

# PLAYING TO WIN

## Securus

Sally-Ann Griffiths, e-Safety Director at Securus, speaks to *GO* about the company's recent contract win with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames to implement an e-safety solution across all primary and secondary schools in the area.



**Q What does your contract with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames involve?**

**A** Securus is providing computer monitoring software as part of a borough-wide initiative to raise e-safety standards, addressing the issues of web filtering, acceptable web use and remote access policies. The scheme is being run by the council on behalf of nine secondary schools and 38 primary schools in the borough. It will ensure that all pupils are kept safe from risks such as cyber-bullying or predator grooming when they use computers at school.

**Q What is the contract worth and how long is it for?**

**A** Roll-out of the scheme began in April 2008 and should be completed by the end of the summer term. Annual maintenance and support will be provided on a rolling basis. The contract for equipment and site licences is worth £43,000 and annual costs thereafter are worth over £11,000. The borough has purchased three years' maintenance and support in advance, equating to over £33,000.

**Q What solution was provided?**

**A** Securus identifies when there is an issue or concern for a pupil's welfare by capturing examples of ICT misuse or unacceptable behaviour. This includes the use of bullying or threatening language and visits to inappropriate internet sites. Every Kingston secondary school involved in the project

will own and manage its own dedicated computer server to monitor their local ICT network and capture issues. All of the primary schools are covered by two centralised network servers that are hosted by the council. Each participating primary school will be able to login to the central server to review and manage their own issues. We will work with the council to ensure that the whole service is operating well and help them to train their staff to use the system in such a way as to keep administration to a minimum.

**Q What results are being aimed for?**

**A** e-Safety monitoring is becoming a key component in safeguarding pupils while using computers at school. It is a highly effective method of identifying when children are putting themselves or others at risk and alerting staff to issues of concern. Benefits include protecting vulnerable children and preventing pupils from accessing harmful material online. It also teaches pupils to use ICT in a safe way and keeps pupils on task during lessons.

We expect to see a reduction in the level of cyber-bullying. There should also be a fall in general ICT misuse, like the widespread use of proxy bypass sites to circumvent normal internet safeguards.

**Q What were the greatest challenges you encountered in the tendering process?**

**A** e-Safety involves a number of diverse groups

in what Becta calls a 'whole community approach'. This means that a lot of stakeholder consultation is required, going well beyond ICT advisors and coordinators. Problems and benefits need to be communicated to all groups responsible for the welfare of children. This includes children's services, e-safety professionals, head teachers, senior leadership teams, teachers and, where appropriate, school governors, parents and even pupils themselves.

**Q What advice would you give to others embarking on a public sector contract?**

**A** Be flexible and consultative in your approach. Each local authority has its own requirements, structure, budgets and method of procurement, and this requires a different approach each time.

We work with some local authorities to provide protection for Traveller Children and Looked-After Children and the special requirements needed for these groups. You should also be prepared for the long haul since the consultation period involved with these types of contract is often quite lengthy.


**Q What does the contract mean for your business?**

**A** We are dedicated to protecting children through the use of technology and it

means a lot to us to extend e-safety protection across a further 47 schools.

Commercially, we are increasingly working with local authorities rather than individual schools. This has cost and efficiency benefits for both the company and the client, and is an excellent model for the future

**Q What feedback have you received from the client?**

**A** We ran a pilot scheme in Kingston with four secondary schools and two primary schools and the council received a lot of positive feedback from all of the staff involved. We are now almost finished the project and the council is satisfied that monitoring will make a valuable contribution to its e-safety initiatives. 



**Sally-Ann Griffiths**  
e-Safety Director, Securus

If you or your company wish to share your tendering successes with *GO* readers, please email: [feedback@govopps.co.uk](mailto:feedback@govopps.co.uk) for further information.