



## Course Management made simple at Sandwell

According to the British Education Communications and Technology Agency (Becta), up to 56% of teachers are concerned that a lack of good quality Information Communication Technology (ICT) instruction is hindering their continued professional development. This is not the case at Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, where keeping teachers and other school staff up-to-date with the latest technology is a fundamental part of the service they provide. The authority's use of Capita Children's Services (Capita CS) **One Training Manager** helps them manage an extensive range of training and technical support offered to schools across the West Midlands, saving hours in administration time and enabling them to double efficiency.

**One Training Manager** is a computer-based system used by local authorities to manage and administer training effectively. One area in which it has been particularly successful at Sandwell is in their provision of training and support for Capita CS SIMS Management Information System (MIS), used by 99% of schools for storing pupil and other essential information such as staffing details and finances. The authority is committed to ensuring schools capitalise on their investment by offering managers, teachers and administrative staff access to all the training and support they need in order to benefit from a greater understanding of the potential of SIMS, and its capacity to inform good decision-making to raise standards across the school.



"We are incredibly proud of the standard of training and support we provide at Sandwell. Delegates attend courses from almost all 120 schools in the area, with many travelling in from other local authorities across the region", says Janet Smith, Business Manager to the Schools Management Information Systems (SMIS) Team.

In the last eight months, the team has run more than 200 SIMS training sessions at Sandwell, which have helped almost 2000 administrative and teaching staff develop

skills, such as how to effectively record and monitor pupil attendance to tackle truancy. Other courses offer guidance on how schools can make better use of the assessment results and financial information being collected each day. Janet is responsible for the team's administration and is delighted with the administrative time she has saved since the implementation of **One Training Manager**.

Initially processed on paper, the course booking procedure was later transferred onto an Excel® spreadsheet. Managing bookings for the extensive range of courses offered each term was a time-consuming task which sometimes required a whole day to complete.

# CASE STUDY

## One Training Manager

"The transition from our previous system of recording bookings in Excel® to managing courses through **One Training Manager** was very smooth. Now, booking delegates on courses is effortless as their names and contact details are automatically drawn from the main computer system. We can also add new courses in no time by simply cloning existing course details; for the 200 courses that run over the year this saves us 3-4 days in administration and enables us to use our time more effectively."

In addition, attendance registers for all the authorities' courses were previously written by hand, but **One Training Manager** enables these to be printed instantly; saving even more time.

Another way in which the system is benefiting the authority in the management of courses is that the team can now produce certificates of attendance quickly and easily whenever they are needed. These are useful for schools to include in training files and enable individuals to have a record of their own achievements. There is also a complete record of each delegate's course attendance now available within the system and Sandwell can provide schools with detailed reports on the quality and variety of training their teachers and other staff have received; giving them vital evidence of value for money and supporting the team's service level agreement.

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The wealth of historical course data now available to the team within **One Training Manager** is seen as a vital source of information that can be used to monitor training patterns, inform decisions on course content and ascertain which courses are most popular. Sandwell recognises the importance of this information and plans to enter the details of courses from the past five years which will enable them to carry out more extensive analysis, over a wider time frame.

Sandwell has plans for developing a host of new training options to meet the needs of a growing community. The region is in the midst of an ambitious regeneration programme with thousands of new homes and four state-of-the-art health centres being built over the next 14 years. Massive investment has enabled three new City Learning Centres to open their doors and funding from the government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme will enable a complete refurbishment of the borough's secondary schools.

To support this expansion, Sandwell plans to develop the existing training programme to include teacher and early years provision training, courses for businesses, training for social services and tuition for children's services personnel. **One Training Manager** will continue to provide the authority with the excellent administrative support they rely on and the system could also help with the management of catering, resources and invoicing for the training courses planned for many of these new institutions.

"These are exciting times for our region and we intend to ensure our services continue to provide Sandwell's teachers and schools with the training and support they need to deliver the best for our children and young people."

**Janet Smith, Business Manager at SMIS**