

HELP - Housing Employment Link Project

What we did

We have written the specification on behalf of the Kent Homechoice Project Board for a software solution that could facilitate referrals and provide a means of tracking customers and record outcomes.

We wanted to equip the Housing Team and wider partners with the skills to refer and signpost customers in housing need, those living in temporary accommodation and other customers into training and employment opportunities with access to wider support services e.g. mediation and debt advice.

How we did it

Ashford Borough Council was selected by the Kent Homechoice Project Board to lead on the development of the tool as we had been selected as a Trailblazer authority and had already started to develop an enhanced housing options service. The project board agreed to contribute to the development of the tool as part of the Kent Homechoice Project Board.

We met with Locata to move forward discussions around the system they were developing to see if they could develop a system to meet our needs in terms of delivering an enhanced housing approach.

Once Locata were appointed to develop the tool we provided them with a comprehensive list of our project outputs and monitoring requirements including the guidance issued by the Communities and Local Government Evaluation team. We also scoped out the specification of the system with the Housing Options team and interested parties.

Who was involved?

The Housing Operations Manager, Housing Plus Project Manager, Ashford Borough Council Housing Option's team, Gateway Customer Service staff and Locata.

In early discussions Tunbridge Wells Council and Rother District Council were also involved.

www.locata.org.uk



Time taken

We envisage the system being made available in July, which will mean the whole project from start to finish will take four months.

Lessons learned

We encountered unforeseen delays agreeing the specification, as the project outputs were not fully defined and, as we had scoped out the basic system, this in turn increased the final cost. This meant we had to go back to the Kent Homechoice Project Board for final approval, as they had contributed to the cost of the system.

Cost

£11,650 (this includes the first year support charge)

Support Costs (£1,500 per year)

Funding has been secured from the Kent Homechoice project board, with the enhancements we identified being funded from Trailblazer.

For more information email: Housingplus@ashford.gov.uk

