

CASE STUDY 12 – First net:gain completer from Cosmic



It was the constant drive to achieve and demonstrate quality improvement that persuaded Mark Goodman, Chief Officer of Voluntary Youth Services (VYS) Devon, to embark on the net:gain programme at his local centre, Cosmic.

VYS already had a strategic plan and annual work plan in place, but neither made any reference to ICT. Mark saw net:gain advertised, and realised it could be just what his organisation needed. Cosmic is well known in the South West: Mark had worked with them over a number of years, and had a good relationship with the staff there.

Says Mark: "Very few organisations appreciate just how important a role ICT now plays in their organisational effectiveness – we were no exception: I knew we needed to spend some time reflecting on where we were and what we wanted to achieve with ICT."

VYS is not a large organisation, but it provides practical help and a voice for youth groups across the whole of Devon – a wide remit that requires excellent communication, networking and collaboration. Effective, efficient systems and continual review of policy and best practice. Many of VYS's goals for the year revolved around these challenges, areas where effective use of ICT is bound to have an impact.

Mark is pleased with the outcome of the work – which has tied ICT into his planning in just the way he hoped:

- From April 2007 VYS will have replacement strategy for ICT hardware, with monies set aside each year to meet this commitment.
- Next year's Work Plan now has a section on ICT development
- The work will support their Strategic Plan (2008), setting out needs and plans in relation to ICT

On a practical level, VYS has already begun to see improved communication between staff, and better reporting. On a personal level, Mark says that joining net:gain has improved his knowledge and understanding of ICT, especially how it supports organisational development.

"I'd recommend net:gain to any organisation that is serious about investing time in improvement, and wants to get the best out of the tools available: it helps you learn from others who are much more experienced than you, to guide your future planning"

net:gain delegate
Mark Goodman
Voluntary Youth Services
t 01392 250976
e admin@vysdevon.org.uk

net:gain centre
Julie Harris
Cosmic
t 01404 813226
e julie@cosmic.org.uk

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024 768 53054

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