Case study Carewatch
cutting the cost of IT support and improving end-user adoption
SkillSet worked with Carewatch to analyse support calls that had been received over a three-year period. The analysis showed that over half of all the calls received by the IT help desk were a result of users not knowing how to use Carewatch’s rostering application properly. SkillSet’s eLearning team developed three new eLearning modules, designed specifically to address end-user issues. The new eLearning modules helped Carewatch to reduce the volume of support calls by over 70% in just 12 months.

About Carewatch

Carewatch was formed in 1993. The company was set up to deliver an alternative to nursing and residential care and, following an initial pilot operation in Brighton, has grown to become one of the UK’s leading providers of home care.

Today, Carewatch provides practical, personal and complex care to over 22,000 service users. This figure includes the elderly, as well as those with mental health illness, physical and learning disabilities.

Each service user has a unique set of care and support requirements. They are allocated one of Carewatch’s care and support workers, based on the support needed by the service user and the skills required to deliver such support.

Managing a growing workforce

Following a series of acquisitions and an increase in the demand for home care services, Carewatch’s employee base has expanded rapidly. The company now employs over 9,000 staff in more than 150 offices, making it one of the UK’s largest providers of domiciliary care.

To help it manage its growing workforce, Carewatch uses a staff rostering system. The system, provided by StaffPlan (now part of Advanced Health and Care), is used extensively across the organisation to match staff availability with service user requirements.

The rostering application is used by a small number of administrators in each of Carewatch’s offices. It is used to create and manage care worker schedules and ensure that services are delivered at the right time and to the right people.

Staff were provided with face-to-face training from the system vendor when the rostering application was first implemented. As the organisation grew, Carewatch also developed its own induction eLearning course to support new users of the system.
Reducing the volume of IT support calls

The rapid expansion of the company meant that more and more of Carewatch’s staff needed to be able to use the rostering system. To meet the demands placed on the company’s services, it was important that staff were able to use the tool properly and were confident in performing day-to-day activities within the system.

New users of the system were directed to the induction eLearning course. The course could also be accessed, via the extranet, by existing users of the system.

As a result of acquisitions, staff changes and turnover, knowledge of the system had begun to fade and bad habits started to creep in. In addition, the eLearning materials produced by Carewatch had not been updated or maintained, despite changes being made to the system. Users were no longer using the application efficiently or effectively. As a result, system-related IT support calls had risen.

SkillSet worked with Carewatch to analyse support calls that had been received over a three-year period. Working together, we then identified the issues that needed to be addressed to allow the home care provider to optimise its use of the rostering application. The analysis showed that over half of all the calls received by the IT help desk were a result of users not knowing how to use the system properly. The existing eLearning was not providing users with the knowledge that they needed. SkillSet’s eLearning team developed three new eLearning modules, designed specifically to address end-user issues and reduce the volume of support calls received by Carewatch’s IT team. The modules covered topics such as creating new staff or service user records, amending visit schedules and managing costs and charges. They were designed in such a way that users could easily access materials as and when required. This meant that the help desk could direct callers to the relevant eLearning module, promoting a self-help learning culture. We also helped Carewatch to redevelop its existing induction eLearning.

Using proven instructional design principles, SkillSet developed eLearning materials to ensure that end users were efficient, effective and engaged.

- **Efficient**, meaning they could carry out the necessary tasks to make the rostering application work.
- **Effective**, meaning they could use the system properly.
- **Engaged**, meaning they understood what they were learning and why.

The new learning materials were rolled out in April 2010 and are now being used by staff across the business.
Results

Since the new eLearning has been implemented, Carewatch has seen a significant reduction in the number of support calls received by the IT help desk. Between March 2010 and March 2011, the number of training-related IT calls has fallen by over 70%. Users are now more confident in using the rostering application and are able to use the system more effectively.

The new eLearning modules have helped to reduce dependency on the IT help desk, promoting considerable time and cost savings.

The rostering system provides us with the functionality that we need to manage our growing workforce. That’s meaningless, however, if end-users are not employing it correctly.

We were getting a lot of calls from users asking “how do I do this?” or “how do I do that?”. The help desk was effectively providing training over the phone. This was neither time nor cost effective.

Staff were not using the tool effectively or as intended. As a result, we were not realising the true potential of our IT investment.

The new eLearning materials have really helped end-users to become more confident in the rostering system. The feedback we have received so far has been excellent. Staff understand how to use the system, they are able to perform tasks quickly and efficiently and, most importantly, they have embraced these new ways of working.

Kevin Jezzard, director of IT, Carewatch
A quick word about SkillSet

We’ve been designing, developing and delivering training programmes since 1991, so it’s fair to say that we know a thing or two about training!

- We provide a full range of training services, including training needs analysis, design and delivery of blended training programmes, and post ‘go-live’ support.
- We also work with several software vendors to help them improve end-user adoption within their client bases.
- Working in partnership with our friends at TTS, we provide software and solutions to enable our customers to rapidly create documentation, eLearning and support materials.

Recognised as one of the UK’s leading providers of IT training, SkillSet works with clients from across the oil & gas, pharmaceutical, financial services, retail, healthcare and public sectors. Our growing customer list includes organisations such as BP, Tesco, Lloyds Banking Group, EDF Energy and GlaxoSmithKline.