

ADVOCACY SERVICES



LEXXER SOLUTIONS



LEXXER Solutions is a Northern Ireland firm, our Knowledge Brokerage model allows us to tap into global skills and services.

By acting as a broker we can match clients locally, nationally and internationally with those who possess the knowledge, experience or skills to solve a range of problems.

LEXXER's approach has revolutionised the nature of consulting and solutions, offering a new departure in terms of customer satisfaction.

LEXXER Consultancy Services uses Knowledge Brokerage to help you realise the vision of your business or organisation. We provide a range of bespoke services to both commercial and charitable clients to help them gain new insights, innovations and advantage in their field.

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Introduction



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEXXER Solutions were commissioned in August 2018 to provide consultancy, training and support services to FRPU for what was entitled VOICE. It was a project to provide training and support to this advocacy group in terms of developing its volunteer capacity around advocacy, archiving and administrative capacity. The objective was to improve its case management systems, increase capacity to deal with research and to provide a methodology around dealing with the past through oral history.

The support of Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council made the project possible and along with the groups own financial and practical support the first action was to plan and prepare for the project. A clear strategic plan and terms of reference were agreed with a balanced approach of consultation and intervention. The former provided a strategic plan and scoping exercise around the best model for Case Management. This had to be in place to allow Volunteer advocates and existing staff to train on similar systems.

Then specific tailored training courses were developed with FRPU in mind to address skills issues around research, archiving, ethics, data protection and case management. This training used the medium of oral history and applied heritage in order to deal with the past in a way that promotes reconciliation.

The final element of training was around advocacy taking volunteers through various aspects which would be relevant for their work with FRPU. The limited time and resources of the project meant that it was decided to view it as a pilot where the materials were developed and policy decided, with strategic papers researched on case management and advocacy which could be a foundation for future work. This would then be evaluated.



PROJECT ELEMENTS

Our understanding of the tender and brief was further clarified and agreed at the initial planning meeting with FRPU where terms of reference and engagement were drafted.

AHEAD Element - Research , Archiving and Oral History



Our **First Aid** Service is a great starting place for any organisation which is looking into funding. It will promote fresh ideas which will develop a new corporate approach to resources. It will check how fit the organisation is to compete for funding.

VOICE Element - Volunteer Advocacy Training



The Core advocacy training introduces the concept and what it means in the current setting. Then various forms of advocacy and methods are discussed and learners orientate to the form they feel most effective. Then specific modules raise skills levels around both administration and advocacy skills.

CASE Element - Case Management System Development



The remit is to research and propose a case management system to help FRPU organise its advocacy operations. This will allow it to operate quickly and efficiently in a way that is easy when everything is accessible in one place, which will allow volunteer advocates to be trained on the system.



OUTCOMES

The present report is being compiled towards the end of the project, which was in essence a three month pilot programme. The support of Council and FRPU were vital and the outcomes are already clear. The training was designed and developed as bespoke courses for FRPU, then piloted with the volunteers recruited. The concept of case management was reviewed and proposals made stemming from the participation of the staff, board and volunteers. Then a new approach to Dealing with the Past was piloted which has been termed 'realistic reconciliation'. It uses the AHEAD model and is a firm foundation for the future.



Administration

The project drew on the administrative skills of FRPU with management and deployment falling to LEXXER



Promotional Events

The use of the current NIO Consultation was a real success as it enthused and engaged volunteers.



CASE System

A review and scoping exercise was completed with a clear strategic development plan. This was part of an action education approach.



Research Skills

A practical skills set have been developed amongst volunteers allowing them to be a more useful part of the team.



Digital Development

The training focused on moving from manual to digital systems and skills and allowed volunteers to feel part of the transition.



Training and Mentoring

The training itself was developed and deployed in a pilot program due to time and resource constraints.

The main elements of the project have been successfully developed and deployed with completion of training and the final evaluation envisaged on time and within budget.



BENEFICIARIES



The beneficiaries of the project will primarily be the families and victims FRPU work with on a range of advocacy issues, from bereavement and benefits to inquests and investigations

The project however will have a ripple effect reaching beyond the group due to its role in the NIO Consultation



1. Direct FRPU clients and those involved in the group will benefit from increased advocacy capacity
2. The wider victims sector will benefit from the projects input into the NIO Consultation.
3. The focus on realistic reconciliation will be a benefit to the entire community.



ORAL MEMORIAL

The *AHEAD* Programme provides a skills base for community and voluntary groups which have an interest in the past. It was chosen as the most appropriate training programme since it marries practical skills with the principle of reconciliation.

The context of this project was its deployment in the middle of the NIO Consultation on Dealing with the Past, and this opportunity was seized upon by the project and its participants to look at how best to deal with difficult issues. It used the applied heritage model to train volunteers.

The project have victims a chance to look at this less known aspect of the Government proposals namely an Oral History Archive, and to consider how they could contribute and benefit.

Applied Heritage is all about the potential of heritage to transform society, and in particular divided societies, it challenges the perception that history and heritage divides us, and provides a model to use it positively and to use it as a tool for reconciliation and development between communities.

