



 mind  
Tameside,  
Oldham  
and Glossop

## THE CLIENT

**Tameside, Oldham & Glossop Mind (TOG Mind) is an independent charity run by and for local people.**

TOG Mind provides a range of services within preventative, early intervention and primary care settings, with the aim of empowering communities and individuals to benefit from good mental health.

Whilst supported by the national Mind charity, it is fully responsible for securing funding for and delivering services to those locally in need.



# Business Needs

**TOG Mind's existing telephony system was highly fragmented, comprising an ageing on premise platform and a mix of desk, soft and mobile 'phones.**

The charity also had a mix of suppliers, with Avoira managing support of the on premise network and another company having responsibility for mobiles.

"We were coming to the end of our current contract for the Avaya system which Avoira were already supporting for us. The system was a little bit out of date and every cupboard or server room I opened seemed to have a growing batch of old Avaya 'phones that nobody wanted!



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Operations Director, TOG Mind.

"It felt like we really needed an upgrade of the system, so we conducted a wholesale review of all our telephony," recalls TOG Mind's Operations Director, Karen Ditchfield.

That review took into account the usage and needs of some 120 staff members based at the charity's facilities in Ashton-under-Lyne and Oldham, as well as community-based practitioners serving GP surgeries, hospitals and schools.

Karen was keen to streamline communications and, as an ever-cost conscious charity, minimise expenditure.





# The Solution

**Karen called in Avaira account manager Daniel Mohammed to discuss TOG Mind's needs and review the available upgrade options.**

Daniel recommended replacing the on premise system with Microsoft Teams Direct Routing. This is a low-cost subscription, cloud-hosted, unified communications (UC) service that enable calls to be made and received over any Teams enabled device using existing DDIs.

"Teams Routing seemed a good fit in terms of what we needed and a simple solution for people to be using," notes Karen. That opinion was not only informed by the familiarity many users already had with Teams through its use for internal meetings, but the flexibility it would deliver across operations. For example, Karen ascertained that for some existing mobile users, Teams calling would be a better option.

At the same time, she simplified TOG Mind's supply and support chain by handing responsibility for mobile provision to Avaira. "I purposely moved from our old mobile phone supplier because we'd enjoyed really good customer service from Avaira before we moved to Teams," she explains.



Having decided upon a holistic solution, Karen pushed the green light and Avaira's engineers set about planning the transition from old to new. Step one was demonstrating proof of concept through initial implementation across the Oldham and Ashton inbound call reception teams.

With confidence boosted, the solution then went live across all operations.

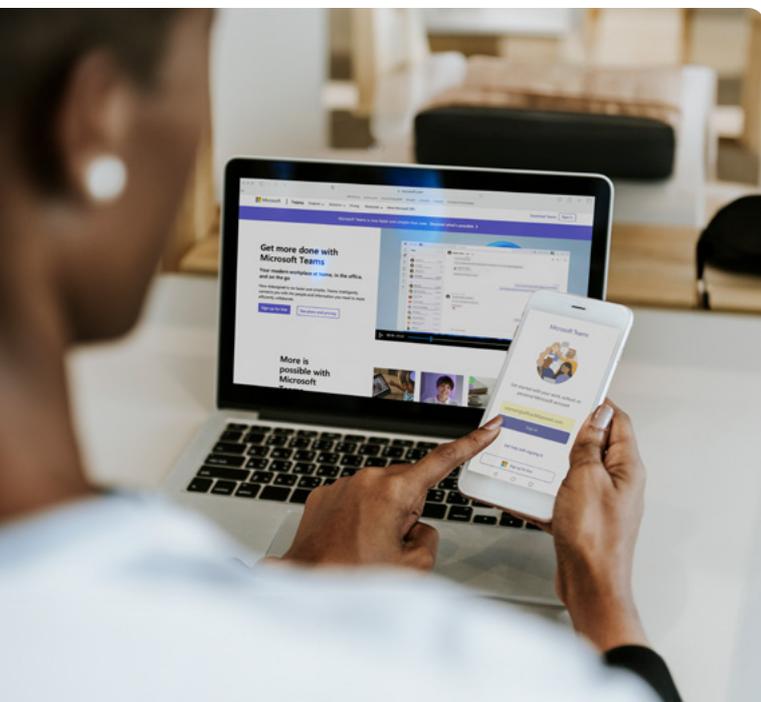
"It all went pretty smoothly," confirms Karen. This was due not just to meticulous planning but Avaira's engineering team providing a substantial comfort zone.

"I had one of Avaira's engineers on site with me on the day, plus one supporting us remotely," says Karen. "What really worked well for us was that with Avaira we'd done the proof of concept for about a month up until the switch over so the team were already really familiar with it."

She adds that having benefited from minimal disruption on installation, she's had "absolutely no issues" since.

The service and support Avaira generally provides to TOG Mind also earns much praise. "Because we're a small charity we don't have an in-house IT department so we really rely on our external suppliers. It's really important that they have a good relationship with us.

"With Avaira it feels like they're not an external supplier but an extension of our own support teams. I know we can go to them and get a response. They don't leave us hanging."





# The Benefits

A primary benefit is the ease of use of the new Microsoft Teams Direct Routing solution, particularly for reception staff charged with directing calls.

"They and non-reception staff who sometimes provide cover, have found it easier. It's quite intuitive. I think they've found it simpler because everybody who they would need to transfer calls to is already in the system. There's no need to allocate an extension, you just look for the person by name."

"They seem to have got used to it really quickly." The benefits though are not just operational but financial, an important factor for any charity.

"Being able to find cost savings anywhere just now is really key for us, more so than ever," says Karen, noting that voluntary sector organisations like TOG Mind need to continuously support people whilst simultaneously fundraising and generating contract revenue.



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Karen Ditchfield,  
Operations Director, TOG Mind.

The good news is that Direct Routing is very much helping that cause.

"I have estimated that Avoira's solution is saving us about £1,000 a month. That's a reduction of about 30%."

That, of course, is money that can now be directed to the provision of vital services to the increasing number of people requiring support in securing or maintaining good mental health.

