



OVERVIEW

Bedford Borough Council is a unitary council serving 166,300 people in the county of Bedfordshire. Although the majority of residents live in the urban areas of Bedford and five large surrounding villages, 94% of the borough's land is rural and sparsely populated. The council takes responsibility for the provision of key services such as education, social services and transport.

POPULATION

166,300

SOLUTIONS

**GovDelivery
Communications Cloud**
(Active since 2015)

Two ways email campaigns are helping to improve lives in the East of England

SITUATION

A need to give citizens choice and drive engagement with critical programmes

With no budget for council magazines and a keenness to adopt more cost effective digital avenues of communication, Bedford needed a way to reach, inform, educate, and engage more local people. The council knew residents wanted a choice in how they engage with the council: Twitter doesn't suit everyone. Using Outlook to communicate with different groups was an administrative burden and unsustainable, especially given there was no way of tracking engagement rates or any impacts.

SOLUTION

A proactive approach to keeping residents informed and equipped to take positive action

Bedford Borough Council introduced an email bulletins service (powered by the GovDelivery Communications Cloud by Granicus) in winter 2015 for residents and stakeholders to subscribe to. Since then nearly 20,000 people have signed up to receive updates on the local services they need and opportunities they care about; equivalent to 26% of households or 11.4% of residents.

RESULTS

Healthier communities with easier access to opportunities

Among Bedford's most popular email bulletins are Sport and Physical Activity, Borough Monthly, and Jobs Hub. These are already helping to drive engagement in a range of initiatives and have a positive impact in residents' lives.

See next page for two outcomes so far >

19,000
subscribers in
~12 months

26%
of households
subscribed

382%
subscriber growth
(March '16 – March '17)

60.4%
average engagement
rate

300+
more people in work
or training

37%
conversion rate on
sports activity bookings

Outcome 1: More people in work or training

Over 5,400 residents are subscribed to the weekly Jobs Hub bulletin which provides job seekers with the latest training opportunities, apprenticeships and job vacancies. The council also uses this channel to gather feedback and keep track of each subscriber's employment status. A further 2,500 young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and 151 providers are also receiving targeted updates through this channel, making it easier to collaborate with partners and share updates in one place.

Metrics

In the 12 months since launching the bulletin:

- More than 300 people have been helped into work or training
- Admin workload has reduced by over half a day a week
- Up to 36% unique email open rate
- Up to 36% click rate
- 5,400 residents have subscribed (plus 2,500 NEET young people)
- Better collaboration between partners and providers

Outcome 2: More residents taking action to improve their physical and mental health

There are significant health inequalities across the borough, depending on gender, ethnicity and income. Only one third of residents eat healthily, fewer still are physically active, and life expectancy is lower than the average for the East of England.

The council's Sustainable Community Strategy aims to ensure everyone gets the help they need to lead healthy and independent lives. Email bulletins are now integral to the council's outreach strategy, promoting health initiatives, mental health support, and exercise opportunities.

Metrics

In just over 12 months since launching the email updates:

- 5,200 residents have subscribed to Sport and Physical Activity bulletin
- Up to 55% unique open rate
- Up to 19% click rate
- 37% conversion rate for "ReActiv8" sports bookings
(For example: 231 programme bookings from 625 email recipients)
- More residents accessing "ShelfHelp" mental health support scheme
- More residents receiving flu jabs and health checks

ABOUT GRANICUS

Granicus provides technology that empowers government organisations to create better lives for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 150 UK public sector organisations and 3,000 worldwide, Granicus helps turn government missions into quantifiable realities. Granicus products connect more than 10 million UK citizens and 150 million people globally, creating a powerful network to enhance government transparency and citizen engagement.