Report

Report to:	**Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**22 February 2021**
Report by:	**Chair of Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Steering Group**

Subject:	**Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project – e-Learning Developments During the Covid-19 Pandemic**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

♦ update the Joint Committee on work undertaken in relation to e-learning for local government employees during the Covid-19 pandemic

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Joint Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

(1) that the work carried out by the e-Learning Sub-group during the pandemic to make e-learning content accessible to employees of all councils who are working at home, be noted; and

(2) that the significant progress achieved in delivering e-learning to the benefit of learners from all Member Councils be noted.

3. Background

3.1. E-learning is at the forefront of the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group's activities. E-learning activities are co-ordinated and managed through the e-Learning Sub-group, which is led by representatives from the Full Member Councils and also attended by Participating Members.

3.2. The purpose of the Sub-group is to maximise the opportunities to share resources and develop best practice. Whilst it has always been a networking group, it has achieved much more through problem solving, driving e-learning innovation and creating a genuine desire to improve the learning experience for all employees across the Clyde Valley Councils.

3.3. Councils have been at different stages in their journey to introduce e-learning to all employees and have had a range of priorities in terms of content and employee groups.

4. Current Position

4.1 The membership of the e-Learning Sub-group had been reconfigured to reflect the changes to the overall Project structure and a new workplan had been developed to focus the Sub-group's work. The workplan was developed and approved by the Project Steering Group and work started on its delivery as soon as the membership of the Sub-group was established.

4.2. Attendance at the Sub-group since the restructuring has involved all 6 Full Member Councils and 10 of the 11 Participating Members. The Sub-group has developed in confidence and expertise over the last couple of years and has responded positively to the additional demands placed upon it by the circumstances since March 2020.

4.3. Since a national lockdown was introduced, relaxed and reintroduced in 2020, the majority of employees of local authorities have been working from home, and in some cases undertaking new roles as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The need for employee training for all councils remains a priority, so that staff can undertake their roles effectively. Classroom-based training has, more or less ceased across all councils, with some limited exceptions.

5. Response to Date

5.1. **Implementation of e-Learning for Employees Working from Home**
As councils reacted to the national lockdown, some rapid responses were required in terms of employees making the shift to working from home. This included ensuring that employees had access to laptops and/or mobile devices to allow them to continue to work, and to access learning. The introduction of platforms such as ZOOM and Microsoft Teams were early examples of methods which organisations used for employees to keep in touch with colleagues and service users.

5.2. For those employees who did not normally have access to laptops for work purposes, there was the option to access work content via their own devices – iPads, PCs, tablets, laptops and occasionally mobile phones. As well as security and functionality issues to overcome, from a learning perspective, councils were keen for employees to be able to access e-learning content and to be able to track that activity too.

5.3. Individual Clyde Valley members, and the e-Learning Sub-group in particular, have been instrumental in supporting colleagues within their own councils in the following key ways:-

- ♦ assisting new learners who may not have any experience of accessing e-learning
- ♦ assisting new learners who did not have any experience of using technology to access learning
- ♦ assisting individual employees with accessing e-learning from a range of different devices and settings
- ♦ assisting Service Managers to quickly develop "e" content to enable new and existing employees to undertake new roles in response to the pandemic
- ♦ assisting learning and development colleagues and service managers to transform classroom-based course content into "e" content quickly without loss of quality
- ♦ working with colleagues in IT departments to problem solve technical issues
- ♦ working closely with Brightwave to remove barriers to provision, caused by spikes in uptake across council services

5.4.   COVID-19 restrictions on working have opened new opportunities for technology-enabled learning. With distance learning becoming the new normal, e-learning (online courses, live webinars/recorded presentations) is becoming the preferred mode of learning.

Due to its nature of anytime, anywhere learning, e-learning has proved to be the best medium to meet the needs of learners faced with the COVID-19 restrictions – socially distant, still connected, and functional.

To ensure COVID-19 restrictions are adhered to and learner demand is catered for, channel shift has been necessary. Urgent demand was met by re-purposing traditional classroom learning, making it suitable for online. This process is ongoing and has resulted in upskilling of Learning and Development employees in order that the new demand for e-learning can be satisfied.

