



Avoira's solution delivered significant cost-savings, increased resilience, and enhanced productivity.

## THE CLIENT



Ranked among the top three-percent of England's further education centres, Blackpool & Fylde College is one of the country's leading providers of technical and professional education.

An employment focussed college that partners some 1,800 employers, it serves over 3,600 young and mature students from five campuses Blackpool, Poulton-le-Fylde and Fleetwood.



# Business Needs

The college's existing telephony was delivered by an on-premise call manager which was reaching end-of life.

The central infrastructure that supported it was also ageing, with handsets unlikely to be compatible with a system upgrade.

The existing platform was also dependent upon costly ISDN lines for incoming calls, with SIP trunks serving outbound traffic.

"The need to upgrade was multi-faceted," explains Head of IT, Guy Baxter.



"We had the confidence that Avoira would be able to deliver for us given that they'd previously completed the same Teams solutions within the education sector."

Guy Baxter, Head of IT,  
Blackpool & Fylde College.

"We wanted to get away from ISDN and save some costs there. We also wanted to avoid the vast expense of a whole new system from our existing vendor and the excessive licensing costs that would come with it.

"We recognised too that the existing system was complex and extremely difficult to administer compared to other solutions."

The college put out a tender on the Crescent Purchasing Consortium (CPC) framework, outlining its requirements and preference for a [Microsoft Teams](#) based solution.

"Over Covid we had a vast explosion in the use of Teams and we wanted to settle on a single unified platform," says Guy. "We were making significant use of it internally for voice calls and meetings, so it was a logical place for us to put our telephony."



# The Solution

**Avoira won the CPC bid with a solution comprising Microsoft Teams Direct Routing coupled with Yealink MP54 and MP58 handsets.**

In addition over 500 Polycom and Jabra headsets were specified.

The technology would also be backed by extensive engineering expertise to ensure smooth implementation and management of the solution.

"Of the respondents to our tender, Avoira were best suited. They offered us a cost effective solution, comprehensive expertise and were able to confidently answer our questions," reports Guy.

"We had the confidence that Avoira would be able to deliver for us given that they'd previously completed the same Teams solutions within the education sector.

"Obviously there was a commercial advantage to going with Avoira too."

**The choice of Direct Routing made perfect sense to both the college and Avoira.**

A low-cost subscription UC service it would substantially eliminate the excessive licensing costs inherent in the previous system.

Cloud-hosting would ease the administrative burden whilst enhancing resilience.

Furthermore, the ability to make and receive calls over any Teams enabled device using existing DDIs would support the hybrid working model embraced by the college.

Having green-lighted the project Guy and his team worked closely with Avoira to ensure a smooth transition.



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"We envisaged doing a piecemeal migration but, because we've got such a huge block of numbers, that wasn't possible. We were really worried about moving over in one go, we thought it was going to be incredibly difficult."

Thanks to meticulous planning and Avoira's extensive experience and expertise, that proved not to be the case.

"Working with Avoira allowed us to make sure all our I's were dotted and t's crossed in advance," says Guy.

Direct Routing was then deployed on a Friday night, final user acceptance testing conducted on the Saturday with the solution going live on the Monday morning,

"We had Avoira with us every step of the way, the Friday evening, over the Saturday and the Sunday if we needed them" enthuses Guy. "We also had direct-to-engineer support for two weeks post go live.

"We always felt we had the resource and expertise to help us and Avoira were certainly extremely responsive."



# The Benefits

**As with the college's business needs, the benefits of Avoira's solution are multi-faceted.**

They include significant cost-savings, increased resilience, greater flexibility and enhanced productivity.

The college now has fewer than 100 handsets, a dramatic reduction on the 500 that previously sat on desks. Now 900 teaching and support staff can use softphones, wherever they are, whenever they want

"The main cost saving was in mitigating the hefty capital expenditure required to refresh the old system and hardware," notes Guy, adding that further savings came from ditching the old ISDN lines."

**Expertly implemented and managed, Avoira's solution has delivered significant cost-savings, increased resilience, enhanced productivity and cut the administrative burden**



**"We had Avoira with us every step of the way,"**

Guy Baxter, Head of IT,  
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**If time is money, then even greater financial benefits have been secured.**

"We've lost the administrative overhead and are certainly seeing the operational benefits from having a less complex system.

"We've also got Avoira's expertise and resources to assist with or implement changes as and when we need."

Going with a hosted session borders control (SBC) solution also eliminated previously identified business continuity concerns.

"Moving to the Avoira hosted solution means that people are no longer tethered to buildings and desks. This has significantly enhanced out disaster recovery and business continuity prospects."

Productivity gains are also evident. "Having everyone working on the same UC platform certainly increases productivity," he concludes.