



• CHARITY SECTOR CASE STUDY

“Every Day I Lived in Fear the Server Would Break.”

Cheryl Kearney, CEO - Sycamore Trust

30 Years

12 Office Staff

Barking & Dagenham



CLIENT PROFILE

Sycamore Trust



30

YEARS SUPPORTING FAMILIES

12+

OFFICE-BASED STAFF

IN BRIEF

A 30-year autism charity in Barking & Dagenham. Supports children, young people and adults pre and post autism diagnosis, plus an Autism Ambassador programme of adults with lived experience who go out and share their story to raise awareness. 12 office-based staff, around 10 youth-club staff, around 10 volunteers - small team, big work, mission-critical IT.

INDUSTRIES SERVED

Autism Charity

Children & Young People

Adult Services

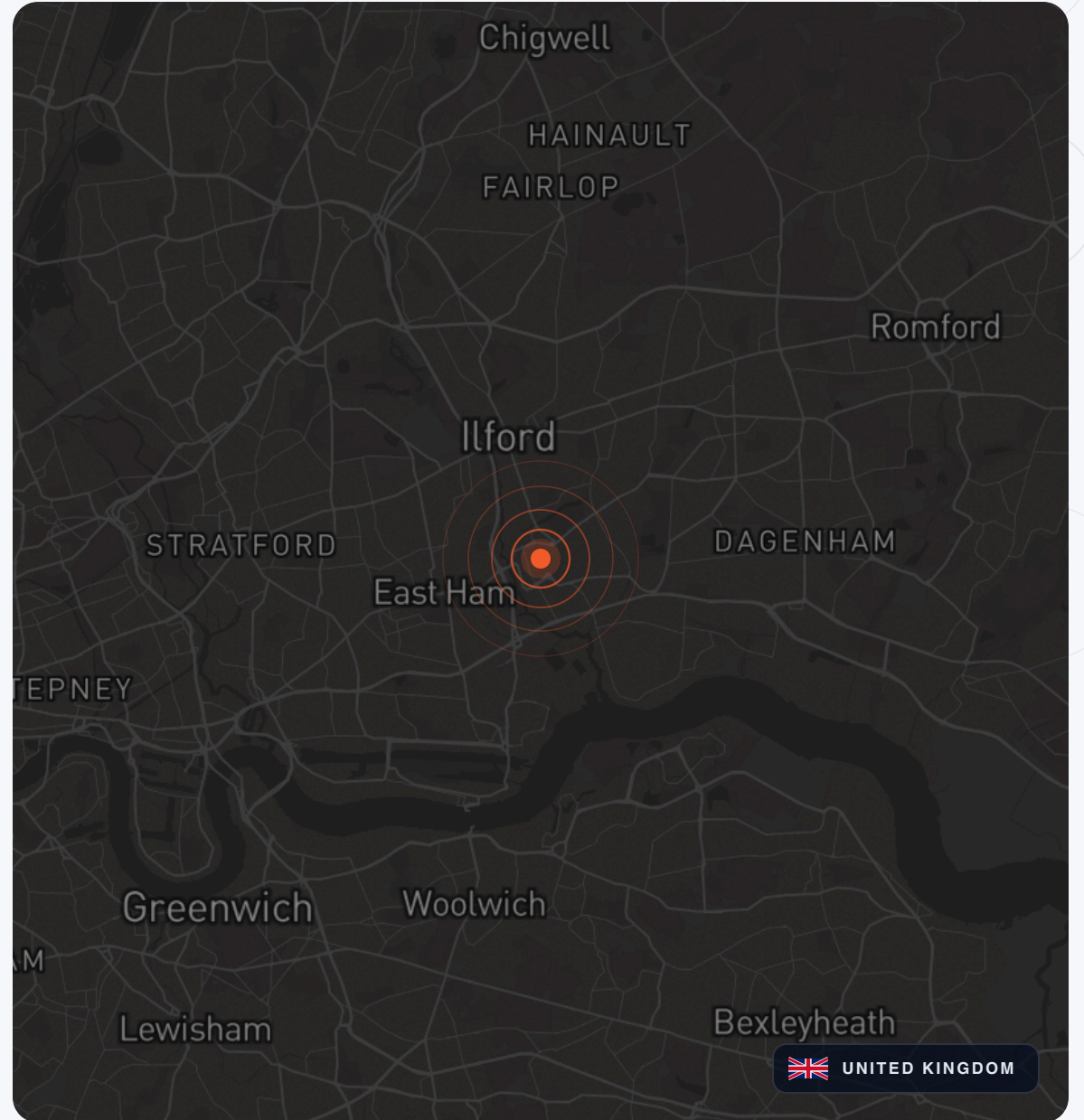
Autism Ambassador Programme



Cheryl Kearney

CEO, Sycamore Trust

Barking & Dagenham, Essex



Outdated, Slow, Unsupported - and Holding Back the Mission.