5.5.   A surge in demand for e-learning is now being experienced by councils. This is evident in the statistical diagrams provided by Clyde Valley Councils for the period January/February 2019 to January/February 2021 and traffic via Learning Management Systems (LMS), attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Most Councils experienced high traffic from mid-February 2020, until July. Although the demand then declined, in the main, it has remained higher than the previous year; with a new peak, which begun to emerge in December 2020 and has continued to the present.

For example, Glasgow City Council saw a peak for logins in April 2020 of 22,255. Their peak for logins in 2019, was 13,000 which occurred in March. January 2021 logins were 9,540, compared with 3,000 the previous year. They reported 123,000 courses being accessed, 94,000 of which were completed.

28% of Renfrewshire Council's staff accessed e-learning content in the 11 months from 1 March 2020 to 31 January 2021. Renfrewshire employees accessed almost 46,000 pieces of content (a 24% increase) and completed almost 22,500 pieces of content (an 11% increase), compared to the same period the previous year.

This increase in demand resulted in some councils temporarily increasing contract limits to their LMS. For example, South Lanarkshire Council logins reached a peak of 53,707 in April 2020 (previous peak in demand in 2019 was around 8,000).

Use of Microsoft Teams and other live platforms within councils has also increased, not only for communicating with colleagues and teams, but by providing opportunity for services to meet learning demands with live webinars. It is likely that increased use of these platforms has reduced the heavy demand via LMS.

Services have quickly realised the true potential and benefits of online learning, with lockdown(s) expediating the adoption of e-learning and live webinar, where it was once largely disregarded as a valuable medium. Furthermore, employees have now become accustomed to receiving learning via online means. Lockdown(s) has given the opportunity for barriers to be broken down, where they once existed. This has secured the future of online learning in Learning and Development.

6.   Employee Implications
6.1.   The continued participation and time allocated to the Project by Group representatives remains crucial to achieving the Project's objectives. This is now being demonstrated more equitably through the inputs from both Full and Participating Member Councils.

7.   Financial Implications
7.1.   There are no immediate financial implications.

8.   Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications
8.1.   There are no climate change, sustainability, or environmental implications within this report.

9.   Other Implications
9.1   The Clyde Valley contract with Brightwave concludes in July 2021 and discussions are underway regarding options for a suitable Learning Management system from that point onwards.   Continuity of provision as well as value for money are key considerations.

10.   Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements
10.1.   This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

10.2.   The workplan contained in this report have previously been consulted upon and approved by the Clyde Valley Steering Group.

Gill Bhatti
Chair, Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project Steering Group

27 January 2021

Previous References
♦   10 June 2019 - Clyde Valley Learning and Development Project – Update on Progress of e-Learning Plan

List of Background Papers
♦   Clyde Valley Learning and Development Joint Committee Minute of Agreement

Contact for Further Information
If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-
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Summary of login data

| Council	Peak logins 2019 (approx)	Peak logins 2020 (approx)	Peak Logins Jan 2020 (approx)	Peak Logins Jan 2021 (approx)
Angus Council	Aug - 8,589	Aug - 8,000	2,454	4,000
Argyll and Bute Council	Feb - 900	Apr - 2,728	900	1,600
Clackmannanshire Council	Aug - 3,400	Apr - 5,409	800	2,400
Dundee City Council	Sept - 2,100	May - 6,887	1,000	3,500
East Renfrewshire Council	Mar - 650	Apr - 4,531	500	850
Falkirk Council	Aug - 2,500	Apr - 6,290	1, 200	2,700
Glasgow City Council	Mar - 13,000	Apr - 22,255	3,000	9,540
Inverclyde Council	Aug - 1,150	May - 1,000	700	500
Orkney Islands Council	Nov - 2,200	June - 3,044	700	2,175
Perth and Kinross Council	Nov - 4,000	June - 8,920	1,900	3,000
Renfrewshire Council	Dec - 2,800	July - 3,343	600	2,900
Scottish Borders Council	Nov - 2,709	May - 6,318	2,200	4,900
South Lanarkshire Council	Feb - 8,000	Apr - 53,707	5,000	35,000

