

# Delivering accessible IT support while protecting young people's data and planning for the future



**Client: The Abingdon Bridge**

The Abingdon Bridge youth charity relies on pro bono IT support and advice from claireLOGIC – now it is starting to look at how IT can support its future

**The Abingdon Bridge (TAB) is an Oxfordshire-based wellbeing charity supporting young people aged 13 to 25 years.**

It depends on IT for everything from keeping records about young people, researching services on their behalf, filling in and submitting applications and forms, and keeping a team of three full time staff and 20 counsellors in touch by email. As a donation-funded organisation, funding its IT needs is difficult.

The Managing Director at claireLOGIC noticed the charity several years ago. Realising that it was on their doorstep, he reached out. He arranged a basic IT support service on a pro bono basis which has now been in place for around three years. claireLOGIC now knows the charity and its challenges well, and has appointed an account manager to give advice and organise low-cost IT project help when needed.

Kirsty Darter is the charity's Office Manager. Since joining over a year ago, Kirsty's role has expanded; she is involved with HR and finance, as well as the office and its IT.



**I don't know what I would have done if claireLOGIC hadn't been there – I wouldn't have had anywhere to go for help... Having IT support pro bono has been amazing.**

Kirsty Darter, Office Manager



## Supporting team and volunteers

The claireLOGIC IT service desk is on call if anything goes wrong for a TAB user, or a printer malfunctions, so they can arrange to get things fixed swiftly. Both the core team and the extended team of counsellors can call on their help when accessing or using the charity's systems. claireLOGIC is easy to reach and provides a fast response.

Kirsty finds the IT support desk invaluable: *"when I joined, I don't know what I would have done if claireLOGIC hadn't been there – I wouldn't have had anywhere to go for help with setting up new starters, for instance. Having IT support pro bono has been amazing."*

She appreciates the speed of the help too, saying *"I can't fault claireLOGIC really – I just submit a form or call them, and they get things done more or less straight away."*



**I can't fault  
claireLOGIC really –  
I just submit a form  
or call them, and  
they get things  
done more or less  
straight away.**



Kirsty particularly appreciates how the support team handles even basic questions: *"I am really not technically minded in any way! Being able to ring someone at claireLOGIC who I know is sympathetic to that, and won't make me feel silly for asking a question, makes such a difference."*

*"Even getting a printer set up isn't easy – though it may seem simple to some people. I could just call it in, and claireLOGIC just came and set it up for me,"* she added.

## Securing sensitive data

How TAB protects data has become a key focus. It holds a lot of data including sensitive information about its clients. If not managed properly, breached or lost, it could do more than harm the charity's reputation.

TAB uses the GDPR-compliant Views database application that is purpose-designed for charities, and has been making efforts to improve the team's awareness of the issue. Kirsty related that:

*"we're very conscious that our information is confidential, and are careful that our clients sign a consent form before we store their information in our database. One of our Trustees ran a training session on GDPR which was really useful in helping us be aware of how we each treat data and where we send information."*

The training triggered greater realisation that data privacy and protection processes should be prioritised. Part of this is putting data and system security basics in place, so claireLOGIC recommended a backup solution and new antivirus package for the Trustees to consider.



## Caring isn't always sharing

A second area of concern lay around use of personal equipment. When working at home or on site, the team still often uses their own machines and resources. Kirsty observed: *"although TAB provides our team with mobile phones, some staff also use their own phones, laptops or iPads to log in sometimes – and our counsellors also often run online sessions with clients."*

claireLOGIC is actively looking at ways to mitigate the network risks of the use of personal devices and the data security issues that can come from use of personal email and applications. Kirsty explained: *"we had one particular issue with SharePoint, – one of our counsellors has had real challenges trying to use our SharePoint as well as the one for her private practice, which claireLOGIC is addressing."*

The charity team had a habit of treating laptops and PCs as community equipment. Counsellors dropping into the office might share the office team's logins if they needed to get on the system, and occasionally young people might use machines too, albeit supervised. claireLOGIC flagged that that when a member of the team generously shared their laptop, they weren't considering what personal information and documents they were potentially also making accessible.

As part of building better safeguards, claireLOGIC set up guest user accounts which protects other people's information when they log in, no matter which machine they use.



**I am really not technically minded in any way! Being able to ring someone at claireLOGIC who won't make me feel silly for asking a question, makes such a difference.**



## Disparate and dated devices

claireLOGIC noticed that the PC, laptop and other devices in use were from various manufacturers, with varying operating systems, and often very outdated. As is the case for many charities, TAB had built most of its IT via donated equipment such as PCs, laptops and printers.

Kirsty realised the same thing, and asked for advice. *"We had a range of units that were donated, and that had some random versions of Windows and Office applications. When claireLOGIC looked into it they confirmed this needed to be addressed, but also discovered we actually had 10 Microsoft Office accounts that had been purchased as a charity that we weren't using."*

A careful PC upgrade and replacement programme is now underway, aiming to balance essential specifications and functionality with affordability, so the charity can make most of its limited budget. claireLOGIC will source new equipment and set up the relevant user profiles, ready to use.

*"Our computers were getting so slow, but now claireLOGIC have taken our old donated units away to wipe and dispose of them and will help us replace what we need,"* Kirsty said. claireLOGIC disposes of kit appropriately via a partner based process that ensures hard disks are fully wiped for data security, and recycled in line with waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) regulations.



**Our computers were getting so slow, but now claireLOGIC have taken our old donated units away to wipe and dispose of them and will help us replace what we need.**



claireLOGIC is also helping the team stay connected. Wi-Fi has been a challenge, and it is on the list for an upgrade. Kirsty reflected: *"we have eight counselling rooms and when everyone's using Wi-Fi it is really not great. When my colleague Holly works upstairs it can drop out completely, and if someone is doing a WhatsApp call with a client that fails, it's really not ideal. Now claireLOGIC is getting extenders for us."*

## Helping more and more

In our uncertain world, there is one thing of which TAB is sure: more young people will need their help. So, The Abingdon Bridge continues to grow. Four more counsellors are starting, bringing the team to 27. It will also be utilising a recently re-furbished second site in the old Police Station on Bridge Street, its original home. This provides more counselling rooms and the potential for drop-in services. Kirsty admitted that: *"I haven't even started to think about the IT needs in that building, but claireLOGIC will help with that."*

As claireLOGIC helps TAB modernise and secure its existing systems and helps it look ahead at changing needs, it recognises that it needs a more structured and forward thinking approach, Kirsty concluded: *"We really now need an IT strategy, because we are still growing. We need to be more on top of the equipment we've got – claireLOGIC is already advising me on building an asset register for that and will help us create plans for the future. We need to know for sure that we have everything covered."*



She knows she has the help required on hand: *"claireLOGIC are patient, understanding, and knowledgeable – plus, they don't talk down to you. I'm confident that when I have a new starter, they will always set things up in plenty of time – and if we have a problem they are a few minutes' walk away and can drop in to see what the problem is."*

She concluded: *"A contact at another charity recently asked me about who we use for IT support. I said that what I value is that I can ring with any query no matter how small, and that they understand not everybody is an IT expert. From my point of view, it's like a comfort blanket. Having claireLOGIC on my side means peace of mind. I know that things are backed up, we have antivirus protection in place, and that we're as tight as we can be in ensuring our confidential information never gets out into the wider world."*



**claireLOGIC  
are patient,  
understanding, and  
knowledgeable –  
plus, they don't talk  
down to you... From  
my point of view,  
it's like a comfort  
blanket. Having  
claireLOGIC on my  
side means peace  
of mind.**

