



Training Manual

# Train the Trainer

Training Users of the LINK Client Recording System

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## About this Course

Welcome to Train the Trainer -- today you will learn to deliver the introductory 'How to use LINK' course. General principles of teaching will also be touched on.

Train the Trainer participants should:

- Know how to use the LINK system
- Understand the training needs of their organisation

Previous teaching experience is not necessary, although if you have some it is certainly welcome. You need to be a communicative, respectful and patient person who enjoys helping other people learn. Ideally you will also be well-organised and enthusiastic about providing effective training for your staff.

Each organisation could benefit from choosing 2 or more people to be trainers because:

- Two heads are better than one. The two trainers can support each other.
- The Train the Trainer programme is intended to be dynamic -- trainer teams can discuss and adapt the courses to the ever-changing needs of their organisation.
- There will be continuity for the organisation when staff members leave.

## Topics Covered

Your trainer will discuss course objectives and timetable with you, but typically it takes about six hours, split into two sessions as follows:

### 1st Session

#### **1 Purpose of LINK**

Benefits of the LINK client recording system – how agencies use it to support work with clients and produce statistics

#### **2 Trainer skills**

What constitutes good training – the role of the trainer

#### **3 Delivering 'How To Use LINK'**

The objectives of the introductory level course – training users to use LINK

### 2nd Session

#### **4 Delivering 'How To Use LINK'**

Training LINK users about client consent and confidentiality – solutions to common problems encountered by trainees

#### **5 Trainer skills**

Practice activities – how adults learn – training tips – explaining procedures effectively

#### **6 Follow-up and support**

Supporting project workers and managers – using the LINK training site – resources available

## Benefits of LINK

LINK is a Web-based client recording system developed by the Homeless Agency, Resource Information Service and homeless service providers in Dublin. There are approximately 60 sites that use it to share information about clients and the services they use. In particular, it is used to support:

### **Clients:**

- assessments of client needs are more accurate and up-to-date
- helps improve quality, appropriateness and continuity of care
- clients only need give their details once

### **Homeless services:**

- data is entered by front-line workers, and therefore more accurate
- workers in different agencies can coordinate their efforts
- data is immediately visible to all permitted users
- agencies can coordinate, target and integrate services

### **Homeless Agency**

- can produce statistics on the homeless population and use of services
- can better monitor the effectiveness of strategies, identify emerging trends & plan for the future

### **Decision-makers & Media:**

- accurate information can be made available to researchers, the media and policymakers

## The Role of the Trainer

All services are being trained to use the LINK system effectively. For project workers, new computer skills and daily habits may be required. For managers and project leaders, there are new responsibilities in terms of implementing the system, making sure it works for them and communicating with trainers to make sure any gaps are addressed.

*The trainers play a pivotal role in all of this.* It is the trainers who make sure everyone understands the system and acquires practical skills. They also guide people through changes in work practices and teach them how to enter accurate data.

The trainer is aided by the fact that LINK is Web-based, live, needs no special IT resources, was developed by a charity to meet the needs of the voluntary sector, and is backed up by support staff such as the Homeless Agency Link Coordinator.

## Teaching Well

Our first task is to answer the question: what constitutes good training? Take a few minutes to think back and recall times when another person was teaching you something. Pay attention to particularly positive and negative experiences, and write down any words or phrases you associate with them.

### **PRACTICE EXERCISE**

Words or phrases that describe teachers and experiences you liked:

Words or phrases that describe teachers and experiences you DID NOT like:

Discuss your thoughts with the group. Is there anything you all agreed upon? Or do the members of the group prefer different approaches to teaching and learning?

## Solving Practical Problems

Next, take a few minutes to imagine you are teaching some colleagues how to use LINK. Form a picture in your minds -- visualise the room, the chairs, the computers and the trainees listening to what you are saying, working at the computer or whatever you imagine to be happening.

Your trainer will divide you into two groups. In the yellow box below, write down any problems or obstacles that could occur.

While in previous exercises we focused on the training itself, this exercise explores practical, organisational and technical problems (such as a trainees arriving late or a computer failing).

When you are finished, get together and discuss your findings.

### **PRACTICE EXERCISE**

Divide the problems on your list into the following three categories:

Problems that could be prevented:

Problems that are best solved as they arise:

Problems that cannot be solved:

# Trainer Task Checklist

Study the following "Trainer Tasks" checklist. Is there anything you would remove? Or some other consideration you would add?

