



Scottish Prison Service College Case Study

Respecting Individuals: Recognising Rights

The Scottish Prison Service (SPS) is an executive agency of the Scottish Government; it has an annual budget of just over £210 million and is responsible for the safe custody of more than 7,000 prisoners on any given day. It employs approximately 4,200 staff at 15 establishments including prisons, a training college, a central storage facility and headquarters.

Located in the SPS College, the eLearning Development Unit provides a wide range of e-learning content from initial project scoping through various development stages to implementation, assessment, evaluation and review.

What was the issue facing the SPS?

SPS wanted to take steps in mitigating the Corporate Risks associated with human rights-related litigation. The challenge was to develop a learning solution to improve on the level of knowledge and awareness relating to human rights issues within a custodial environment, allowing staff to get it right first time.

SPS needed human rights issues to be dealt with more effectively within prisons in general and by front line prison staff in particular, and for staff to deal with human rights with more confidence. They also wanted to improve prisoner's knowledge and understanding about the relationship between human rights and Prison Rules.

The solution?

Targeted at all 4,200 SPS Staff, a blended learning solution was deemed to be the most appropriate approach to take. The Director of Prisons felt that the knowledge-based nature of the subject, and the requirement to evidence compliance lent itself to e-learning and subsequently commissioned the **Respecting Individuals: Recognising Rights** human rights-based online training course, and a further classroom-based element to allow staff to explore and discuss the topic in relation to their work.

With a proven record of success across a number of other e-learning courses, and with subject matter expertise in-house, the SPSC team were tasked to deliver a “fit for purpose” product. Originally mandated at the end of 2005, the project was delivered on time, within budget and to the quality standards agreed with the key client sponsor.

Process for Development

The development process was quality assured via the nationally recognised “Skillsmark” Quality Assurance model developed by the UK Justice Sector Skills Council. Quality assurance of content was achieved through direct involvement of all the key stakeholders, which included the Client and the subject matter experts.

The staging of the project ensured the involvement of the Project Board, which included the Client as Senior User. Any subsequent changes to the original project specification were signed off / authorised by the Project Board throughout the lifecycle of the project. SPS also conducted a risk workshop to identify, capture and manage risks associated with the project.

The key deliverables included:

- A portal to access the e-learning within the existing SPS Intranet, that also includes a help and support facility providing immediate reference;
- A core product that engages with learners by providing scenario-driven exercises and user interactivity, and addresses accessibility issues;
- A custom tracking and monitoring mechanism; and
- A reporting structure for senior SPS management and SPS staff training managers.

Workshops were convened to storyboard the course framework, scrutinize content, authorise any necessary adjustments and indicate acceptance. SPSC had previously introduced e-learning content aimed at large numbers of personnel, and as a result already had a sizeable audience familiar with ‘learning through e-learning’. Project Board meetings provided an opportunity for formal product review and acceptance.

Key personnel were involved in the scoping exercise and invited to attend every development workshop. The development process included:

- Facility to comment on and sign off prototypes;
- Provision of an online development portal so they could see the product evolve and comment on changes immediately; and
- Consultation on how they wished it rolled out and at what locations. These were subsequently built into the implementation plan.
- Final sign off at Project Board level.
- Commitment to review the product on a 6 monthly basis.

The product included accessibility features, easy access to reference materials (online, FAQs, video walkthroughs), and was available via a programme portal accessible by desktop link.

Implementation

A national key performance indicator (KPI) of 90% course completion by April 2007 was set following a high profile presentation to senior Governors.



Pilot groups were established in line with internal production protocols to gauge initial user experience, document comments, identify and resolve any issues, and feed this back into the review process. Focus groups were also used to gauge learner experience in a more qualitative measure and a process of continuous improvement ensured that improvement changes were able to be implemented swiftly.

The team also ran a series of briefings with local Staff Training Managers (STMs) as these personnel would be key in supporting elearning at a local level.