“Every day I lived in fear that that was the day that the server was going to break and we would have no system and we would have no backup.”

01

A System Past Its Prime

Sycamore had run on the same setup for around a decade - server in the office, mix of desktops and laptops, no real cloud. “The whole system was very slow because it was so outdated. And quite often I would come in to staff not being very happy because they hadn’t been able to access something.”

02

Intermittent Support When It Mattered Most

“The support was quite intermittent and slow from the service provider.” For a charity where IT directly underpins the support given to families, that translated into people not being helped when they reached out.

FUNDING ON THE LINE

“If you’re going for local authority funding, one of the key things that you need to prove is that your IT system is secure... if you can’t show that, then you will not be awarded local authority contracts.”

Three pressures the charity sector knows by heart - in Cheryl's words.



FUNDING DEPENDS ON IT

"If you can't show that, then you will not be awarded local authority contracts."

Cyber security evidence is now a precondition for local authority funding. For charities, IT investment is no longer optional - it's the gate to delivering services at all.



AN AUTISM-AWARE WORKFORCE

"We have people with autism working in the organisation, so change is a massive thing for them."

An IT migration is not just a tech project. For inclusive employers it has to be designed around the people doing the work, or change itself becomes the disruption.



THE HAND-HOLDING GAP

"We don't know anything about IT. So we need someone that we could trust, that we could listen to. They would listen to us and then they would make sure that they built us a system that was right for our organisation."

Charity CEOs rarely come from a tech background. The provider that wins is the one who guides without lecturing - and stays present after the kit is in.

They Listened. Then They Built Around Us.

Urban Network was the third tender. “Urban were the last company to actually come in. And I just think immediately they asked us lots of questions that would not been asked before.”

What sealed it wasn't price. “The biggest change for us when we went to Urban was that they listened to what we wanted. They took into account that actually we have people with autism working in the organisation, so change is a massive thing for them. They actually came and gave us ideas about what they thought we would need.”

3rd

TENDER CHERYL INVITED - THE ONE THAT WON

WHAT URBAN ACTUALLY DID

“I think the whole staff team was so pleasantly surprised that it was really, really smooth. Like really smooth.”

“Knowing that you can switch your laptop on, it's going to come on, it's going to work straight away and there's not really going to be any issues.”

PER APPOINTMENT

30%

Less workload after every face-to-face appointment
- admin happens in the room, not after.

All 12

OFFICE STAFF NOW ABLE TO WORK
FLEXIBLY

Zero

PERSONAL PHONES STILL RINGING OUT
OF HOURS

30% Less Admin. 100% More Care.

Cheryl arrived at the figure herself, late in the conversation, after walking through how appointments now work. The headline isn't the percentage - it's what the percentage frees up. Time given back to parents and carers who don't have it to begin with.

- ▶ **Admin in the room, not after.** "Rather than talking about a service or doing a form or doing something with them, we actually are doing it there and then."
- ▶ **Time saved on both sides.** "We're not only always saving ourselves time, we're saving parent-carer time, which is so valuable."
- ▶ **Phones tied to working hours, not personal mobiles.** "It's like being in the office without being in the office."

"Once my child comes home from school, there's no form filling being done in my house. I am just looking after my child. So the more we can do in an appointment, the less they have to do at home."

CHERYL, ON WHAT PARENT-CARERS TELL HER



Trust First. Then the Tech.

- ▶ **They listen first.** “Urban were the last company to actually come in. And I just think immediately they asked us lots of questions that would not been asked before. And they shared quite a lot of information with us that we just weren’t aware of.”
- ▶ **They are still there afterwards.** “Perry didn’t just come in and sell the product and then walk away. He’s still involved. He still checks in. And I think that’s about always about the relationship.”
- ▶ **They flag, not push.** “The thing I really like about Urban is they will come to us and say, there is this thing that, you know, there is a cost, we recommend you do it, but you don’t have to. And that’s really important as well.”



“Anyone can sell you a laptop. Anyone can sell you a phone system. But if you don’t have trust in what you’re being told, and they don’t provide you with a really high quality service during and after, you need organisations like Urban that will take you forward rather than just keeping you sitting still.”

Cheryl Kearney, CEO - Sycamore Trust

ON WAITING TOO LONG

“Don’t wait until it’s failing on a regular basis. As soon as you notice that the quality of service is not as you need or what you expect, then really the investment in IT, I think particularly these days is so key because it can make such a big difference to your organisation.”



TALK TO URBAN NETWORK

Get in Touch Today

Urban Network supports SMBs and charities across London, the Midlands and the South East with end-to-end Microsoft 365, network and cyber, and telecoms. Hand-holding for non-technical leaders is the default, not an upsell.

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