Login by month per council

Angus Council
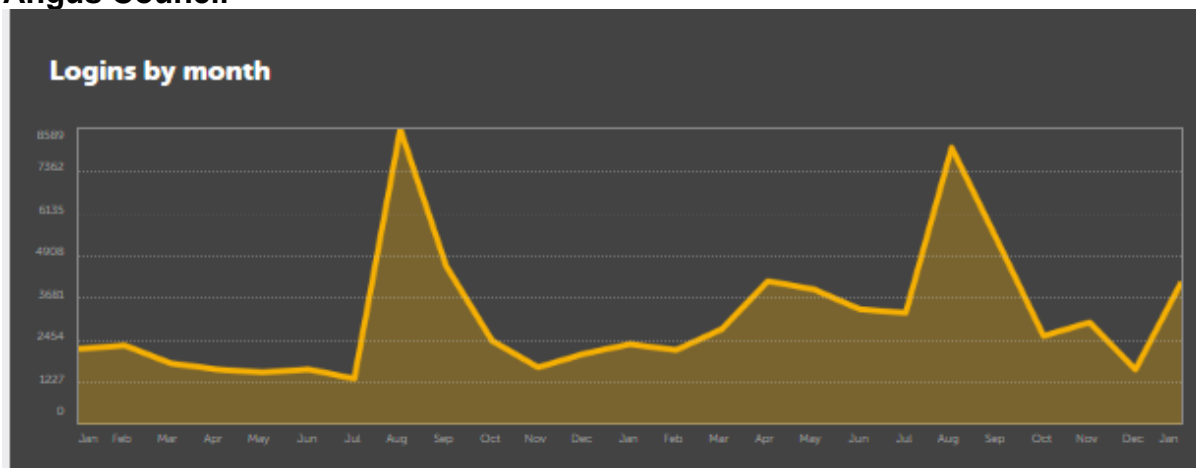
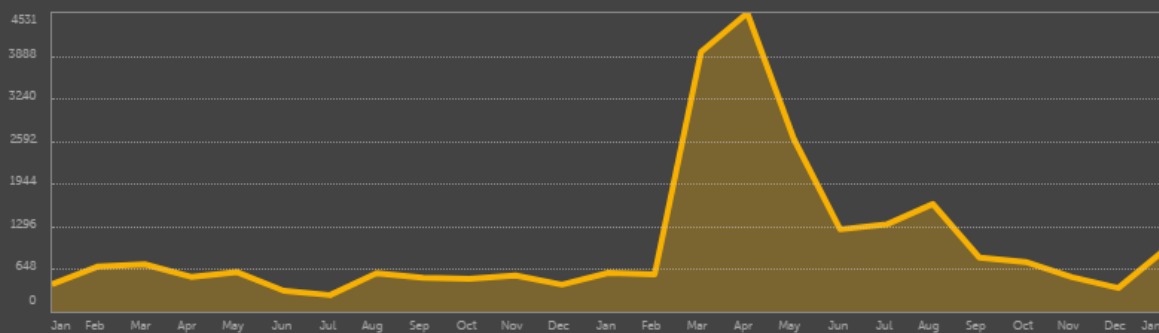## Argyll and Bute Council
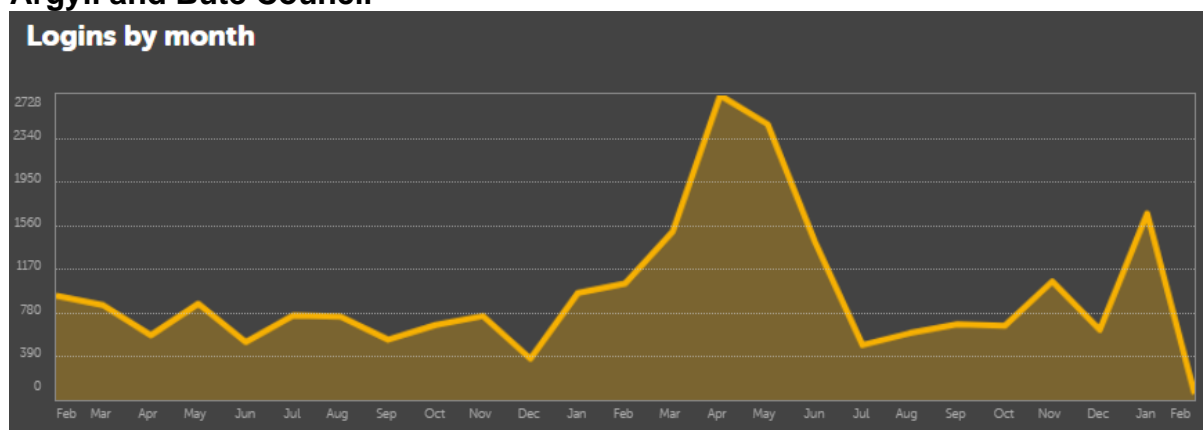
Clackmannanshire Council

