learningpool

Aberdeenshire County Council

Background

When you're a large local authority, responsible for a wide and diverse array of essential services, how do you create a one-stop learning portal that is effective, accessible, and usable for all?

This was exactly the mammoth challenge faced by Aberdeenshire Council's Learning and Development team.

A Vast and Varied Learning Opportunity

Aberdeenshire Council is a large local authority in Northeast Scotland, covering an area of 2,437 square miles (6,316km). The local authority employs over 16,000 people and provides a wide and diverse array of essential services, ranging from the education of school children, support for community learning groups, care at home for vulnerable residents, gravedigging, and the maintenance of network systems – to name but a few.
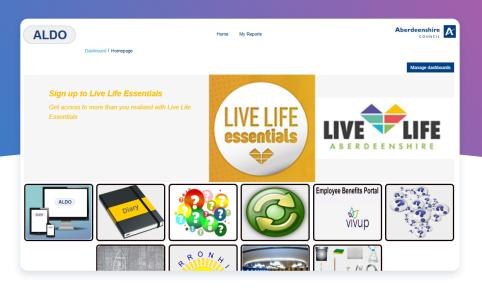
With such a vast area to serve and a range of internal roles to develop and train, a user-friendly solution was key to ensure continuous, at-need learning for the benefit of all Aberdeenshire Council employees.

2437
Square miles covered

16000
Employees

learningpool

Meeting Employee Needs

Aberdeenshire Council employees are enthusiastic, motivated, and committed individuals, who take pride in their work and appreciate the integral role they play in delivering a first-class service to their community. Keen to learn and build on experience, Aberdeenshire Council responded to this challenge by carefully evaluating and revising its training provision. The result? The creation of a blended-learning training model, supported by a modern, digitally enabled learning platform.

The key criteria for the new learning platform included:

Quality
A solution that would meet learner needs (reduce feelings of disruption and increase accessibility) and administrators' high standards (be trackable and user-friendly).

Flexibility
Regarding both functionality and appearance, i.e. a look and feel that would be appealing to the learner.
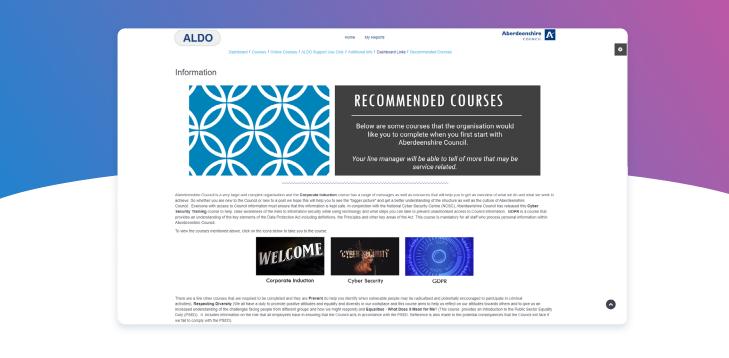
Price
It would need to be cost-effective.

Technical support
It would need to provide reliable hosting and support services.

learningpool

An All-Emcompassing 21st-Century Learning Solution

With many criteria points to hit and a plethora of different service areas to cover, this wouldn't be an overnight process. In addition, it was important to Aberdeenshire Council to bring its platform into the 21st century, with a new look and feel.

Aberdeenshire Council's in-house team introduced Learning Pool Platform to create new content, tools and courses that would meet the needs of all across the business. Thus, with the support of Learning Pool, Aberdeenshire Learning and Development Online (ALDO) was reborn with a new look and feel, along with more interactive and immersive content capabilities.

With accounts created for all employees, elected members, volunteers and partner agencies, such users have access to almost all of the circa 450 courses available (some restricted courses for security reasons or business levels are necessary). All courses are device-agnostic and have been refreshed with support from subject matter experts – resulting in the right content, for the right individuals, within the right teams, at the right time.

Each course can also jump straight to the required content at the exact point of need.

The range of courses spans all service needs, with each one being available either online or face-to-face/virtual. For example:

- Environment & Infrastructure Service - Burials
- Education & Children Services - The Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Program
- Health & Social Care Partnership - Sheltered Housing/Care at Home Induction & program at learning
- Business Services - Leadership and Management suite of courses and digital skills
- Chief Executive Service - Elected Members 2022 Induction Program

All corporate mandatory courses are available on ALDO and form part of the induction processes, again resulting in less time away from the workplace.

learningpool

"As a result of the functionality of the Learning Pool Platform, we were able to work flexibly and supportively with the Aberdeenshire Council's Community Learning and Development team (CLD) enabling us to create a bespoke program of e-learns which are creative and helpful.