## When Asked to Train



<b>1</b>	<p><b>Determine Link Experience</b></p> <p>Are the trainees new or existing staff members? Do they have prior experience of using LINK?</p> <p>'How to Use LINK' is suitable for people with no or limited experience of LINK. If they are experienced users, they should do a more advanced course.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Identify Individual Training Needs</b></p> <p>Ascertain whether any trainees have literacy difficulties or absolutely no experience with computers. If so, provide preparatory training with them in advance, and offer follow-up support after they have learned to use LINK.</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Determine the Number of Trainees</b></p> <p>Determine how many people require training. Will you be training people individually or in groups? A group of 3 - 6 is small enough for you to provide individual attention, but large enough to encourage discussion.</p> <p>Remember that Project Leaders may need to learn how to set up passwords for their staff, and they require an appropriate password for this.</p>	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Ensure Adequate Facilities</b></p> <p>Each trainee must have an individual computer with internet access.</p> <p>Activities and discussions work very well if you have a table to sit around for part of the course, and/or a white board or flip chart.</p>	
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Arrange Time and Venue</b></p> <p>Ensure that either you or the manager informs the trainees of the time and venue. People often forget if they don't receive a reminder.</p>	
<b>6</b>	<p><b>Prepare the Course</b></p> <p>Print a manual for each trainee.</p> <p>Set up a password to the LINK training site for each trainee.</p> <p>Try out the lessons and practice activities to make sure they work for you.</p> <p>Read over the FAQs to remind yourself of answers to common questions.</p>	

## On the Day of the Course

<b>7</b>	<b>Arrive Early to Prepare</b> <p>Will you be delivering training in a regular venue? Will the IT facilities be reliable? If not, it is particularly important to turn up early and ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- There are sufficient computers, chairs, white board, pens etc</li><li>- Network log-ons are working</li><li>- Internet Explorer (or another browser) can access LINK on each computer</li><li>- You know where the toilets and smoking room are</li><li>- You know what to do in case of fire</li><li>- Tea and coffee will be available for the break</li><li>- There will be no interruptions</li></ul>	
<b>8</b>	<b>Welcome the Trainees</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Welcome everyone to the course. Be enthusiastic and create a relaxed atmosphere. If possible, offer them tea/coffee/cold drinks.</li><li>- If the trainees don't know each other, have them introduce themselves.</li><li>- Remind them to switch off their mobile phones.</li><li>- Ensure that they know where the toilets and smoking area are located, and what to do in case of fire.</li><li>- Clarify what is going to happen during the day.</li><li>- Ask trainees if they have any special needs, questions about LINK or topics they want to cover.</li></ul>	
<b>9</b>	<b>Deliver the Course</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Clearly outline expectations and structure.</li><li>- Remember that people learn by doing. Leave enough time for exercises and questions.</li><li>- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. If relevant, find out the answer and let the trainee know later.</li><li>- At the end of the course, ask trainees to complete the training evaluation sheets</li></ul>	

## Training Adults

Remember that your trainees are adults and treat them as such. Each trainee is entitled to respect, attention, and consideration of his/her previous experience.

Keep in mind that there are factors such as work history, educational background, age, familiarity with computers, health, medication, positive or negative experiences in school etc. that will affect the way in which each person learns.

### **PRACTICE EXERCISE**

Consider the following real life training scenario:

A trainer is showing four trainees how to log onto the LINK website.

The trainer tells the group, "Now, could you please open your Web browser. To do this, you click the **Start** button, look at the top of the menu and then click Internet Explorer, which is marked by a big blue 'E'."

Two of the trainees use the Internet all the time -- they have already logged on and look bored. One of the trainees is a little bit slower, but is getting there. The fourth trainee, who has little office experience, stares at the trainer and says in frustration, "I have no idea what you're talking about."

How would you handle the situation in a such a way that the more experienced people remain engaged, and the less experienced person is neither left behind nor embarrassed at holding the others back?