The skills our AHEAD Program imparts will allow groups like FRPU to deal with the past in a way that is respectful to their members but also promotes

reconciliation. The Oral History Skills Training combine principles and practical lessons from ethic and empathy to technical ability in recording material.

Can We Help You?

We support many organisations including

We support a wide range of organisations including Charities, Churches, Community Groups, Culture & Heritage Groups, Conservation & Ecological Organisations, Campaigning and Lobbying Groups, Commercial Not-for-Profit Firms and Competitive Organisations like Sports Clubs.

[Drop us a line](#)





VOICE HEARD



The We offer a range of bespoke services to both commercial and charitable clients. Our unique knowledge brokerage model allows us to bring professional and academic services and skills to the table which groups could not otherwise afford.

We believe that being a voluntary group doesn't mean you have to be amateurs, and with our services you can compete with larger charities and commercial operations.

Our full range of Services include:

Fundraising Strategy and Implementation

Working with you to develop a

The project worked seamlessly with the wider case work and support work of FRPU. It happened at a very important and pivotal time for victims, as they were asked to consider the draft legislation on Dealing with the Past.

In this context the learning was real and relevant and the issues current and contextualised.

Volunteers were able to work directly with victims and then through the process advocate their views. The project used the Consultation process as a basis for engagement and awareness raising.



CASE OPEN

A study was commissioned involving FRPU staff, board and the volunteer advocates as well as users to look at how to improve the case management system currently being used. It was a scoping exercise conducted as a way of developing a case management system that could : structure workflows with dynamic tasks, schedule meetings, and share documents with clients. Operating quickly and efficiently is easy when everything is accessible in one place.

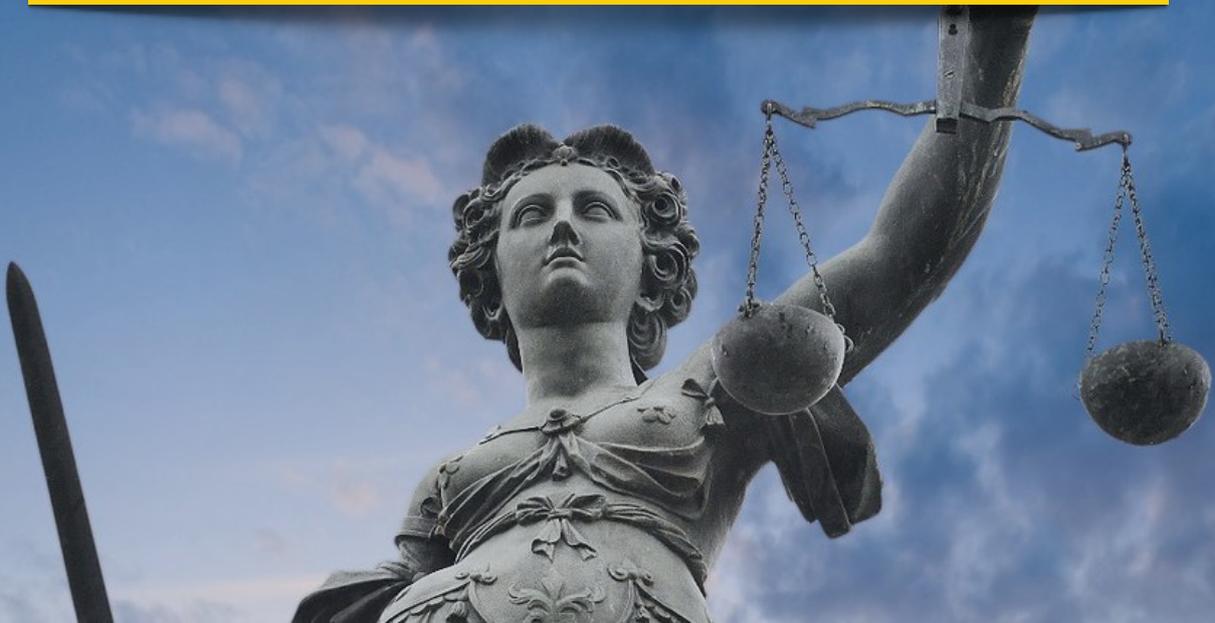
The system should allow client information, case information, correspondence and minutes to be held securely and accessed easily. Collaboration between team members will ensure that time and money is saved. This was a crucial component of the project to allow for development of training on such a system as it developed. Volunteer advocates learnt through the process how the current system worked and then felt part of the team which looked at how to improve it.

Time and resources Aomori allow for a scoping exercise as part of the overall training.

Development of a digital system, based on open source solutions which will allow for the ongoing involvement of the team.

The preferred option was a collaborative model using existing open source systems which integrate with existing software and both manual and IT systems which the volunteer advocates have been familiarised with. This complemented the training on

data management and ethics where confidentiality and security have been central features to ensure that clients information is handled appropriately and in line with new GDPR Guidelines. This action training has proven popular, and engaging.





PROGRESS

Progress has been swift and sure with a clear commission from FRPU and ongoing joint management of the project. Finances have been made available by Council and matched by the group allowing for greater control and coordination. Completion is envisaged on time and within budget.





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