Dundee City Council

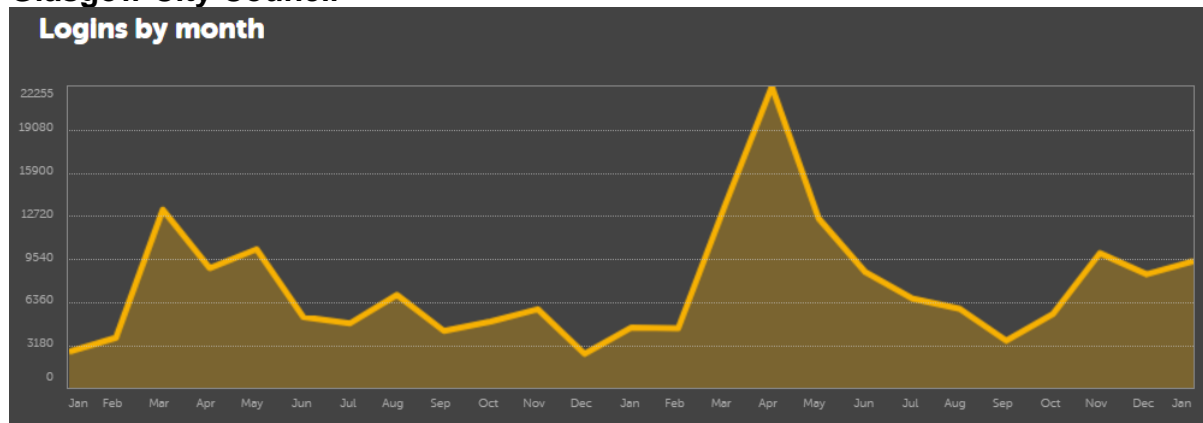Logins by month

East Renfrewshire Council

Logins by month

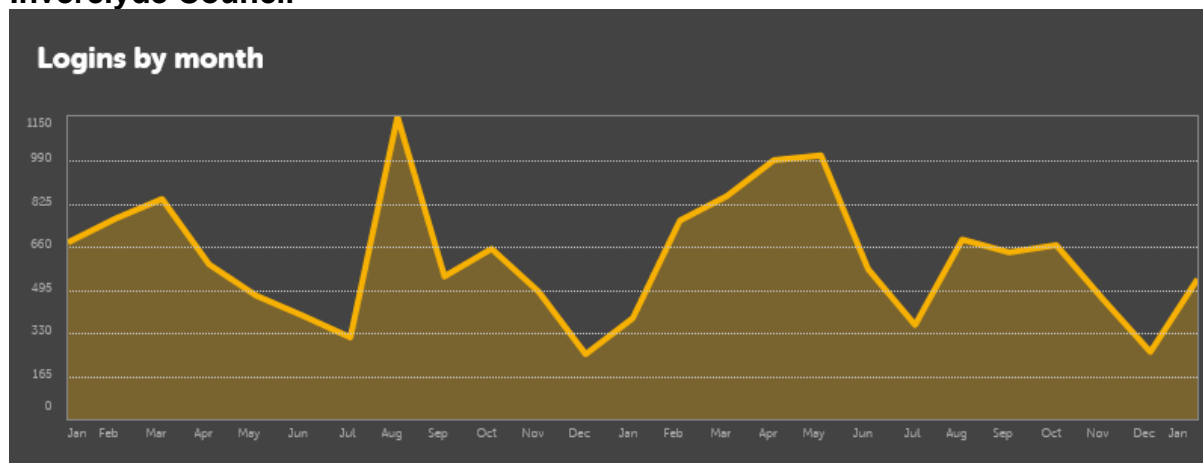|	10 months prior to COVID	10 Months of COVID
Modules accessed	4779	18540
Modules completed/passed	3735	14627
Modules incomplete/browsed/failed	1044	3913
Number of employees how have accessed modules	829	1304

