

## Using technology to support technology - Citrix® GoToMeeting®<sup>1</sup> reduces the cost of training and improves the service and support for staff implementing the e-KSF at NHS Blood and Transplant

### About NHS Blood and Transplant

The NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), a Special Health Authority within the NHS, is responsible for ensuring the supply of blood, organs and associated services to the NHS. Its work is varied and includes encouraging people to donate organs, blood and tissues, and raising the quality and effectiveness of blood and transplant services; and providing expert advice to other NHS organisations and the Department of Health. NHSBT staff are dispersed across 100 geographic locations in the UK.

### Using collaboration technology to support learners

The geographic dispersion of staff makes the provision of training in general, and rollout of KSF in particular, to NHSBT's 6000+ staff a challenge for the centralised Learning and Development team, but one that they have tackled head on through the appropriate use of technology.

In 2008 the NHSBT placed online collaboration at the heart of its operation, using Citrix® GoToMeeting® to allow its employees to meet and work online. GoToMeeting has ensured NHSBT can establish a more flexible, responsive and efficient operation, by enabling staff to easily and regularly keep in touch with colleagues without having to travel between sites. Using GoToMeeting, NHSBT staff can meet online and share their computer screen with all participants in order to collaborate on documents, update projects and plan logistics. Electronic drawing and annotation tools such as highlighters and arrows, combined with the ability to easily switch back and forth between presenters, ensure interactive and productive discussions.

GoToMeeting has been installed centrally by the IT team at NHSBT and is a cost effective solution for a range of business needs. Conference telephone numbers are free-phone so there are no excessive call charges levied. NHSBT don't have and don't need an advanced IT network to support the use of this technology. Many systems don't allow the use of video or sound yet GoToMeeting works seamlessly for staff. There is also no support required for individuals to understand how to use the software, this can be taught within individuals first use of the technology.

### Introducing e-KSF

The GoToMeeting technology has proved itself ideal as a tool to introduce staff to the e-KSF system, and to provide training and support "virtually" to geographically dispersed teams.

NHSBT has made great strides with the initial steps of implementing the KSF, however the challenge was how to report progress with implementation. Initially a spreadsheet was circulated for completion by team managers. This was a time consuming and lengthy process and also potentially not 100% accurate. In September 2007, NHSBT made a decision to make e-KSF a mandatory system for all staff covered by AfC, to reduce these reporting challenges and also to realise the wider benefits the KSF will offer following a more efficient roll-out to staff.

e-KSF training is embedded within a wider Basic IT Skills course offered by NHSBT, which is provided to all staff in an effort to raise the level of IT skills amongst staff. e-KSF Awareness for Managers and Reviewers sessions have been provided which lasted 1.5 hours and covered the main processes of assigning post outlines to staff, planning the review, recording the review and creating the Personal Development Plan (PDP). These sessions are now drawing to a close and have had approx 250 staff attend.

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<sup>1</sup> Other online collaboration tools are available. Think Associates Ltd does not specifically promote or support GoToMeeting.

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Although this formal classroom training is available to all staff, there are a number of individuals who will require additional support or a quick reminder / refresher session following training. To provide this training in classrooms is both costly and logistically complex, in particular for NHSBT. It is also not the most efficient way to provide 'ad-hoc support' to staff who often require troubleshooting support on certain aspects of the process. It is here that GoToMeeting has had most impact.

*Working for a national organisation, it would be impossible to provide instant face-to-face support to our dispersed workforce whenever a staff member calls me with an e-KSF training need. However, using a blended learning approach with GoToMeeting really helps deliver that training, without anyone having to spend hours travelling. I can sit at a computer and on the phone in Sheffield, and train staff who at the same time are sitting in offices in Bristol, Manchester and London. Is it the right solution for everyone? No! However, it is a tool which has helped a lot of staff receive e-KSF training here at NHSBT, and it will continue to be used to help support our staff for the foreseeable future.*

**Warren Carratt, National Learning & Development Consultant - e-Learning & ICT, NHSBT**

### **Benefits of GoToMeeting**

The use of GoToMeeting to train and support learners in the e-KSF has demonstrated the following benefits:

- It is a proactive way of supporting users just when they need it and staff no longer need to wait for the next available training session which could be too far in the advance to be of immediate benefit.
- It reduces the cost of providing additional refresher training and support (no travel, no lunches, no room hire etc) and gets over the geographic hurdle of staff in disparate and remote locations. (The use of GoToMeeting has already saved thousands of pounds for the Learning and Development team.)
- As training can be provided within individuals' workplace then there is no time lost when individuals are out of the office travelling and as a result it's often easier for staff to fit training around existing workloads.
- Individuals appear to be more engaged in the training / support as it enables more targeted 1:2:1 support.
- It reduces the barriers to the implementation of the e-KSF as people no longer have the excuse 'I don't know how to use it'.
- Even if immersed in the KSF / e-KSF then it can still be difficult for leads / champions to understand where an individual is experiencing problems, through the use of GoToMeeting the ability for users to take control of the screen and be the presenter to show the support staff / champion where they are having problems takes out the guesswork.
- For staff who are able to work from home, they can still access support from within the organisation or working at another NHSBT location.
- When groups of staff require training it can be used within meeting or training rooms meaning the trainer no longer needs to be onsite.
- Sessions can be recorded for staff to access at a later date.
- For the Learning and Development team who need to think of themselves more as a business / service provider within the organisation the use of GoToMeeting offers another way of increasing the service and value they provide to staff.

*"I found GoToMeeting really easy to use, and it really helped me understand how to navigate through the e-KSF. Not having to leave my desk made the training even easier to access, and knowing I could always have a follow up session put my mind at ease".*

**Biomedical Scientist, Manchester**

### **Organisational benefits of this approach**

Over 200 staff have now received some form of support on the KSF / e-KSF using GoToMeeting and although it will not entirely replace classroom based training the increasing pressure on training budgets will continue to make this an invaluable support mechanism for NHSBT to support the implementation of the KSF and e-KSF, along with other learning and development needs and their wider business/organisational agenda. The aim is to reach 100% of staff with a signed off review and Personal Development Plan (PDP) on the e-KSF.

**To read more about how the NHSBT is using GoToMeeting please [click here](#).**