Text Message Server ensures it's all systems go at at Merton Council

Text Message Server (TMS) is used at Merton Council to help maintain the continuity of their primary computer services. TMS automatically alerts an engineer by text if a power supply fails, a network connection goes down, a server error occurs, or a heating problem is detected in the Civic Centre building.

Local Government: Maintaining Primary Services

Our enterprise text messaging solution can cost-effectively and reliably help an organisation to maintain the continuity of primary services, such as power loss and IT failure, by automatically and immediately alerting an engineer when a malfunction is detected.

System and services down-time compromise customer service

For all councils, maintaining the efficiency of frontline services is a top priority. They need to be operational 100% of the time.

If primary systems and facilities fail, services will be interrupted. It is therefore essential to have a Business Continuity Plan and procedures in place which are specific to the organisation's unique requirements, so if disaster strikes, you can continue business as usual with minimum disruption.

Councils need to save costs

This means finding better and more efficient ways of operating. Lean projects and business transformation initiatives – through modernised back-office functions; unifying and centralising all communications, so it is easier for residents to access information/advice and providing notification alerts/back-up for primary service systems to ensure continuity – all play a part in being able to maintain and improve frontline services in times of austerity.

Text Messaging is a reliable and cost-effective method of emergency notification

Calling, leaving a message or emailing is not the most reliable way of getting in touch with people in an emergency. In a situation where time is of the essence, text is best – it is immediate and discreet.

A server-based text messaging solution, such as Text Message Server, can be automated to generate notifications and reminders at preset times and dates and/or by pre-determined hardware/software/system triggers.

Reliable, secure and cost effective, cloud-based, SMS/Text Messaging Platform. Email SMS Gateway, Web Client, SMPP, API & more...

123-txt.com

Easy integration

Text Message Server is easily integrated with monitoring systems to respond to an emergency alert and send a notification message directly to the mobile of the designated emergency contact.

Efficiency Drives

Efficiency is very much part of Merton Council's operational and customer service culture.

They have introduced measures, such as shared services, and carried out a series of lean reviews across the council (in the areas of benefits, adult social care, fostering and adoption and waste services) to identify where efficiency improvements can be made and waste minimised.

Downtime = Inefficiency

Merton's IT department plays a key role in making sure that all systems run consistently and smoothly, with no downtime. If business systems are interrupted, customer service goes out of the window. Procedures that help resolve network outages and troubleshoot performance problems, have to be in place and working 24/7.

The SMS Gateway is integrated with Merton's Microsoft Exchange environment

This enables it to automatically send a text which has been triggered by a fault or failure notification from the following key monitoring systems;

- The Trend Building Energy Management System, which monitors and controls all heating, ventilation and air conditioning
- The APC InfraStruXure Central System, which constantly checks the power supply, temperature and mains services, and identifies any problems
- The TeVista Network Monitoring and Troubleshooting System, which continually checks all disparate network connections, so Merton can keep its network traffic smooth-flowing across the whole organisation
- OpManager, which monitors the servers

Monitoring systems identify the problem and TMS lets an engineer know

- Key monitoring systems automatically communicate with TMS
- An email is generated by the monitoring system and sent via SMTP to the TMS server
- TMS then automatically sends a text alert to the appropriate engineer

TMS is fail safe

Merton generally use an IP connection to send these messages, but have back-up measures in place if their internet connection goes down, ensuring messages are still sent to engineers – TMS will seamlessly switch to a GSM modem if IP connection is lost.

An SMS gateway is a scalable investment

TMS works with almost every business application, which made it easy for Merton to build on their initial investment and deploy SMS communications in other areas of the Council, with usage continuing to expand.

TMS is used to confirm sports facility and hall bookings

Leisure and Culture are using TMS to confirm bookings. The Public are able to complete booking requests via the Council's website, where they can opt to supply a mobile number to receive a text confirmation of the booking.

Emma Carnell, who is responsible for hall bookings said, *"The uptake of those opting to receive text confirmation for bookings has been very positive – and continues to grow. Not all residents have access to email, so texting is a good method of communication for them. From the Council's perspective, texting is a fast, immediate, accurate and cost effective. For residents, it is instant and unobtrusive."*

Full reporting functionality

Anthea Leeds is responsible for monitoring TMS and running the monthly report and statistics on usage. *"One of the best features of TMS from an IT perspective is the reporting functionality. When we first got TMS for engineer alerts, the number of texts sent in a month was quite low – around 350. As other departments have adopted the technology, the volume of messages has steadily increased and we now use around 1500 text messages a month – 17% of these being used by Leisure and Culture to confirm sport facility and hall hire bookings."*

Text communications are reliable, cost effective and 'green', adaptable and compliant

- **Reliable:** Merton knows that if Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) problems arise, or the internet connection goes down, TMS will still be able to function and send notifications.
- **Cost effective and Green:** Swapping from postal reminders to text reminders cuts costs. No more paper, consumables and postage, or staff time taken up printing and filling envelopes.
- **Adaptable:** TMS integrates with any system – so it is easy build functionality on the SMS investment, providing text technology to multiple departments.
- **Compliant:** Full reporting and audit trail functionality.