



# LGcomms Webinar

## From Zero to Hero: Internal Communications

With Havering Council

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# What we will cover

1. About Havering and our workforce
2. Our approach
3. Channels & data
4. Campaigns
5. Some take-aways
6. Ask us anything



# About you

## Chat



Do you work in

- ☒ Internal comms
- ☐ External comms
- ☐ Bit of both
- ☐ Neither

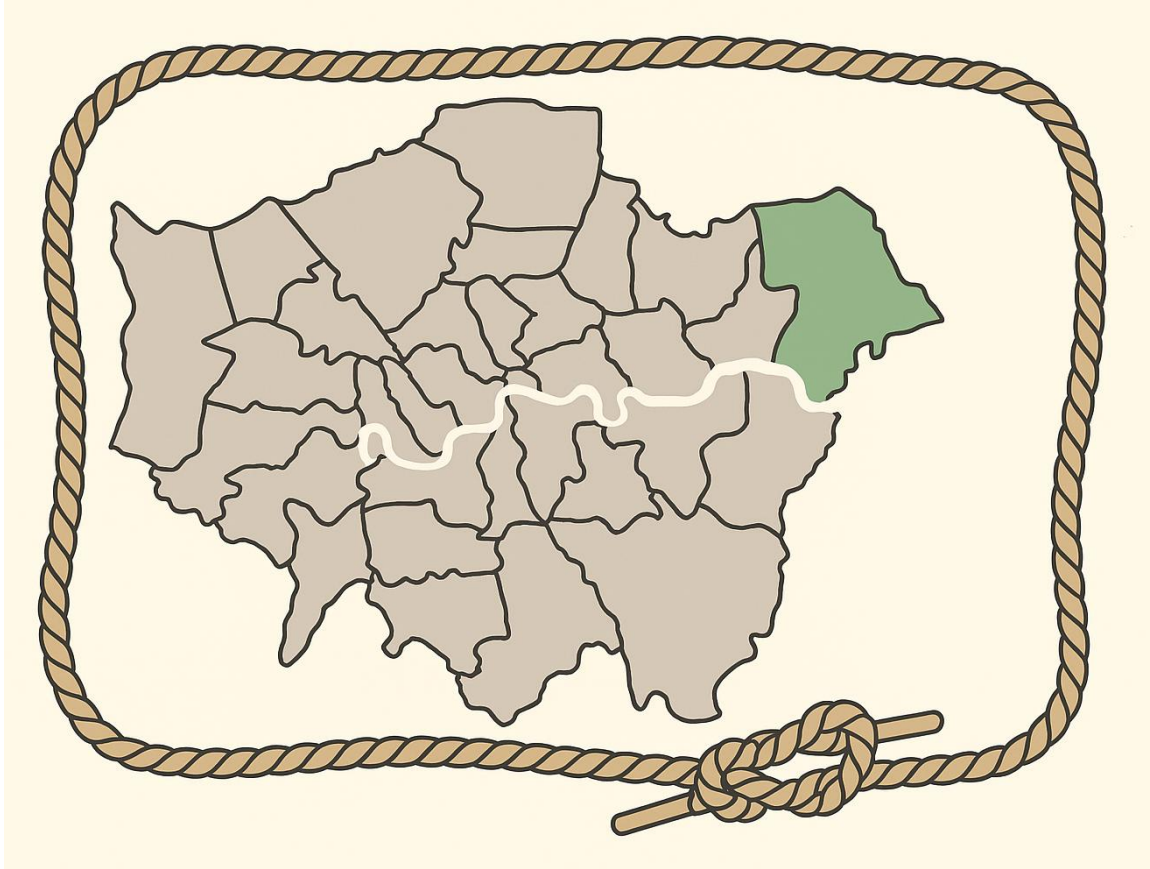
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Havering



# About Havering



- London's third largest borough
- Only Residents' Association controlled council in London
- London's second oldest (65+) and fourth fastest growing (0 to 4) population in the country
- 70% of spending on social care and housing
- Rely on Exceptional Financial Support from Government to balance the books
- Internal comms on a shoestring

# About us



## 2025

- Comms 2.0 Unawards – Best Internal Communications
- PRCA Dare Awards – Public Sector Award

## 2024

- Comms 2.0 Unawards – Best Internal Communications
- PRCA UK Awards - Campaign of the Year
- PRCA UK Awards - Best use of Planning, Research and Evaluation
- PRCA UK Awards - Employee Engagement Campaign of the Year



