

Yorkshire and Humber Grid for Learning

Yorkshire and Humber Grid for Learning Foundation Ltd (YHGfL) is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee which is owned by 12 local authorities in the region. We were created in such a way that any services taken by member authorities do not have to be procured from us – the 'Teckal exemption' means that we are, in effect, a traded service of each authority. This saves each authority money and effort in obtaining services, rather than having to procure them individually from other providers. As we are owned by the local authorities, it also means that we represent less risk than commercial providers and, because we are not-for-profit, we only need to cover costs so we are normally more cost-effective than alternative providers. All of these factors mean that our relationships with client authorities are not the normal commercial client/contractor ones.

One key principle that we work by is that we do not duplicate what is already happening in the region: instead, we add value. This approach means that our focus is on aggregating demand, expertise, experience and value for the benefit of all member local authorities saving time, effort and money. We are an embodiment of collaborative working across the region, at the same time offering leadership, a focus for innovation and an exemplification of excellence. This was recognised in October 2010 when we were awarded an ICT Excellence Award for Support for Schools.

Our services

All of our services have been developed specifically to fulfil a demand identified within the region – and they are responsive to what our local authorities need. Our services go through a process of continual improvement which is based upon frequent and repeated discussions with colleagues at all levels of the local authorities including elected members, staff in schools, corporate IT departments, education support and improvement services and local authority officers. Our work covers a whole range of services from approaches to teaching and learning to network design, implementation and development.

Broadly, our services fall under a number of headings:

- Consultancy
- Network and technical services
- Staff development
- Education and related services

Consultancy

Our staff are well qualified and can provide technical consultancy across a range of areas from aspects of teaching and learning to network security and design. Where such consultancy can be shown to benefit a number of local authorities, no extra charges are made – providing substantial savings on commercial consultancy rates. In the past year, we have provided consultancy on such issues as:

- eSafety
- eSecurity
- embedding ICT across the curriculum
- the use of learning platforms
- utilising network capacity effectively
- effective configuration of school networks
- traffic monitoring and shaping

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but does give a feel for the breadth of services we can offer.

Network and technical services

Our support and technical development teams have a range of well qualified staff who are dedicated to supporting the region, including a dedicated eSecurity Manager who works closely with our eSafety Manager to provide a coherent approach which includes both behavioural/attitudinal and technical considerations. We currently manage a resilient and reliable region-wide grid which provides an interconnect between local authority WANs and Janet: during the past year, we procured the latest version of the grid which will have core network capacity of around 10Gb with two scaleable 1Gb connections into each connected local authority.

For those authorities connected to the grid, such as Rotherham connectivity cost just over £81,000 in 2010-11, some **£57,960** (at today's prices) per year cheaper than the previous low bandwidth non resilient solution.

We also provide ISP services for those authorities who wish to take them: our services are accredited. Our services include:

- Email
- Filtering
- Virtual Private Network
- Reverse Proxy
- Domain Hosting
- Windows Update Service
- Web Hosting
- Video Conferencing
- Failover ISP
- Support Desk

Our ability to aggregate demand means that we are able to provide savings through a variety of agreements with suppliers. One deal in autumn 2009 provided over £0.75m savings against published educational discounts for AV software and this year we launched a VPN service with an annual cost per user under £5 – a substantial saving from commercial offerings..

Staff development

YHGfL organises a range of CPD workshops, seminars and conferences all of which are free to people within member authorities. These include the following events which have been run over the last 12 months, in some cases repeatedly due to high demand.

- Using LOC8 within the classroom
- Creating Online Content
- Monitoring solutions demonstration
- Cyber Bullying Conference
- Using Video Conferencing in the Classroom
- Using the Fuse Content Creator
- Introduction to Blogging

- Using Tuned In Drum Beats in the classroom
- Identity Provision Workshop
- 2DIY Content Creation
- Data Handling & Security in Schools
- Blogging & Podcasting
- Yorkshire and Humber Regional Advisors Conference
- Engage with Animation
- Social Networking - Catch up with the Kids!
- Parental Engagement and Online Reporting
- Basic Video Production
- Information management and data handling for schools
- Safer Internet Day
- Ways to combat Cyberbullying for professionals working with young people
- Learn to Love your Learning Platform Conference
- Making the News 2

It is worth noting that Rotherham had a total of 20 delegates at these events.

In addition, we have an agreement with a commercial training provider which means that we can offer significant discounts on technical training relating, for example, to Cisco courses and ITIL training.

Education and related services

We have an experienced eLearning team which includes a dedicated eSafety Manager who is a member of a number of LSCBs around the region.

