

Case study: 55% telephony cost reduction for Pembrokeshire College



What was the challenge?

Communication is key in further education providers, but there are challenges for those managing the telephony systems. College staff often work across distributed sites with staff members frequently travelling away from their landlines. The telephone is often used as a way of getting in touch with colleagues, so there is a heavy load on the internal college system, as well as the cost of external calls to consider. Typically there are two ways of providing the telephone network: voice over IP or VoIP, which works across the

learning providers' internet connection, and traditional ISDN which uses physical telephone lines.

In west Wales, Pembrokeshire College had been running VoIP on their local area network for a number of years to cater for its 4,500 students and staff on multiple campuses. But by 2013 external call costs using traditional ISDN links were becoming a real concern.

How did we solve it?

The college identified its telephony requirements and confirmed that it wished to **use Jisc's Telephony Purchasing Service to seek a new supplier**, becoming the first UK educational institution to do so.

The Jisc team submitted a Simplified Contract Notice on Pembrokeshire College's behalf, allowing 15 days for any new bidders to join the service and have the opportunity to tender for the contract.

This was followed by a mini-competition where all suppliers on the service were invited to participate and undergo assessment. Jisc handled clarifications between the supplier and the customer, ensuring a full audit trail of all communication to adhere with the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) rules.

Two suppliers submitted bids for the contract which led to the college making its decision based on cost, as it already had peace of mind that both bidders were physically connected to the Janet network and had been rigorously evaluated through the process. The college then engaged directly with the winning supplier to begin the transition. As it is a UK-wide framework, rental rates and costs per call were reduced and the college achieved a **55% reduction in costs** in the process. Jisc were on hand to help with the entire procurement process, providing assistance with drafting mini competition documents and were also help with the evaluation too, ensuring that the best supplier was chosen.

What were the benefits to the student experience/ organisational IT/ research reputation/ teaching, learning and assessment or other area?

Matthew Marl, IT manager at Pembrokeshire College, says, "By using the telephony purchasing service, we experienced a **straightforward transition** which has resulted in our annual call **costs falling from almost £12,000 per annum to around £5,500 per annum**. This is a huge saving and we are now looking at extending the system to allow calls between college mobiles and college landlines to go through the same system which will result in further savings."

What were the benefits to business efficiency, and other savings?

The move made use of the college's Janet network connection, powered by Jisc. Matthew says, "The core thing that's always underpinned everything within FE has been **the Janet network, which is excellent and an enabler** for all sorts of technology."

Matthew explains, "Janet enables. Telephony, for example - we wouldn't have been able to do that without Janet. We implemented Microsoft Office 365® for students and we're looking to upgrade this so we can implement it for staff as well. Janet allowed us to run services ourselves, due to the reliability and bandwidth of the connection. We run and host our own website. We don't need to outsource: through Janet we're able to do inter-site backups, all of which are of great benefit to the college."

More information?

For more information on how the telephony purchasing service could help procure the best value solution to fit your organisational needs, contact service@ja.net or visit the website (jisc.ac.uk/telephony-purchasing).