

# CASE STUDY

**Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland**

**December 2021**

## **The Challenge**

Finding the 'Managing the Remote Workforce' course was a timely intervention as a result of the rapid changes that our organisation has been going through these last 18 months.

Given the nature of our organisation, security is always paramount so remote working was an entirely new concept. Whilst we had been working towards some degree of enabling remote access to systems, fully remote working was rapidly imposed on us as a result of Covid-19 and the 'work from home' requirement.

## **The Solution**

When we realised the challenge we were facing, we approached Cosensa to discuss how we might address these issues and they were able to provide us with details of their 'Managing the Remote Workforce' course. Included in the two-day programme were the following subject areas:

- Understand the Management of Team Performance
- Understand your Management Style
- Identify areas for personal development
- Benefits of a remote workforce
- Understand Quality Management Techniques
- Developing a Growth Mindset
- The Importance of Trust when managing a remote workforce
- Understanding the importance of communication
- How to communicate effectively when managing a remote team
- Explore different methods of communication
- Understanding how individuals in your team communicate best
- How to develop digitally friendly teams

The programme had already been written and it fitted our needs, so we arranged for the first lot of managers to attend in December 2020.

**"...unlike  
anything we had  
done before."**

## The Outcome

We had always focused on the technical and security issues of remote working but this course helped us realise there is also a human impact. It helped us highlight the potential pitfalls but importantly helped consider solutions.

Importantly for the organisation, attendance at this course was also the start of a process of self-awareness for some line managers. With many new to line management roles, this was the first time they had really been asked to reflect on the impact of their natural styles and communication preferences. Being able to do this directly in relation to a completely different way of working was invaluable.

**This refreshed some areas of management for me, but also gave me an insight into some of my colleagues preferred way of working, so this should help me going forward on best method of engagement to suit their needs.**

**Really enjoyed the course. Has helped me to develop a plan regarding managing my staff remotely and the way in which I communicate with them.**

**Course was very relevant to changes I am having to deal with. As we move to remote working, this course was very beneficial to highlight the potential issues with managing staff remotely and with lots of practical solutions to help.**

## The Testimony

Almost immediately on return from the August 2021 course, a senior line manager emailed me to say how much she had got out of the course. She suggested that it should be made mandatory for our line managers and was "unlike anything we had done before".

We have our final group going through the course in January 2022 and a proposal that future line managers are enrolled as and when the course becomes available.

## Contact Details

**Name: Karen Ritchie**

**Role: Learning and Development Officer**

**Email: karen.ritchie@policeombudsman.org**

**"Really excellent. Very enjoyable and helped me understand my staff better and their needs"**