Get Connected Investment Project

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Document reference number	DHI+DDMMYY+doctype+000X *DHI270117S0009*
	o E = exploratory report o L = lab report o F = factory report o S = summary document o LR = literature review o RR = research report o MR = market research o MAP = mapping o V=video o O= other

Publication date	27/1/2017
Revision date	
Revision number	

Purpose of document	Summary of digital skills related document
Other detail (delete row if appropriate)	

Related projects	Names and doc reference numbers
Keywords	digital skills; funding; social care

Get Connected Investment Project

Specialists in Care, Quality and Innovation

Social care institute for excellence

ARP

Objectives and role of ARP

The objective for the funding is that access to ICT is improved for users of service, family carers and staff to enhance the quality of life offered with the service and improve opportunities for learning. ARP was appointed to undertake a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of the grants distribution process. The report doesn't seek to evaluate the impact of the grants but on the investment process itself, and the various ways to distribute £12 million fairly across the sector of approximately 25,000 social care providers.

Results of the Get Connected Investment Process

At the time of the report most grants have been paid out with the remaining grants to be finalised in the 3 months following the report. Around 5% of the sector, some 1,200 social care provider organisations, have been allocated an average of around £10000 each for essential computer equipment and/or training, to become truly connected. Most grant recipients were allocated their requested amount, in cycle 4 grants were reduced by a small percentage to ensure all successful applicants could share in the remaining grant available. Whilst the complex process of application, evaluation and prioritisation, and implementation have been difficult for both applicants and assessors, very few complaints have been made during the project.

Highlights

There are many contributing factors towards the success rate of the process:

1. Excellent leadership of the project, with strong technical leads in each of the different operations.

2. Good team working between the main partners (SCIE, CTT, LASA), with the external consultants, ARP and NIACE/IES fully engaged at each stage of the process. Individual project partners may be good, but they need to work together to be effective. Regular formal partner's meetings ensured that different specialists worked together seamlessly across Get Connected operations.

3. An External Advisory Board, performing the customer role in the project and consisting of a strong core of organisational leaders representing the service user in the social care sector.

4. A considered and flexible approach to business process development. Many decisions during the planning phase helped in this regard:

    a. 4 cycles to allow specialist bids and provide 4 windows of opportunity
    b. Each cycle has 2 stages, allowing double filtering ensuring applicants met project criteria and received value for money.
    c. Extending project time when necessary
    d. Special cases were subject to pragmatic special rules

5. Information management – the choice, development and consistent use throughout the project of excellent operational and management systems.

6. Due diligence and fairness of opportunity were cornerstones of the assessment processes.

7. A cost-effective payment and audit policy, with ~20% of grant recipients randomly selected for detailed audit, research. Or site-visit to ensure the grant had been used for the agreed purpose.

Conclusion

The sum of public money available (~£12 million) was distributed fairly among the social care provider sector. Over 1,200 sector providers secured a grant. Research suggests these organisations are likely to be the vanguard of the digital revolution. Experience from the project could be used to inform the ongoing ICT development in the sector.

Recommendations

- Seek further financial resources for 'more of the same'.
- The GC programme should to continue to foster relations with and benefit from joint working with similar organisations.
- Consideration should be given to helping tackle issues of implementation, support and

sustainability now being faced by grant recipients.

- SCIE has a lead role to play in the promotion of good practice, having gained considerable knowledge and understanding of projects of the sector.