

# “Where IT’s @”: Evaluation

Paul Ticher

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[paul@paulticher.com](mailto:paul@paulticher.com)

# The aim of the project

- To improve the performance of small advice agencies, through the use of ICT

# What did it provide?

- Software (case recording, benefits calculations, electronic information)
- Training
- Consultancy and technical support
- Broadband provision

# Challenges for the project

- Turbulence (9 agencies left, 9 joined, 11 stayed throughout)
- Changes within agencies — moving premises, changes in funding, activities and staff
- Changes in project funding, so that the package on offer had to change
- Technical developments, especially the rapid increase in availability of broadband

# The software

- Case recording (AIMS) is a triumph in 6 out of the 10 agencies using it
- Benefits calculation fills a specific role — and does this well
- Use of electronic information depends on personal preference

# What the managers say:

- *“AIMS is very, very useful. It gives an up to date daily record ...”*
- *“AIMS ... has improved our recording and given us more information. We [also] think more about data capture.”*
- *“We use statistics in funding bids and in targeting service delivery — we noticed take-up of a particular service was poor among elderly black people and took steps to address that.”*

# Other parts of the package

- Technical support has been well received
- Most agencies' are using ICT more confidently than before the project
- Most training was rated good or excellent
- Agencies felt supported by the project administration
- Broadband provision was problematic, but most difficulties are now resolved

# Overall impact

- The package was well planned and well delivered
- The project made a tangible difference in at least ten agencies
- In some of these it has transformed the agency
- The key to success is management commitment
- ICT is not the whole story to improved capacity, but it can be a key part

# Managers' assessments

- *“We are absolutely positive about the project. It is the type of capacity-building that works”*
- *“We would have got there, but not as thoroughly and not as well”*
- *“It made all the difference. Without Where IT's @ we would still just be word processing on old equipment”*
- *“Where IT's @ has helped up our game ... as part of a raft of initiatives”*

# Some lessons for future projects

- Plan for turbulence
- Run a rolling programme
- Good ICT support boosts confidence
- People differ in their attitudes to ICT and electronic information
- You can't shy away from technical risks