



Creating community

Shelter Intranet

About our client

Shelter is a national organisation working to improve the lives of homeless and badly housed people. They provide up-to-date housing law and information courses as well as practical training and detailed proposals on reforming housing benefit and are feeding into the wider welfare reform agenda. Through the network of Housing Aid Centres, projects and surgeries, Shelter staff provide free, professional and independent advice to over 100,000 homeless and badly housed people each year throughout England and Scotland.

The business requirements

Shelter required an intranet that reflected their “people centred” approach and matched their values and working practices. They wanted a tool that felt familiar for all levels of staff and that would lead each and every member towards more open and coherent communication.

They wanted a fast and accessible intranet that had to be navigable by even the most novice of users. It also had to allow more experienced users to get to the information they need quickly and efficiently. Increasing staff effectiveness was an important aim of this project.

The intranet also had to be scalable. Due to their charity status, Shelter wanted to be able to update and expand the site themselves after the initial build by developing new pages as and when they were needed.

The Keymedia solution

We worked closely with Shelter to design a site that would “help Shelter become an organisation of informed, integrated and empowered employees, who communicate effectively and who are actively involved in achieving Shelter’s vision and objectives. To improve service provision, staff effectiveness and value for money”.

Project Type

Intranet
Usability testing

Keywords

Cost effective
Bespoke functionality
Accessibility
Usability
Guided tour
Shared vision

Before we started building the intranet, we assessed and interpreted Shelter's organisational goals, information needs and their users requirements. The intranet had to be accessible to all Shelter staff regardless of their computer skills and provide an online environment where knowledge and information could be shared, and where any user could find all Shelter documentation quickly and easily. Using our usability expertise Keymedia provided advice and recommendations for the design of the intranet to ensure it met all of the user requirements. Our final design reflected the results extensive testing. As part of the usability consultancy we also produced a Guided Tour of the intranet to assist, in particular, novice users.

To encourage the growth of an online community amongst the Shelter workforce, Keymedia built an interactive map for the intranet. This map enables users to pinpoint offices, housing offices and Shelter shops across the country. This creates an internal awareness of the reach of Shelter in the UK, but is also a valuable information source.

To enable Shelter to continue to build and develop their site we provided them with a styleguide. The guide documents all facets of the intranet design including colour references, page layouts, fonts and fonts sizes. This means that new pages can be developed in house by Shelter which are consistent with the designs Keymedia originally provided. By allowing the site to develop organically, Shelter's intranet acts as a strong, flexible framework where people can collaborate and grow together.

The business benefits

The Shelter intranet is the primary communication link and knowledge store for the organisation countrywide. It provides:

- Improved staff efficiency through ease of communication
- Ease of use due to adhering to usability and accessibility requirements
- Cost effective dissemination of information
- Improved service provision
- Creation of a closer community of staff
- A more unified vision of the organisation as a whole