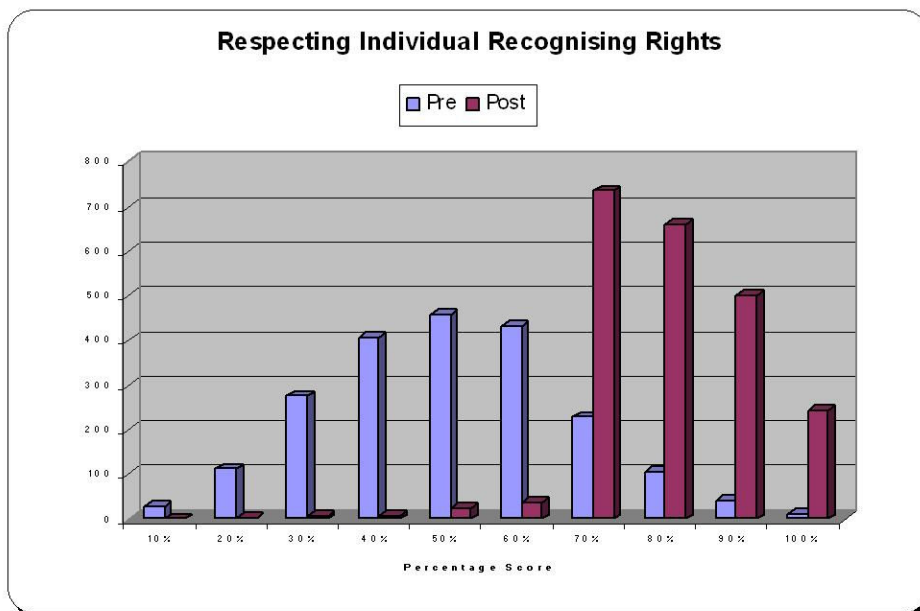
Results?

SPSC wanted to capture as much feedback as possible - both during the learning and after. Through facilities such as a direct contact facility 'in course' (via email buttons and the Resources section) they were able to capture such feedback. All evaluation submissions and electronic enquiries were read every day and responded to within 24 hours; and summary reports and graphs based on evaluation returns were produced and disseminated to all stakeholders on a weekly basis.