## Training Tips

The following tips can be useful when training adults:

- Don't assume that everyone is familiar with technical terms like 'web browser' or 'field'. You can always ask the group to define these terms.
- Check to see that trainees have understood information or instructions. It is not a good idea to just ask, 'Do you understand?' 'Right?' 'OK?' Rather, ask questions which will reveal whether or not they have understood.
- Relate new ideas to something the trainees already know. For example, they might consider how records have been kept up to now (on paper), and how this will be done in a new way through LINK.
- Present only one idea or concept at a time.
- Inevitably, some people will be much quicker at picking up LINK than others so it is important to keep their interest engaged.
  - o Have more challenging practice material available for them.
  - o Involve them in the teaching process by having them answer questions that arise (e.g. 'What are databases used for?'). In this way, everyone is engaged and learning. Often, it will raise topics which are useful to all trainees.
- People learn by doing. You will know they have learned the skill when they can apply it to new situations.

## Explaining Procedures Effectively

Divide into groups of two or three. In each pair there will be a 'trainer' who will explain a procedure to the 'trainee/s'.

Your trainer will give you instructions for your roles. Follow them to the best of your ability. When you are finished, hold a group discussion to consider your experience as a trainer or a trainee in the role play.

### **PRACTICE EXERCISE**

Did you gain any new insights? Did anything surprise you?

## Using the 'How to Use Link' Manual

Your trainer will give you an annotated copy of the 'How to use LINK' trainee manual. It has trainer comments that are not in the manual your trainees will be given such as:

- Things you need to know about setting up the course
- Extra knowledge that may be of interest to some trainees
- Pointers or tips on areas of LINK that people typically have problems with

The group will then go through the manual to make sure that you can use it effectively.

## Training Role-play

Now that you are familiar with the structure of the course, try teaching another person how to do something in the LINK database.

### **PRACTICE EXERCISE**

Working in pairs at the computer, one trainee plays the role of the student and the other the role of the trainer. The 'trainer' teaches the 'student' how to do a task in LINK. Take a few minutes to do this. Afterwards, the 'trainer' reflects on how well they feel they did and how they could improve. The 'student' may add some suggestions.

The 'trainer' and 'student' then swap roles. This time the 'trainer' teaches the 'student' how to do a different task in LINK. Again, spend a few minutes doing this and then reflect on how the 'trainer' has done.

Did you draw any new conclusions on foot of this exercise?

## Frequently Asked Questions

The questions asked by past LINK trainees have been compiled into a useful Frequently Asked Questions document. It is likely that you will be asked some of these questions on any given training day.

### **PRACTICE EXERCISE**

This exercise is designed to give you working knowledge of some frequently asked questions, as well as to demonstrate their relevance to your training work.

Each small group or pair of trainees will be given 10 of the frequently asked questions and 10 answers, each on a separate piece of paper. Working together, match up each question with the correct answer.

When you are finished, get back together with the group and discuss any FAQs that you found particularly puzzling, useful or interesting.

## Evaluating Training

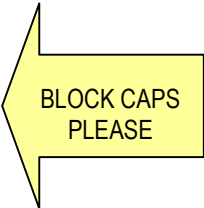
Your final task as a trainer will be to collect feedback from your trainees -- see the next page for a sample evaluation form. You will know your training has been successful if your trainees have acquired:

- The skills to perform basic tasks in LINK.
- Confidence in using LINK.
- A good understanding of how LINK shares and protects client personal information.

Evaluations will give you valuable insights into your strengths and weaknesses as a trainer, and those of the training programme. Please make suggestions for improvements to the Homeless Agency LINK Trainer or LINK Coordinator.

That is the end of today's session. Good luck with your training.

**LINK Training Attendance & Evaluation: "How to Use LINK"**



Name		Date	
Agency		New user?	

*To help us provide you with good quality training, please evaluate the course you have taken:*

	strongly agree	agree	disagree	strongly disagree
	☺			☹
I can now use LINK to enter and look up client information.				
I understand how client data is shared and protected in LINK.				
The instructor communicated effectively.				
The instructor encouraged questions and discussion.				
The practice activities helped me learn.				
The training materials provided were clear and instructive.				
Overall, I am satisfied with this training course.				

*Additional information -- please circle the appropriate answer*

How confident do you feel about using LINK?	Very	Quite	Not very. I need more practice first.	Not at all. I need lots more practice.
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*I am interested in further LINK training. Please contact me at: .....*

*Additional comments --*

Please provide us with any comments that will help us to improve LINK training. Feel free to use the back of the form if you need more room.

