

The UK's leading learning disability charity has revolutionised its telecommunications strategy with a bespoke solution from Aurora Kendrick James that consolidates billing information and optimises call tariffs to deliver substantial cost-savings.

Who is Mencap?

Mencap was founded in 1946 and is today the largest UK charity dedicated to learning disability. The charity provides housing and support and community support services for people with a learning disability and families and carers nationwide. An active voice in influencing government attitudes and legislation. Mencap also runs three colleges for students and provides employment services that helps people with a learning disability find new career opportunities and supports employers.

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With over 100 offices, 600 homes and supported living schemes UK-wide, plus an additional 450 affiliated local Mencap societies and 300 gateway leisure schemes, the communications spend across the organisation tops £1 million each year. Wanting to deliver services as cost-effectively as possible, Mencap needed to reduce its telecommunications costs and adopt a cohesive approach to the delivery of management information across its widespread sites to minimise the time staff spent on these non-core tasks. To do this the charity called in communications consultancy experts Aurora Kendrick James (AKJ) to consolidate billing, optimise tariffs, monitor call traffic and analyse data right across its organisation.

Cutting Costs in Target Areas

Restrictions in local authority funding have put pressure on Mencap to deliver an increasing number of services and schemes without adding to its running costs. As a result, the charity is constantly striving to make operational savings and increase its staff efficiency so that it can finance the continual enhancement of the invaluable services it provides to people with a learning disability.

A cost review carried out by Mencap highlighted the charity's telecommunications spend as a growing drain on funds, time and resources. The charity's existing process for delivering telephone billing data across the organisation involved manually processing over 1,000 paper invoices each month in 16 local offices.

Aiming to reduce the time this took and analyse where cost savings could be achieved, Mencap decided to assess its entire communications use with the help of leading communications consultancy AKJ.

Consolidating Communications Information

As a first step AKJ enabled Mencap to consolidate all its billing information, gathered from its nationwide sites, and present it in a single report that made it easier for individual site managers to view and analyse their own call traffic and review costs.

With the data gathering, billing and reporting managed externally by AKJ this avoided Mencap having to dedicate resources to managing and maintaining the process internally.

Mencap implemented the BT OneBill solution to streamline telephone invoicing across its organisation, with assistance from AKJ. This has enabled the charity to merge its existing multiple paper invoices into one single telephone bill, and highlight each local cost centre activity in a customised breakdown that enables efficient analysis of each different area of spend.



corporate reporting

"We were aware of Aurora Kendrick James' reputation as an innovator in helping companies better understand and consolidate their communications use, to make it more efficient and minimise costs.

They very quickly analysed our current use and identified where we could reduce our spend, make savings and increase our efficiency by improving our existing in-house processes and systems."

Keith Burgess
Head of IT and Support Services
Mencap

AKJ case study

AKJ also analysed the frequency, type and scope of Mencap's existing telephone usage to determine the best carrier package for the organisation that would yield the highest savings. The Consultancy provided the analysis which enabled Mencap to make an informed decision about their telecoms carrier. Following the charity's decision, AKJ were able to project manage the transition to Carrier Pre-Selection.

Mr Burgess said "Our previous process of handling vast volumes of paper invoices, tracking overall spend and manually breaking costs down area by area was time-intensive, expensive and inefficient. Thanks to Aurora Kendrick James the difficulties we faced in consolidating our billing information into a manageable format have been completely eradicated. The customised solutions they have introduced have also enabled us to cut costs, reduce the time our staff spent on comms-related tasks and generate further savings on an ongoing basis."



Managing Data for Reporting and Analysis

Mencap was also keen to provide billing information electronically across its nationwide network of offices. The AKJ reporting and analysis solution, a web-based centrally-managed system developed by the Consultancy, enables remote access to billing data via Mencap's own intranet site.

The tailored solution enables local cost centres to track patterns of telephone usage and billing information in a computerised format, eliminating the need for paper invoices.

Data can also be analysed at a local and national level to provide a clear view of cost structure, spend and allocation of resources company-wide.

Mr Burgess said "AKJ's online reporting and analysis system provides us with an invaluable facility to understand and exercise managerial control over the way we use our telephone systems. It helps us to continually locate areas of high usage and high spend to target ways of reducing our costs even further."

The Results

Outside of improving their communications and administrative efficiency AKJ's involvement with Mencap is also impacting how the charity delivers core services. The charity enlisted the Consultancy's expertise in project managing the installation of 400 telephone lines to provide Internet access across the charity's registered homes.

AKJ's ongoing consultancy support has to date enabled Mencap to realise a sizeable annual budget saving, as well as tangibly improve its staff and operational efficiency.

Effective Communications Management

Mr Burgess said "The complete strategic solution that AKJ has provided has dramatically improved how we understand and analyse our telephone usage, enabling us to reduce unnecessary spend, improve our staff's productivity and generate substantial savings on an ongoing basis."

"Our ongoing relationship with AKJ will ensure that Mencap uses communications efficiently to deliver our services and control our costs so that we can use the savings to maintain and enhance the care we provide."

For more information, please contact the AKJ team on 01634 673 800 or email info@akjl.co.uk

Solution Overview

The Customer Challenge

- To reduce operational telephony costs.
- To manage telecommunications data on a local and national level, and enhance reporting capabilities.
- To efficiently deliver critical information across a widespread and dispersed user base.
- To improve call traffic reporting to better understand patterns of usage and eliminate unnecessary spend.
- To optimise telephone tariffs and tailor carrier requirements.

AKJ Solution

- Tailored consultancy on identifying wastage and increasing efficiencies.
- Consolidated billing, online data analysis, and optimisation of existing carrier terms and contracts.
- Analysis of telephone usage, including frequency, type and scope of calls, existing carrier arrangements and billing structure.
- Tailored, bespoke solutions and supported implementation of BT OneBill to consolidate invoicing.
- Carrier Pre Selection to route calls via low call rate providers.
- Bespoke online reporting and analysis solution s enabling efficient review of call traffic and spend remotely.

The Business Benefits

- Substantial cost savings.
- Reduced staff time on non-core activities.
- Consolidated telephone bills, with customised usage breakdown in an easy-to-view format.
- Seamlessly integrated solutions providing facilitated management overview of telecommunications activity.
- Optimised tariffs providing low call rates and ongoing preferred carrier selection to deliver the highest saving.
- Efficient analysis of comms-related expenditure across all centres.