

# Operation Reach Update January 2013

## Aims of project:

One of the problems arising out of the drive to reduce our paper publications is that many of our staff do not have any or limited access to email and the internet/intranet – what we call our ‘hard to reach’ employees. For those who do not have access to the Citrix environment, this numbers approximately 3,000 employees.

Operation Reach intends to gather information on non-office based staff which establishes:

- Who hard to reach groups are and who are their direct line managers/supervisors
- How/where they work
- If they have access to mobile technology in their work
- If they have access to internet at home
- If they are willing to provide personal email addresses or mobile numbers to receive CYC news and notices
- If not, how else they can be reached
- How we will record this information, who will maintain it and how it will be used.

The cost of producing paper based publications for staff communications has become unsustainable, both environmentally and financially and so the key aim is to ensure that we can contact more and more people electronically. While many of our ‘hard to reach’ employees do not have direct access to computers/mobile data handsets at work, they often do at home and may be happy to provide personal email addresses/mobile numbers to receive updates and news from the council.

With the introduction of the new iTrent self-service HR system, staff will also need to be able to view and maintain their personnel/pay information online.

There are also many more staff now who use mobile technology provided by CYC in their work. We need to be able to bring this information together so that we can utilise it for general communications purposes and keep all our staff informed.

Operation Reach intends to bring together work that has already been done in reaching out to non-office based staff and creating a hub of contact information across the council that can help us do this.

### **Operation Reach steering group**

An operation reach steering group was set up last year to help collect the information and decide on process. Members include:

- Annette Clark, Communications Officer, OCE
- Jane Benson, Business Support manager, CAN
- Niall McVicar, Family Information Service, ACE
- Ben Wilson, ICT, CBSS
- Marilyn Summers, iTrent and HR transformation project manager, OCE
- Ali Lilly, Business Change Manager, ACE

### **Activity and progress to date**

Several data capture exercises took place using paper permission forms sent out via managers to hard to reach groups and also with payslips that are sent to home addresses over the summer which asked for permission to send email or text messages regarding important staff communications to personal addresses/mobile phones.

We have had 408 respondents, most of whom have supplied personal email addresses or mobile numbers to receive email/text alerts and messages.

This group comprises a range of employee types including cleaners, caretakers, care workers, refuse operatives, teaching assistants and adult education tutors.

A spreadsheet has been created with the data and details contact preferences (SMS/Email). Mailing lists and SMS lists have been created by Communications using this data. These are used when sending out important all-user emails or publication dates for the staff e-magazine, buzz (externally available on web).

Copies of the data files and hard copy forms have been sent to HR Business Centre for filing and inputting to iTrent.

All of the hard to reach groups in CAN directorate such as cleaners, highways & civils, refuse operatives and drivers, have been approached for permissions either through their managers or through the paper form exercises or breakfast meetings.

### **WorkWithYork**

Many casuals and other hard to reach workers are now employed through the WorkWith York recruitment pool managed by Karen Bull and this is allowing us to establish more formalised contact with them on a regular basis.

Presently, they have the following types and numbers of staff on their books:

- Admin/Clerical – 59 (most of these have email access)
- Manual – 69: Waste loaders, Drivers, Park Attendants, Caretakers, Cemetery workers, cash collectors, street cleaners (mostly classed as hard to reach)
- Libraries – 105 (most of these have email access)
- Other – 15 Passenger transport assistants, Adult tutor support assistants (classed as hard to reach)
- Professional – 38 (what type of workers are included?) Social workers, Care managers, specialist teachers, E crime investigators, learning and work advisors, environmental health officers, accounting staff, IT analysts, project managers, contact supervisors, family support workers, housing managers, trading standards inspectors (not classed as hard to reach)

- Social Care Staff – 273: General assistants, Care assistants, care leaders, mental health support workers, learning disability support workers (classed as hard to reach).
- CYT Staff (teachers and support staff) – 227: includes MSAs, teaching assistants (mixture of hard to reach/e-enabled)

The iTrent team is also mapping the management reporting lines across the organisation which will make it easier to deal directly with managers and supervisors of hard to reach groups.

### **SMS service**

Using Pinacl SMS credits from central Pinacl account we have now set up SMS messaging service for use by Communications Team to send texts to subscribers . They are currently being used to alert people to publication of buzz so are only sent to those with internet access either at home or at work (currently 140). Each text costs 4.2p so each communication costs around £6. 2,000 credits were allocated and there are 1,200 remaining however, it has not been established whether there will be available funding/credits to continue this service in future. This is being investigated.

### **Other communications channels**

A TV screen has been set up in the EcoDepot canteen which is regularly updated with news items from buzz and colin and other sources.

Staff can also use PCs with internet access in the canteen and access the council's intranet and buzz e-magazine.

Notice boards around site all carry latest editions of buzz and all-user emails.

Breakfast sessions regularly held at EcoDepot and York Explore with attendance from Health and Wellbeing, HR, Lottery, and other employee services. Currently has been restricted to CAN employees only however this is to be opened up to all hard to reach groups.

## Next steps

- Further permission form exercises to be undertaken with remaining groups of staff ie Youth Services, EPHs and other care establishments and WorkwithYork hard to reach groups.
- Data verification exercise to be undertaken to cross check existing information
- Survey of personal SMS/email subscribers to gather feedback on service
- Input of data to iTrent so people can maintain their own information going forward and up to date reports can then be run on regular basis.
- Identifying specific individuals with no access to internet/email/mobile data and working with their managers/supervisors to develop ways to keep them regularly informed of important news, HR, health and wellbeing initiatives etc.