Among other services and resources, we have:

- YHGfL website which gives access to a wealth of information, advice and guidance
 - eSafety
 - Resources and CPD
 - News and Events
 - Training/support videos for download
 - Signposting to other online resources and support
- ShareIT schools' blogs – a safe, secure and reliable blogging system for schools which can be fully customised.
- ePods which is a dedicated podcast storage and retrieval system which has been made available to all schools. Hosting of podcasts via Podium would normally cost an average secondary school an annual fee of £300.
- Innovation Fund – YHGfL provide funds and support for innovative projects of up to £2000 per project.
- Support visits – the eLearning Team will carry out a range of support visits on request, for example eSafety sessions including parents' evenings.
- Regional Groups – these groups are made up of local authority representatives from across the region. They enable sharing of information and resources,

sharing of good practice and CPD opportunities. Groups facilitated during 2010/11 by YHGfL include:

- Regional eLearning Group
 - Regional Network Group
 - Regional eSafety Group
 - Regional CLC Managers Group
 - Regional Primary ICT Consultants Group
 - Regional ICT Advisors Group
- Promotion of information, news, events and good practice from LAs to schools via the website, the eNews Blog, Twitter and the ShareIT newsletter both in hard copy and online.
 - YHGfL arranges free trial access for the region to a range of educational resources with a view to aggregated purchasing where appropriate. For example, the Immersive Education deal which saves schools up to 90% on the educational RRP.
 - Support to Initial Teacher Training providers via work with the Teacher Development Agency and direct to providers including Leeds Universities.

YHGfL and Rotherham

In the financial year 2010-11, Rotherham was very much involved with YHGfL. Clearly, some aspects of that involvement are difficult to quantify – particularly, for example, attendance of colleagues at meetings where expertise and effective practice are shared – but there are also a number of specific benefits.

Rotherham

YHGfL continue to support Rotherham on their eSafeguarding journey: for example, our eSafety Manager is a member of the LSCB eSafety Group.

We have continued to engage with schools where possible at staff meetings, conferences and with innovation projects such as the Papershow project.

We have also been able to identify some specific savings and added value from which Rotherham has benefitted in the past financial year:

Video Conferencing:

Facilitation of the regional video conferencing provision (provided free at point of use) costs **£16,900** per year, or £1,410 per authority. It is likely that should an authority wish to provide this service individually the cost would be similar for the authority as for the region.

Audio Networks:

A national agreement was negotiated to provide access to both of these resources free at point of use to schools. Again, it forms part of the eLearning Services and the cost to the region equates to not quite £180 per authority. However, an annual blanket licence for each school would cost £3,000 per school – even at a 50% discount that would cost **£195,000** for the LA as a whole.

LOC8:

The Consortium contributed to the development of the LOC8 product which was provided as a free at point of use resource for the region's schools. The cost of provision regionally equates to around £260 per authority annually. It's difficult to provide a commercial price for this service but, even if it was as low as £500 per school per annum, this would equate to **£65,000** for the LA as a whole.

Making the News 2:

The Consortium contributed a one off payment of £5,000 (just over £400 per authority) which gives all schools access to this extremely popular resource. Individual school licence costs would be in the region of **£300** per school, equating to **£39,000** for the authority as a whole.

CPD events

Delegates from Rotherham who attended our events have praised their content and the venues. Non-Consortium attendees were charged £150 per person per event and for the 20 delegates who attended conferences this year this would equate to **£3,000**. If provided by an external provider this cost would be substantially higher.

Innovation Fund

Rotherham was involved in the developments of Papershow and Rotherham Journalist via the YHGfL Innovation Fund, which gave grants totalling £3,000 to these projects.

Explanation of how numbers/costs are calculated

To enable consistency, for billing and allocating, we calculate that Rotherham have 43,928 pupils, in approximately 130 schools.

Rotherham's contribution to the Consortium works out at approximately £3.23 per pupil. Of this, 12p covers the running of the Consortium itself, while the balance provides services. The eLearning services, including all the free at point of use products, seminars, workshops and expert advice costs just £1.27 per pupil.

Summary of benefits 2010-11

Item	Per Annum Savings	One off Value Provided
Connectivity	£57,960	
Videoconferencing	£15,490	
Audio Networks	£194,820	
Loc8	£64,740	
MTN2	£38,580	
Innovation Fund		£3,000
Seminars		£3,000
Total	£371,590	£6,000

Rotherham's contribution for 2010-11 was £141,803 which generated annual savings of more than £371,500 and added value of around £6,000 – or additional benefits of **£2.66 for every £1 contributed.**

The future

YHGfL is committed to building its value to its member authorities and so we are developing our capabilities, capacity and services. In the coming years of budget cuts, we recognise that saving money is critical for local authorities, so we are looking for any and every opportunity to aggregate demand in order to deliver those savings. Working in close collaboration with all of the organisations we serve, we want to develop and deepen our relationships and maximise our value to them.