The CLD Improvement team also worked with our colleagues in the ALDO team to create a training matrix to match all CLD job profiles within the council. As the elements are in-house, we also created a short video to provide a tour demonstrating how members of staff would navigate their professional learning offer digitally".

Sue Briggs
Strategic Development Officer for Quality
Improvement and Professional Learning

Learning at the time of need - Excellence during the Pandemic

The refreshed and revitalized ALDO provided the perfect solution at the beginning of the pandemic. With all leisure centres suddenly having to shut their doors, staff working within this service were asked to complete a programme of courses to equip them with the knowledge and skills for work in Health and Social Care (i.e. working in Care Homes, Home Care Services, etc.).

This quick action and accessible learning meant that staff was equipped and able to be redeployed in a different sector during the most critical time – securing jobs, and wages, and enabling care for those in great need.

The Impact

"The relaunch and modernisation of ALDO with a new look and feel mean that it is now fit for purpose and allowed us to maximise the benefits of technology – e.g. anytime, anywhere, just-in-time learning, 24/7 accessibility, on any internet-enabled device, to keep increasing training uptake.

Having the support of Learning Pool to implement new changes and technological updates has been invaluable to us at Aberdeenshire Council.

ALDO is now part of our everyday cultural language and landscape – embedded in everyday working life, regardless of levels, roles, location, or responsibility. Feedback on ALDO has been really positive and has given us an indication of what learners want. We will look to expand and reflect this feedback on an ongoing basis, as we will be able to amend content quickly and effectively as needed."

Sharon O'Neill
Employee Development Officer

Through working with the Learning Pool Platform, Aberdeenshire Council has seen nothing short of outstanding results. In the last four years (from 2019 to the end of 2021), course completion rates have risen by over 240%, to over 47,000 per annum. The current total of completions in 2022 (up to the end of June) has already surapssed 2021 figures.

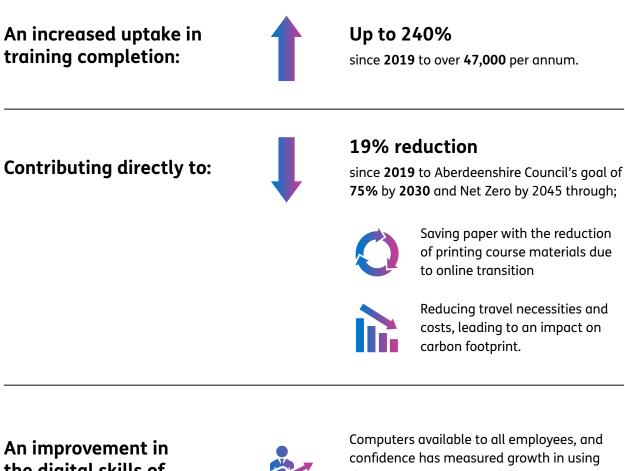This is further reinforced by nearly 600 unique daily logins and an average of 4.1/5 user feedback ratings.

Aberdeenshire Council can also report that its ALDO feedback word cloud consists of phrases like:

- 'Great'
- 'Godsend over Covid-19'
- 'Excellent'
- 'Perfect for online learning'
- 'Valuable'

All such feedback is captured, and any constructive feedback acted upon.

learningpool

As a result, ALDO has seen Aberdeenshire Council achieve:

An increased uptake in training completion:

Up to 240%
since **2019** to over **47,000** per annum.

Contributing directly to:

19% reduction
since **2019** to Aberdeenshire Council's goal of **75%** by **2030** and Net Zero by 2045 through;

Saving paper with the reduction of printing course materials due to online transition

Reducing travel necessities and costs, leading to an impact on carbon footprint.

An improvement in the digital skills of its workforce:

Computers available to all employees, and confidence has measured growth in using their own equipment and devices to access their learning.

The learning journey is continuous; therefore, ALDO will continue to develop, expand, and evolve as individual learner needs are identified. While such changes are inevitable, one thing will remain – with its new capabilities, accessibility and functionality, ALDO will always play a key role within the overall culture of Aberdeenshire Council with continuing support from the Learning Pool team.

learningpool