Falkirk Council

Logins by month

Glasgow City Council

Inverclyde Council

North Lanarkshire Council
Council do not use Brightwave as LMS. Learning activity between June and December 2020 provided below, showing a similar increases in demand in 2020.

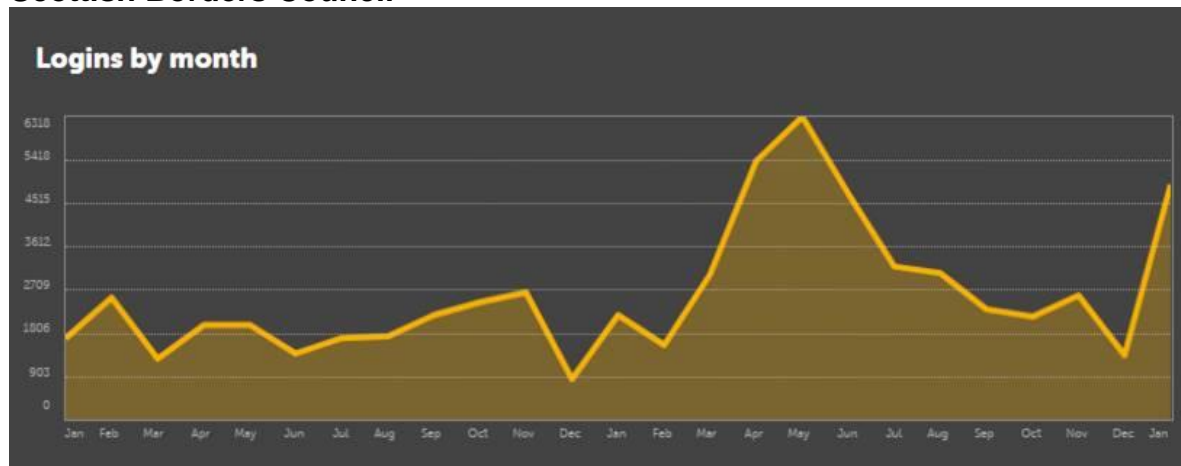| Type	Number of completions	Most popular topics
E-learning	17,627 course completions on LearnNL	- O365 learning pathways - Working from home resources - Free online resources - Mandatory learning
Webinars	789 attendees across all webinars offered	- Working from home effectively - Building resilience - Managing your remote team - Motivating your remote team - Running effective online meetings

