

CASE STUDY



Southern Communications help The Wessex Autistic Society save money and obtain value

The Wessex Autistic Society was founded in 1968 by parents of children with Autism, a life-long developmental disability affecting as many as 600,000 people in the UK. Those with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) often lack understanding of the world around them, and have difficulty with communication and social interaction.

With some 330 staff operating from locations across Dorset and Southern Somerset, The Wessex Autistic Society provides essential support for people with Autism, their carers and families.

Background

The Society has a team of mobile staff, or Service Users, who operate throughout the Dorset and South Somerset region supporting events and running a variety of activities, often in remote countryside locations. Each has a mobile phone or Blackberry provided by the Society, enabling them to stay in contact with colleagues, the Central Support Base in Christchurch, and the other Society offices. A number of on-call managers have the same arrangement.

In addition, the Society's offices and establishments have land-line connections, making and receiving high volumes of phone calls every day. Costs of The Society's communications can be considerable.

The Issues

As is the case with Charities, there is a constant need to keep costs down and The Society keeps a strong focus on value-for-money. Having established a favoured mobile network with good coverage and good landline connection service, the next step was to reduce the running costs and at the same time receive good customer support.

The Answer

Southern Communications now provide a combined service for both the mobile fleet and landline connections. With access to all major mobile and fixed line networks, they retained the quality of connections The Society was used to. Service levels were improved with their friendly in-house support team. Kevin Metcraft was involved with the decision to move over to Southern Communications, and was quickly on first-name terms with the staff. "Service from them is excellent. Whenever we ask for something, we get a good response and it gets done promptly".

On top of improving service, Southern Comms ensured The Society had the lowest possible call and line rental rates to reduce phone bills.

The Future

The Society continues to develop its services, which are in ever-increasing demand as awareness of Autism grows. Communicating has become a never-ending project and its costs and support are under constant review. Recent investment in data networking will ensure that mobile staff can reach each other in the future using both voice and data, and the convergence of the two technologies, known as VoIP is just around the corner.

Southern Communications' access to multiple network providers allows it to be flexible and reduce costs with market trend, which are passed on to all of its customers. The Society will therefore benefit from rate reductions as time progresses, without detriment to service or value.

When the time comes to harness VoIP and internet telephony, widely regarded as the next thing in telcoms, The Society's data infrastructure will be the perfect platform for the telephony on offer from Southern Communications.