## 2023

- PR Moment – Employee Engagement Campaign of the Year
- LGC Awards – Campaign of the Year (shortlisted)





# Our workforce



**3,138**  
Staff



**2,515**  
Employees



**1,982**  
Hybrid Workers



**50**  
Avg. Age



**70.5%**  
Women



**9.8** Years  
Avg. Tenure



**32.1%**  
Part Time



**10.1%**  
Annual Turnover



**467**  
Off Network Staff

**21.3% BAME**



**9.8%**



**3.1%**  
LGBT



**67%**  
are  
Residents



**16%** Fewer  
Log-ins  
on Friday



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# Our approach



- Data driven
- Always human interest
- Tap into feelings and nostalgia
- ROSIE or OASIS
- Outcomes not just outputs
- Internal comms like a marriage



# Our approach



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# Our channels



# Our metrics

## Reach and awareness

- Newsletter – 1,600 reads per week
- Chief Executive Message – 1,700 reads
- Calendar invites – c. 2,600 accounts
- All staff emails – c. 1,800 reads
- Screensavers – c.2,671 screens, rotated 3-4 per month

## Engagement channels

- Let's Talk webinars – up to 1,000
- Staff WhatsApp – 500 followers
- Videos – average 350 views
- Podcasts (new) – 100 views

## Impact

- Informed levels – 76%
- Satisfaction – 72%



# Channels

Chat



**What internal  
channels are  
working well  
for you?**

Type message here...

Send

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# A bit about WhatsApp





# A bit about WhatsApp



Navigated internal approval processes for WhatsApp



Completed Data Protection Impact Assessment  
Screening and initial risk assessment – 56+ questions  
and risk review meeting



Faced IT scepticism, with a  
preference for VIVA Engage



Addresses data protection concerns  
and finally secured sign-off

# A bit about WhatsApp

- Initial uptake after launch (May–June): 20–30 followers.
- Growth settled through early summer due to holidays.
- Screensaver campaign (July) led to a spike reaching ~200 followers.
- Continued consistent promotion has grown the channel to 500 followers.
- Content now reaches around 77% of followers on average.





# A bit about WhatsApp

Weather warnings and safety alerts

Travel and transport information

Pension updates and HR notices

Local staff events and recognition

Internal Campaigns



# Channels

But....

Effective channels alone don't lead to successful outcomes.

They are however an essential prerequisite.

# Issue one – upskilling our workforce

## Background

With budget pressures all but essential development had taken a back seat.

The council was returning £47,000 of unspent apprenticeship levy each month and wasn't investing in management skills and future managers.

## Objectives

1. Invest in aspiring, junior and middle managers after years of under investment in learning and development.
2. More than double the number of 40 apprentices
3. Reduce the amount the council was losing and deliver savings

## Considerations

How can we challenge stereotypes of apprenticeships?

What would entice both staff and managers to consider apprenticeships?

How can we tap into feelings around career progression and associate them with apprenticeships?



# Issue one – upskilling our workforce

# ON TRACK

**FOR NEW MANAGEMENT**

**SKILLS**

For details on the opportunities available for  
first line managers and middle managers:  
Visit [intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack](http://intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack)  
Email [ontrack@havering.gov.uk](mailto:ontrack@havering.gov.uk)



## Issue one – upskilling our workforce

[illegible]

**"I FELT I HAD LOST MY WAY FORWARD WITH MY CAREER AND WANTED TO DO A COURSE THAT WOULD ALLOW ME TO STRENGTHEN MY KNOWLEDGE AND INCREASE MY FUTURE CAREER OPTIONS."**



**For details on the opportunities available for first time managers and middle managers:  
Visit [intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack](http://intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack)  
Email [ontrack@havering.gov.uk](mailto:ontrack@havering.gov.uk)**



## Issue one – upskilling our workforce

# ON TRACK

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

**"I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING ON DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES AND WAYS TO MANAGE A TEAM AND INDIVIDUALS."**



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## Issue one – upskilling our workforce

[illegible]

# MANAGEMENT APPRENTICESHIPS: THE BENEFITS

## 1. DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

## 2. BOOST YOUR EARNINGS

### 3. PROGRESS YOUR CAREER

## 4. INCREASE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

## 5. LEAD YOUR TEAM

## 30 PLACES AVAILABLE

**Find out more information today**  
**[intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack](http://intranet.havering.gov.uk/ontrack)**



# Upskilling our workforce

## 1. Where we started

↓ Cash lost monthly  
£c.47k 

Apprentices



40 → 80

## 2. Where we finished

Management apprentices

↑  86

Percentage of apprentices

↑ 71% 

cash saved

↑   
£311.5k

Campaign windows

 3

# Issue two – supporting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

## Background

Poor EDI staff data - only 34.4 % of staff share personal protected characteristics.

