specialist workshops designed to help them make the most of eLearning.

Collaboration is at the heart of what we do. Find out more at <http://www.charitylearning.org/>