

➔ Local authority improves communications while cutting costs with SMS

Councils have been one of the early adopters of SMS messaging. This discreet and direct form of communication is an easy way to keep residents informed and engaged.



The Customer

This County Council was originally a two-tier council. It became a unitary authority in 2009 when the seven districts of the county were abolished. It is now one of the largest local authorities in England with 63 electoral divisions.

The Council provides services to more than 513,000 people. They have over 18,000 staff, 39 libraries, 10 leisure centers, 6 swimming pools, 15 children's centers and 10 hubs, 78,000 street lights and 270 schools.



The Challenge

This Council was seen as an innovator due to integrating text messaging early, installing an SMS gateway on the business network back in 2005.

The key challenge was to improve communication to the authority's population while streamlining processes and reducing costs. Traditional communications via telephone and letter are costly, often ineffective and labour intensive.

Initial challenges included improving services to the Adult Health Service, Housing Association Group, Fraud Team and the Public Library Services, as well as providing weather alerts all year round.



The Solution

- On-premise text message server.
- Unlimited user licences.
- Integration into Exchange with 2-way SMS messaging via Outlook.
- Integration into Adult and Health Services, using shared short codes "Foster" and "Adopt"
- Shared code 66644 – for the Housing Association Group. Key words "Rent", "Let", "Repairs" and "Lease".
- Texting the word "Fraud" to a long virtual number which is routed to the benefit fraud division for reviews.
- Integration to Library Book system to auto generate emails/texts to the public.



The Benefits

- Improved 2-way communication between the public and the Council.
- Better engagement with younger residents, particularly young families and single parents.
- Considerable cost savings, evident almost immediately.
- SMS integration into the Library systems encourage the public to return their books by using a simple, cost effective automated process.
- An increase in legitimate fraud reports as the council now provides a simple and discreet reporting method. This results in a decrease of fraudulent claims.

- The Housing Association has made huge progress in communication with residents. Many do not have a landline, so SMS messaging is ideal. All messages are stored for compliancy.

The Council is constantly reviewing their services and looking to improve all areas of the business with SMS. The current project is to integrate SMS with their CRM system for confirmation of appointments, with the ability to change appointments automatically. The Council will be testing the ProcessFlows' 123-txt, a cloud SMS platform for this requirement with a view to moving all services to the cloud if suitable.