eLearning Supporting Children with Exceptional Healthcare Needs

eCom Scotland

Setting the scene

NHS National Services Scotland (NHS NSS) is a Non Departmental Public Body which provides advice and services to the rest of NHS Scotland. Accountable to the Scottish Government, NSS works at the heart of the health service, providing national strategic support services and expert advice to NHS Scotland. The Children with Exceptional Healthcare Needs (CEN) Network is part of the National Network Management Service a division within NSS.

The CEN Network needed to develop and create two updated learning resource, for all practitioners and undergraduates (students) working with children and young people with exceptional healthcare needs. The learning resources entitled "Communication -NSS" and "Coordination-NSS" aim to strengthening specialist services for children with complex and exceptional healthcare needs in Scotland.
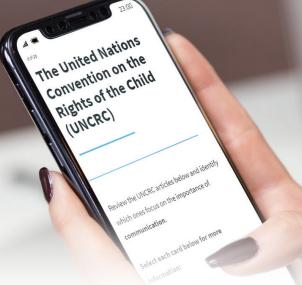
The Challenge

The Communication -NSS module it was essential to provide an accurate understanding of the importance of children and young people's right to communication, how to ensure their voices are heard and that their views are respected in all decisions involving them. The resource needed to highlight the challenges of communication with non-verbal speakers and increase awareness in the use of Additional and Augmentative communication resources to enable communication. The resource also needed to cover all the unique aspects of caring for children and young people with communication barriers.

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The Coordination-NSS module needed to focus on the importance of delivering a streamlined and co-ordinated response from practitioners in care planning and delivery across all ages and through

Transitions (health, education and social care). The module should enable Practitioners to feel confident, understand, listen to and be actively involved in provision of co-ordinated care and show how important the need for the child's views to be taken into account, whenever consent is sought in relation to healthcare through assessment of their developmental capacity in accordance with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) guidance.

The intended target audience are working in a range of multidisciplinary professional roles including practitioners and undergraduates (students) working with children and young people with exceptional healthcare needs across health, local authority and the voluntary sector.

The CEN Network also wanted to encourage learners, through learning activities, to reflect on personal attitudes, beliefs and work practices as well as how they interact with children, young people and their families with communication issues and or in need of a more co-ordinated care. Learners need to increase their knowledge and experience in caring for children with exceptional healthcare needs and their families through completion.

The Solution

Having decided on a digital delivery model, the CEN network issued a competitive tender to help them select a provider.

eCom was delighted to be chosen as the winning bidder and our instructional design team worked closely with the subject matter experts (SME's) to make a visually appealing, easy to navigate module structure. This ensured the learning resource would be intuitive and not overly complicated. Giving it the ability to suit a wide variety of users regardless of their level of confidence in using technology whilst still maintaining the Networks' vision.

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Because of this good working relationship with SME's eCom were able to ensure the brand and visuals were appropriate to the resource which often required images with specialist themes. These needed to be created by eCom designers.
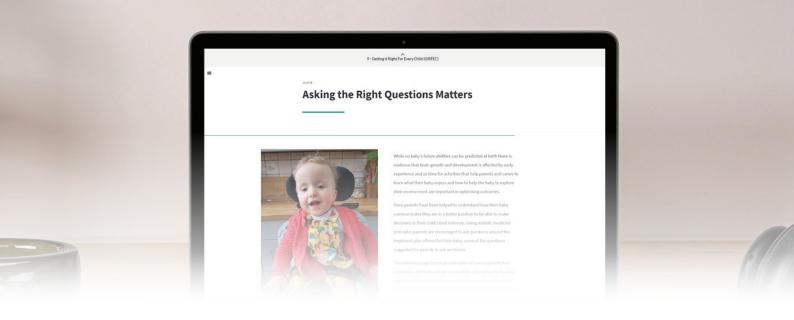
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Asking the Right Questions Matters

While no baby's future abilities can be predicted at birth there is evidence that brain growth and development is affected by early experience and so time for activities that help parents and carers to learn what their baby enjoys and how to help the baby to explore their environment are important in optimising outcomes.

Once parents have been helped to understand how their baby communicates they are in a better position to be able to make decisions in their child's best interests. Using realistic medicine principles parents are encouraged to ask questions around the treatment plan offered for their baby; some of the questions suggested for parents to ask are below.

This will encourage better co-ordination of care as parents feel included as partners and are aware of the alternatives to the plan suggested. Best Scotland has adopted the principles of Realistic

Together the eCom team and SME's identified where opportunities for reflection and a number of interactive features such as knowledge checks could be included throughout the resource, as well as producing a downloadable journal for users to add reflections and answers. This helps confirm that participants have gained the required knowledge, skills and attitudes needed when caring for children, young people and their families. eCom also ensured compliance with the current accessibility legislation for eLearning content.

eCom met all of the CEN Network requirements, with the result being a high-quality, useful and informative eLearning resource that supports additional practice based learning tasks where

required, such as the study of journal materials that were specially made for the course.

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The benefits

The eLearning produced by eCom, helps CEN easily reach and deliver training to the intended audience in an engaging way, helping them develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to ensure they deliver appropriate care.

Learners are able to work through the content with a supervisor, a group of peer

learners or solo at a time that is most suitable for them. This flexibility ensures that training can be easily fitted around existing work commitments.

Using the Turas Learning Management System as the digital delivery model ensures that training can be delivered in a cost-effective way, removing the need for travel or time away from the learner's day-to-day responsibilities. The content can also act as a refresher if required.

Ultimately, the learning resource help CEN support competence in this key area for the NHS.