Orkney Island Council
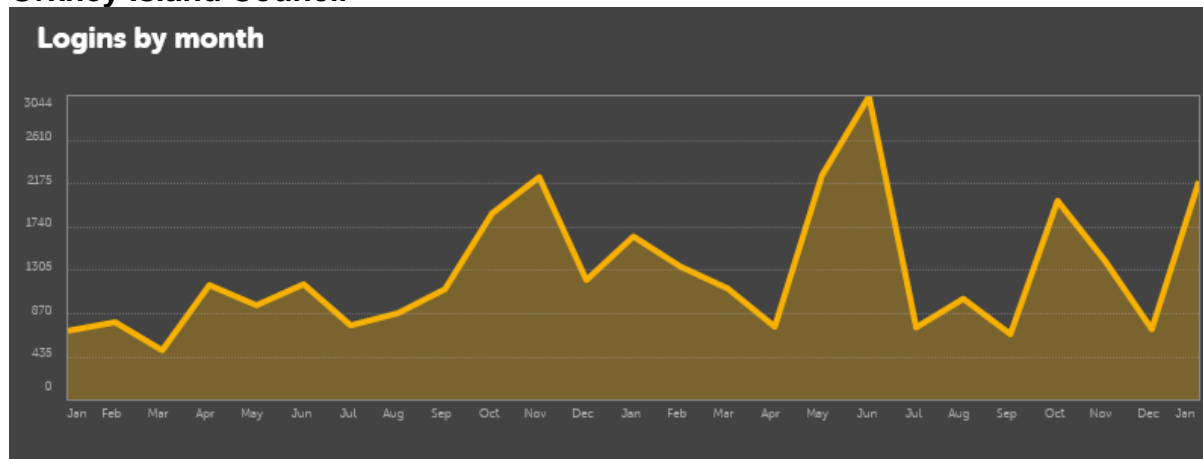
Perth & Kinross Council
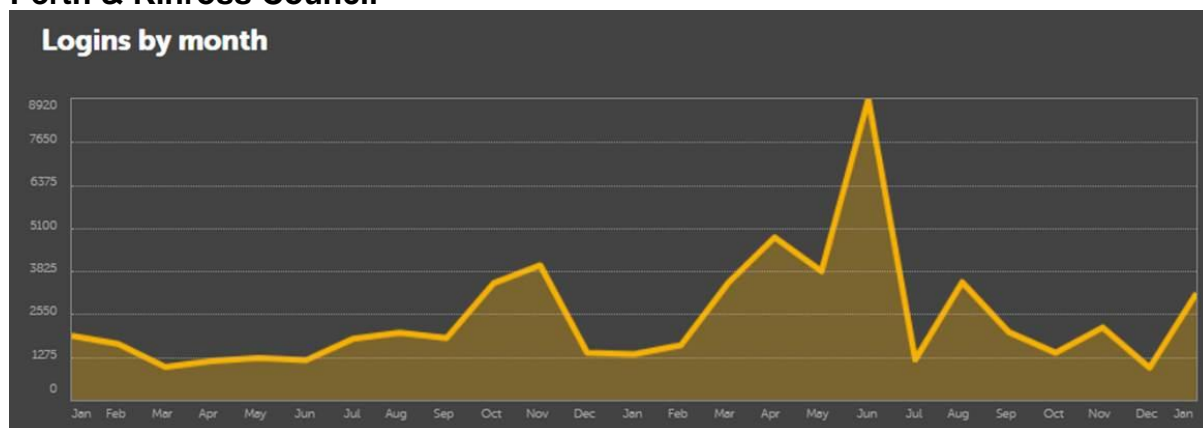
Renfrewshire Council
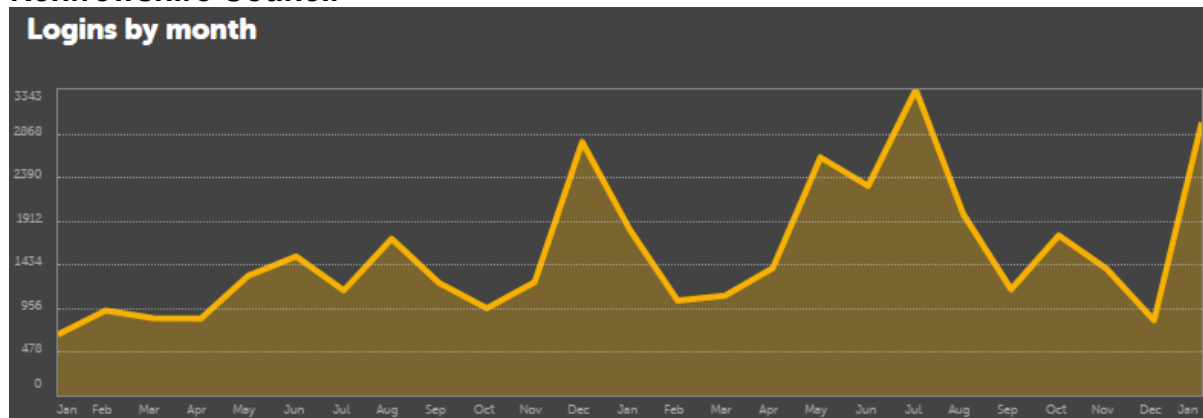
Scottish Borders Council

South Lanarkshire Council