

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

1. Title of the practice

- 'IT TRAINING FOR SERVICE USERS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE -

2. Organisation responsible for the practice

Riga City Council, Latvia

3. Contact person(s)

E-mail	policy@esn-eu.org
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4. Summary of the practice

In 2013, the telecom company Lattelecom organised this initiative which gave 50 service users from five residential care institutions for older people the possibility to receive free IT training to improve their computer skills. The aim has been to expand service users' means of communication, particularly with their friends and families and to give them access to the digital world.

One of the residential homes, Mežciems, had eight training sessions for 10 service users and received 10 used computers as a donation.

5. National/regional/local context of the practice

There is no national policy that supports the improvement of older people's IT skills.

6. Staff involved

- Telecommunication company Lattelecom;
- trainer financed by Lattelecom;
- the long-term care institution Mežciems;
- care professionals at Mežciems;
- a social rehabilitator at Mežciems.

7. Target group

Service users at Mežciems who were interested.

8. Aims of the practice

- To promote the use of a variety of communication channels by using IT, such as Skype or email
- To make older people learn more about the benefits of new technology
- To introduce service users to computers and show them that they can handle IT
- To increase the use of computers and the internet among older people in the care home

9. Issues for social services

Service Integration/ Cooperation across services		Service Planning		Contracting	
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Technology	x	Skills development (of the workforce)	x	Quality of services	
Prevention and rehabilitation		Participation of users	x		

ANALYSIS OF THE PRACTICE

10. Status

Pilot project (ongoing)		Project (ongoing)		Implemented practice (restricted areas)	
Pilot project (terminated)	x	Project (terminated)		Widely spread practice/rolled out	

11. Scope of the practice

Describe the setting of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Micro-level practice*: a practice that involves individuals at the local level
- *Meso-level practice*: a practice that involves organisations or communities
- *Macro level practice* : practice that involves large population groups

Micro level, engaging individuals in IT.

12. Leadership and management of the practice

Description of the leadership of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Collaborative management*: shared between large partnerships, often of central, regional and local representation
- *Organisational management*: by one organisation
- *Professional management*: managed by a single person
- *Shared management*: shared with no defined leadership

Organisational management:

The telecommunications company Lattelecom initiated this project, organised an opening ceremony and publicised the initiative. The trainers, who provided eight sessions at Mežciems, were paid for by Lattelecom.

Mežciems initially intended to implement only a small number of sessions to introduce the service users to computers; however, the administration subsequently agreed to facilitate eight sessions in total.

The project has now terminated, but Mežciems is trying to keep this practice going with the support of regular members of staff and the donated computers.

13. Engaging stakeholders in the practice

Description of the engagement of stakeholders, considering the following criteria:

- *Individual practice:* individuals have sought practice change
- *Network approach:* one or more organisations develop a network
- *Collaborative approach:* large collaboration with relevant stakeholders

Access to services: An opening ceremony at the start of the initiative was organised with service users, representatives of Lattelecom, Riga City Council, the Association of Local Municipalities, the Association of Directors of Long-term care institutions, journalists etc. Service users and the public had the opportunity to try using the computers to observe the positive and encouraging attitude from sponsors and society, conveying that IT is also important for older people and that older people in residential care institutions need to be involved and should also be part of the IT revolution.

Care professionals in the institution assisted service users to get to the sessions.

14. Involvement of service users and their families

Description of the involvement of service users, considering the following criteria:

- *Team involvement:* service users and carers were part of the practice team
- *Consultative:* a consultative body of users was set up for an ongoing dialogue and feedback • *Involvement in care:* person-centred approaches to care/support

At service users' meetings and during individual conversations with people at Mežciems, many expressed the wish to learn how to use computers. At the same time, Lattelecom started this initiative to train older people in the use of computers. The administration of Mežciems agreed to take on this opportunity.

The administration informed service users about this initiative in monthly meetings and selected 10 service users who had expressed interest.

This project has now been terminated; therefore, there are no special trainers available anymore. However, the social rehabilitator continues to assist service users who want to use computers.

15. Costs and resources needed for implementation

Description of how the practice is financed, considering the following criteria:

- *Within existing resources:* staff time and other resources are provided 'in-house'
- *Staffing costs:* costs for staff investment
- *Joint/Pooled budgets:* two or more agencies pool budgets to fund services • *Funded project:* external investment

Due to the fact that this was a social project initiated by Lattelecom, there were no costs for the service users or Mežciems.

Other resources:

- Free WIFI provided by Riga municipality.
- To ensure continuity, a social rehabilitator continues to assist service users who want to use computers.

16. Evaluation approaches

Description of the evaluation method of the practice, considering the following criteria:

- *Multi-method*: use of both a qualitative and a quantitative approach
- *Single method*: a qualitative or quantitative approach
- *Audit*: looks at data sources such as existing medical records and/or other routinely collected service data.
- *Informal*: refers to in-house service evaluation using locally designed tools and/or collecting opportunistic feedback
- *No evaluation*
- *An evaluation is planned*

Informal:

Observations of care workers and individual interviews were used to collect feedback about the project's effects.

17. Measurable effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

Service users	<p>Perceptual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five out of the 10 service users who participated in the training – none of whom had ever used a computer before – continue to use a computer on a regular basis. Other service users with some prior IT skills who had not participated in the training were also encouraged to start using a computer regularly.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, the older people at Mežciems use IT more to communicate with relatives and friends instead of just making phone calls. This has made it easier for the service users and their friends and families to reach each other, which has led to more communication between them.
Formal care givers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.
Other	<p>Perceptual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The image of Lattelecom as a socially responsible company has been improved. Further, the initiative has changed attitudes towards older people in residential care institutions by showing that they have the same interests and needs as others in society.

18. Anticipated or 'aspirational' effects of the practice and what it has achieved for...

This category can include outcomes which are not documented, quantified, or properly evaluated. They can include such elements as improved knowledge, quality, workforce, etc.

Service users	n. a.
Formal caregivers	n. a.
Informal carers	n. a.
Organisations	n. a.
Other	n. a.

19. How the practice has changed the way the service is provided (lessons learned)

Lessons learnt:

- It is possible to learn something new at every age.
- It is important to have a variety of activities in residential care institutions, and using IT contributes to that variety.
- One-off campaign-type activities can be an effective way to increase interest in the use of IT.

20. Sustainability of the practice

Description of whether the practice is sustainable, considering the following criteria:

- *Potential for sustainability:* practice was newly started or is ongoing/not yet mainstreamed. How could the practice be sustained (in terms of resources)?
- *Organic sustainability:* service users have been empowered to take the practice forward •
Established: the project has been operational for several years

Potential for sustainability: Although the project has terminated, service users still have an opportunity to use computers in the residential care institution. This has become a regular practice. If needed, a social rehabilitator is there to give individual support and advise the service users on the use of computers.

21. Transferability of the practice

Description of whether the practice has been transferred, considering the following criteria:

- *Transferred:* transfer to other regions, countries, service user groups, etc.
- *Potential for transferability:* there is interest from the outside; elements of the practice have been taken up and used elsewhere; material for transferability (for ex. training material) has been developed

Transferred: During this project, IT training sessions and computers were made available in five long-term care institutions in Latvia.

Potential for transferability:

Usually, the administration of long-term care institutions and service users are prepared to support and accept this kind of initiative, but there are no mandatory requirements to ensure access to IT equipment in long-term care institutions. This project was therefore important to show the necessity of having such initiatives for service users in long-term care.