

delivering and managing child protection training

Can the AccessAcademy online solution provide all the assurances required by a responsible employer?

Being 'on message' is one of those phrases which have slipped quietly into the English lexicon. As with most new expressions, opinions are divided over its origins. But the most likely source was the use by Labour MPs a few years ago of electronic pagers which carried 'the Word' from No 10 on how MPs were supposed to respond to the burning issues of the day. All of those involved would therefore be 'on message'.

Child protection is one of those issues over which a responsible person cannot afford to be off message. It is not that an untoward or inappropriate event is likely to happen – they are fortunately very rare – but everyone involved however peripherally with children, young people and vulnerable adults has to know exactly how to handle such a situation if it were ever to arise 'on their watch'.

Beyond common sense

It is not sufficient to rely on common sense with child protection: formal training on procedures is critically important if a job were to involve potential contact with children, and is a requirement of the employing party in most of those cases.

From an employer's perspective it is not enough to leave a new member of staff with a checklist of do's and don'ts. At some point during that employment it may become necessary to demonstrate – and prove beyond doubt in court – the depth and content of the training given to that person.

Short of a written examination, there are few reliable methods of providing, monitoring and refreshing that training apart from online interactive courses.

If the delivery mechanism is of the appropriate standard, and the content



covers the subject to the correct depth, the training can be made consistent for all staff.

Senior managers – typically head teachers and directors of children and young people in local authorities - can be confident that they have taken the necessary steps.

Meeting employers' obligations

AccessAcademy would argue that its Child Protection system meets the demands placed on such a system. The web-based teaching and evaluation tool was designed to track the training given to individual members of staff.

The fact that the facility is hosted centrally by the developer means that if a person moves from one part of a large organisation to another, the details of the training programme completed can be made available to the management of the new workplace. Additional training to meet any new circumstances can then be tailored and delivered.

Checking through the company's portfolio, it is clear that AccessAcademy has

developed the tools to deliver interactive training programmes. There must be a question whether the training methodology is appropriate for the type of course material being delivered and, indeed, whether the content itself is fit for purpose. For a local authority committing to the company's Child Protection system, there must surely be a concern on that front.

AccessAcademy MD Christian Greenshaw accepted that point and explained the accreditation process. "The teaching programme and its contents have been evaluated by a leading international accreditation body.

"It is important that the delivery mechanism, the contents and the management of the learning process are all considered to be fit for purpose."

Assurance of completion

A cynical view might be that, in order to demonstrate that all staff had passed through an online training programme, that 'attendances' could be falsely logged on the system.

Control of the learning process inevitably rests with the organisation on whose shoulders legal responsibility would fall in the event of a subsequent incident.

Greenshaw believes that employers take this seriously: "In the case of a high profile medical institution, training is conducted in a designated room, and management logs the 'students' on to the system for their training and evaluation sessions."§

Information about the AccessAcademy Child Protection system can be located at www.accessacademy.co.uk/childprotection