



OVERVIEW

Birmingham is the largest and most populous city in the UK (after London). The council serves over one million citizens and runs nearly all local services including waste and recycling, schools, welfare support, adult and children's social care, roads, and parking.

Birmingham City Council delivered a targeted email campaign using the GovDelivery Communications Cloud by Granicus as part of an initiative to reduce call centre traffic during the school admissions period. Resulting in 72% fewer calls requiring staff assistance on secondary school offer day than in previous years, the channel shift represents a potential cost saving of ~£4.3k in one day.

POPULATION

1,101,360

SOLUTIONS

**GovDelivery
Communications Cloud**
(active since 2013)

CHANNEL SHIFT CAMPAIGN REDUCES DEMAND FOR SCHOOL ADMISSIONS SUPPORT BY 72%

(~£13.4k saving on call costs during secondary school offer week)

SITUATION

School admissions period generates extreme demand for customer support.

Every year there is competition for school places in Birmingham. The council sees a huge spike in call volumes during the school admissions period from parents seeking information about their child's application and school place allocation. In particular, there is high demand from wanting to appeal the outcome, and, when parents can't get through, there's risk of reputational damage.

The extra contact significantly increases the strain on staff resources and call centre costs. For example, on the day offers were made for secondary school places in 2016, 18 members of Customer Services staff were faced with 3,000 calls. The council needed to increase online applications (which had hovered around 83% for years) and provide better access to the information parents wanted.

SOLUTION

Targeted email shifts people online and reduces avoidable phone contact.

After scrutinising the needs and expectations of parents during the school admissions period, the council identified ways they could improve their services and reduce customer contact, making changes for the 2017 and 2018 admissions periods.

Channel shift measures to reduce paper applications and move people online for information included improved messaging via the contact centre's interactive voice response (IVR), better communication with schools, targeted email newsletters to parents who had submitted applications online, and social media outreach.

Email updates delivered through the GovDelivery Communications Cloud kept parents updated on the process. For example, the council sent an email to 14,107 parents one week before the 2018 secondary school offer day to provide clear guidance ahead of the day. The email achieved a 99% delivery rate and high open rate of 65%.

METRICS

14k+

PARENTS INFORMED
DIRECTLY BY EMAIL

65%

UNIQUE EMAIL
OPEN RATE

72%

REDUCTION IN CALLS
ON OFFER DAY

~£13.4K*

SAVING ON CALL
COSTS DURING
OFFER WEEK

IMPROVED CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE

SUCCESSFUL CHANNEL
SHIFT PROJECT

STAFF ABLE TO FOCUS
ON CASEWORK

**Based on SOCITM's channel value benchmarking*

RESULTS

72% reduction in customer calls on school offer day reduces pressure on teams and call costs.

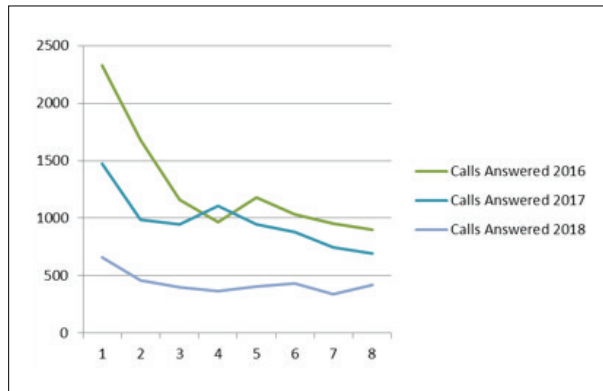
The council's proactive use of email updates to keep parents informed meant any questions about the application and appeals process were answered either in the email or by driving people to the website. This avoided the need for telephone enquiries, reducing the pressure on Customer Services and the School Admissions team on offer day (and the days that followed). Consequently the council was able to focus on its casework, manage appeals more efficiently and save on call centre costs.

Results for 2018 secondary school offer day:

There was a 52% reduction in the number of calls coming through ("calls offered") on the 2018 offer day in comparison to 2016, thanks to the provision of the right info in advance over email. The number of calls requiring assistance from staff ("calls answered") also decreased by 72% in comparison to 2016, indicating that the IVR provided many callers with the info they needed.

Given that the average cost of taking a customer phone call is £2.59*, the 72% reduction in calls answered (~1,650 fewer calls) equates to an approximate saving of £4,275 on offer day alone. The reduced demand over offer day and the following week indicates a total potential saving of nearly £13,400 on call costs in comparison to 2016 - before measures were introduced.

**Based on SOCITM's channel value benchmarking.*



(Working days of the month in March)

MARCH	2016		2017		2018	
WORKING DAY OF THE MONTH	CALLS OFF	CALLS ANS	CALLS OFF	CALLS ANS	CALLS OFF	CALLS ANS
OFFER DAY	2780	2326	1985	1472	1341	661
2	1873	1681	1699	983	539	459
3	1442	1159	1556	946	1062	401
4	1025	969	1428	1107	1074	363
5	1220	1177	1031	943	733	409
6	1065	1030	924	881	532	435
7	980	950	771	747	364	340
8	922	899	710	690	491	422
TOTAL	11307	10191	10104	7769	6136	3490

(3 years of stats)

ABOUT GRANICUS

Granicus provides technology and services that empower government and public sector organisations to create seamless digital experiences for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, content management, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 160 organisations in the UK and 4,000 worldwide, Granicus connects 12 million citizens in the UK and 185 million globally, creating a powerful network for enhanced government transparency and citizen engagement.

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SUMMARY OF BIRMINGHAM'S EMAIL OUTREACH

Powered by the GovDelivery Communications Cloud



304k

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS



40+

SUBSCRIPTION TOPICS
(B2C AND B2B)



3.7m

EMAILS SENT IN THE
LAST 12 MONTHS



28%

OF LOCAL
POPULATION
SUBSCRIBED
(equivalent numbers)



57.2%

AVERAGE
ENGAGEMENT RATE



39.7%

"NETWORK IMPACT"
(subscriber numbers boosted by cross-promotion via other nearby councils in GovDelivery Network: Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Solihull, Coventry, and Stoke)