

# CASE STUDY

## BOURNEMOUTH CITIZENS ADVICE

**South West Communications Group deploys a new telephone system to Bournemouth Citizens Advice Bureau to improve the way they handle calls from their Hampshire clients.**

Bournemouth Citizens Advice Bureau provides Hampshire people with a face-to-face, telephone, email and online advice service on issues that include benefits, housing, consumer issues, employment, debt, family and relationships, the law, and immigration. Established in 1940, Bournemouth Citizens Advice now has more than 100 volunteers who work between their two main sites.

The Bureau was using an aging Panasonic telephone system at its head office at the Bournemouth Town Hall but it no longer met their needs. All calls were answered by the Bureau's receptionists who at times were coming under pressure from the high volume of calls they were receiving and transferring.

The existing telephone system was unsupported and had a number of unresolved faults which was obviously impacting on an advice service that is largely telephone based.

They wanted a more modern solution that would be easy to use, as most of their advisers were volunteers, one that would be simple to re-programme as and when required, and offered key features such as voicemail and automated attendant.

Alcatel·Lucent   
Enterprise



**swcomms** managed to secure this business despite competition from several other suppliers on the back of an email and telesales campaign targeting Citizens Advice Bureau branches in the area. In fact, we were invited to quote for the solution after the manager spoke with another bureau which gave us "very positive feedback about the service, costs and support received."

With a proven track record, having supplied telephone systems for the Andover, Ash, Barnstaple, Bridgwater, Bridport, Bristol, Christchurch, Exeter, Honiton, Newbury, Trowbridge, Weymouth and Winchester Citizens Advice Bureau branches, we were well-versed on the needs of a busy branch and the challenges their staff face on a day-to-day basis. This expertise meant **swcomms** was able to design a solution that would exactly fit Bournemouth's requirements.

**swcomms** installed a robust and reliable Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Office telephone solution, which is a technically superior system yet is easy to use which is crucial for an organisation that has a fluid workforce of volunteers who work for a few hours a week.

The inbuilt voicemail ensures the Bureau remains contactable even if there is no-one personally available to answer a call. Some of the user mailboxes have been integrated with email inboxes so that staff can access their voice messages whenever they need to.

The automated attendant facility gave immediate relief to the under-pressure receptionists. This feature answers all calls with their personalised welcome message and offers the caller a choice of options to confirm opening times, request telephone advice, cancel an appointment or to report an absence.

The caller either holds for a receptionist or chooses one of the options to ensure they are put through to the right person or voice mailbox, thus alleviating a certain amount of call handling for the reception staff.

“We are very happy with the service we have received. **swcomms** kept us informed at every step of the process and the post installation support has been commendable. The new telephone system has been a welcome improvement and has allowed us to provide a better service to our clients. We would happily recommend them.” Manager Samantha Whiting

Computer telephony integration (CTI) allows the Bureau’s full-time staff to have control of their calls from their desktop PCs which simplifies using the features of the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Office solution even further. This also provides a log of all the incoming and outgoing calls to each handset.

Call recording is activated on a manual ad hoc basis if a member of staff is concerned about one of its callers. These recordings are saved in the user’s mailbox and can be played back to another advisor to gain further assistance.

On-site training was provided for the Bureau’s full-time team when the system went live. The training was divided by type of handset and was followed by an administrator training session. This ensured the staff were confident about using the new telephone system and its features from day one.

Ongoing support is provided for the Alcatel-Lucent OmniPCX Office solution care of a service level agreement that includes on-site support 8am and 6pm on weekdays to ensure the Bureau’s service will not suffer in the event of a fault arising.

**swcomms** also took over the Bureau’s lines and minutes to consolidate the Bureau’s communications costs through a single supplier. The lines include the five that serve the Bureau’s second site in Kinson as well as the six ISDN lines required by head office.