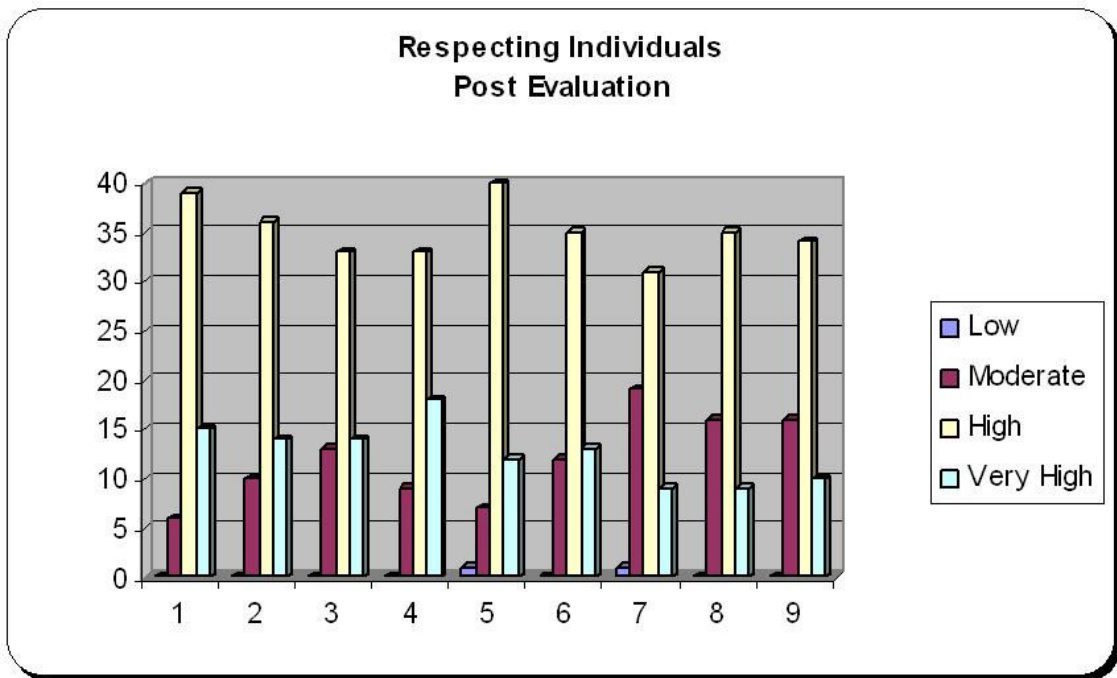
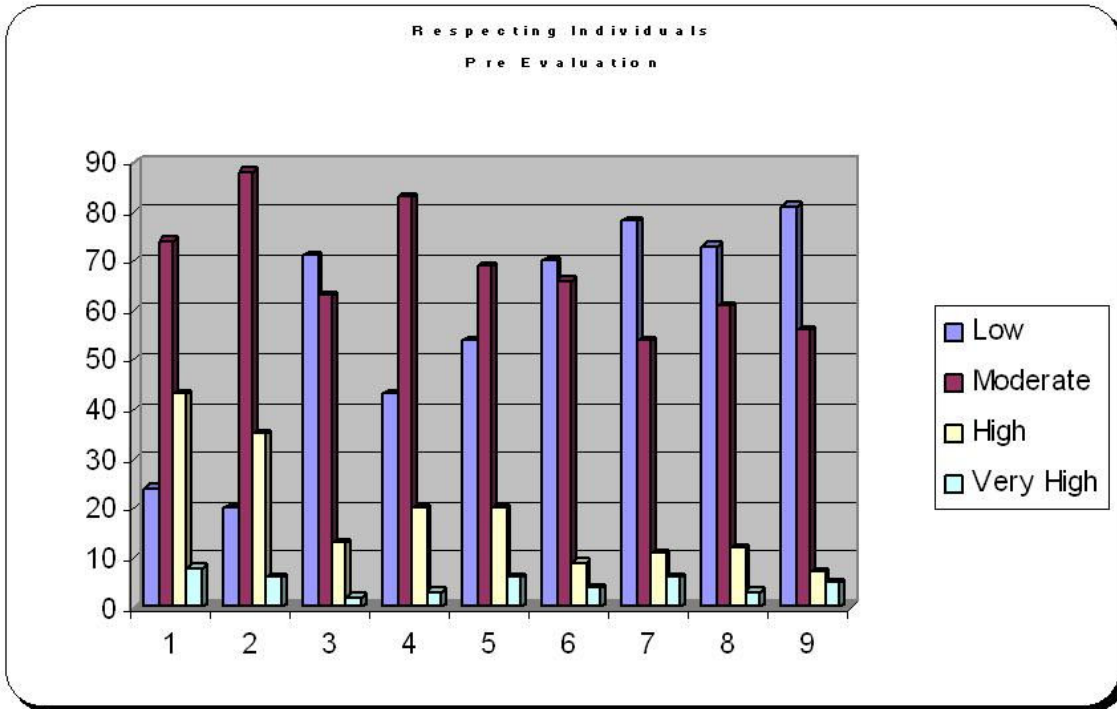
SPS experienced a very positive reaction from learners and interest from other countries looking for similar solutions.

In any given month the organisation continually achieved a completion rate of more than 90%. 4,090 learners have started the course and 3,900 have completed it. SPS cite the very high level of Client engagement as being a contributory factor in the success of this particular product.

Pre & post assessment scores confirm that knowledge has increased as a result of taking the course (see chart below):



Pre & post course evaluations showing learner's perceived level of knowledge and degree of confidence in their abilities to deal with human rights-related issues is shown in the charts below:



Staff are now able to 'hit the ground running' when attending any subsequent classroom-based workshop sessions. Feedback from workshop facilitators has been very positive indeed and they have been able to streamline their sessions due to the greater level of pre-requisite knowledge learners bring to the workshops.

The SPS anticipates a measurable improvement in staff-prisoner relationships (as measured in the Prison Survey) but perhaps more tellingly the number of prisoner on staff assaults on the latest quarter is down in comparison with last year and is currently below their required KPI.



Having created the 'first of a kind' product which targets and directly addresses a major risk facing the SPS, the SPSC team are now geared up for new challenges. The product has generated a significant level of interest across both the UK Justice Sector and also within the Scottish Government.

The product was short-listed for the Institute of IT Training awards 2007, is included as evidence for an Excellence in Civil Service award 2007 and has also been put forward for a Butler Trust Award which recognises an ordinary job extraordinarily well done. The staff involved in the design, development and implementation of the **Respecting Individuals: Recognising Rights** human rights-based training course are to have their efforts recognised by the Scottish Justice Minister at an awards ceremony in Edinburgh Castle early 2008.