

Salford

LinkAge Plus

Mobile Information Centre

Mobile Information Centre (MIC) is a bus-sized vehicle staffed by officers, using wireless 3G mobile phone technology linking MIC's laptops to the Council's server, to access:

- the Council's CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system;
- the library service's management system; and
- the Internet.

Mobile Information Centre

Objective

To reach older people, especially those most isolated, across Salford, and provide them with the services and information, which helps them to live independent and fulfilled lives.

Activity

Mobile Information Centre (MIC) has established a pattern of regular venues for visits across the City and is building on that in an effort to increase its customer base. MIC can help with all sorts of council issues from housing to refuse, street-lighting to anti-social behaviour. MIC can also provide support on health, pensions, community safety and much more. A marketing strategy is in place and we have consolidated relationships with partners including managers of venues who welcome a MIC presence, e.g. supermarkets and community centres, and those who have requested a presence at key sites, e.g. wardens of Housing Association complexes, community workers identifying areas where there is a high number of people who are physically and/or socially isolated. In addition, links have been made with a range of colleagues within the Council and the PCT interested in using MIC as a platform, e.g. officers from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny section seeking public consultation opportunities, colleagues promoting the Expert Patient Programme or Dementia Awareness campaign.

The vehicle is able to access venues across Salford and, where appropriate, enables staff to visit customers in their own homes. The laptops can be taken into disabled customers' homes and, using a 3G card, the same connections can be made and service offered, for example to offer 'live' Council services (e.g. processing housing and council tax benefit claims) and information on a wide range of Council and other services. It also contains a 'taster' library service and referral to the opportunities available to older people at their local library or via the 'at home' library service. Partners including the Council, PCT and other organisations use MIC as a platform from which to promote initiatives and consult with users.

Achievements against objectives

Due to considerable logistical issues (staffing) the service has not attained the targetted visitor numbers, due to its not being deployed full-time. However, responsiveness from customers and partners has demonstrated that there is a great potential and plans are in place to develop the MIC considerably.

Wider achievements

As a wide-ranging outreach service for the City's most isolated and vulnerable people MIC has contributed specifically to the objectives of the Council's Older People's Strategy (enabling older people to live independent and fulfilled lives) as well as a number of local

and national priorities around accessibility and inclusion, health and well-being, community cohesion and learning and creativity.

Resources

LinkAge grant funding – vehicle build and running costs, staffing, ICT, books, marketing.

Key lesson learned

- A key strength of the service lies in the 'live' ICT which enables staff to offer the same holistic service as provided in the Council's Customer Services offices, signposting older people to a number of opportunities (from fire safety to affordable warmth advice).
- Do not underestimate the innovative nature of the project, which has resulted in an exciting resource with huge potential, but has also produced challenges in vehicle and ICT design and, especially, staffing.

Further information

Contact: Chris Farey, Assistant Libraries and Information Service Manager, Salford Museum and Art Gallery, Peel Park, Salford M5 4WU

Ref to website: <http://www.salford.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/mic.htm>

Related documents

See website above.