Tough nut to crack – we've consistently asked staff to do this.

Not helped by our clunky back-office Fusion system

## Objectives

Increase disclosure rate for council-employed staff to 90%

Help staff understand why diversity data matters

Create a sense of belonging and ownership over D&I

Build disclosure into the onboarding process

## Considerations

We can't use the Fusion system

How to sell this to our time-pressed staff?

How can we get some momentum going?

Staff not wanting to be discriminated against and fear of unfair treatment



# Count me in

Please take a few minutes to complete your personal details on Fusion.

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See how you will be making such a positive difference:  
[intranet.havering.gov.uk/count-me-in](https://intranet.havering.gov.uk/count-me-in).

# Count me in outcomes

- From 34.4% to 91% completions
- Confidence and reassurance – feedback and pulse surveys
- 31.5% increase in interaction with Fusion
- Hundreds attended virtual sessions, engaged with weekly content
- Personal reminders resulted in a 22% increase in the first month
- 97.7% disclosure rate among new staff

# Issue three – new ways of working

## Background

The pandemic radically changed how Havering staff work – before COVID most were office based.

Now the majority work from home with new shared booked workspaces when they come into the office

Customer service had significantly declined. Complaints were up.

## Objectives

**Highlight inconsiderate behaviours** (+1,000 unique intranet visits)

**Get people talking** (+70 suggestions)

booking desks +15%  
setting up voicemail +10%  
Hunt groups +15%

**Culture change**  
-5% complaints (service availability).

## Considerations

Our brief was to make it fun, highlight negative behaviours in a non personal way.

How can we generate debate about good practice in a new hybrid world?

How can we nudge and use humour to improve customer service?



# Adjusting to hybrid working



## Use of tech

- Staff hard to reach
- Not using Skype and Teams functions including team groups, voicemail
- Poor business continuity with hunt groups



## New shared spaces

- Not booking desks
- Litter and noise in communal areas
- Treating shared desks like they are your own



## Customer service

- Little support for switchboard colleagues
- Not putting the needs of residents and customers first

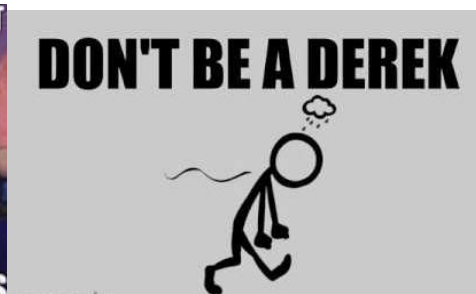
# Get creative

## Our inspiration:



Don't be a ...  
desk **hog!**

Don't leave property while going away for lectures or lunch in order to reserve your place.



## Our result:

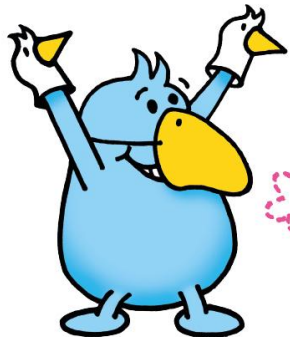




# Adjusting to hybrid working

## THE HAVERING CHARACTERS

*By Havering Council*



R.U. Unreachable



I.M. Invisible



V. Loud



A. Hogger



B. Inconsiderate



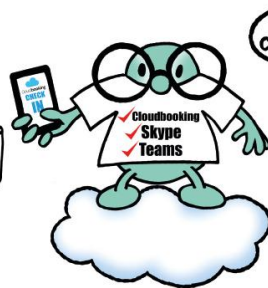
I.M. Contactable



B. Considerate



A. Hugger



C.A. Smart-Worker



U.R. Helpful

### DO YOU RECOGNISE THEM?

Highlight inconsiderate behaviours

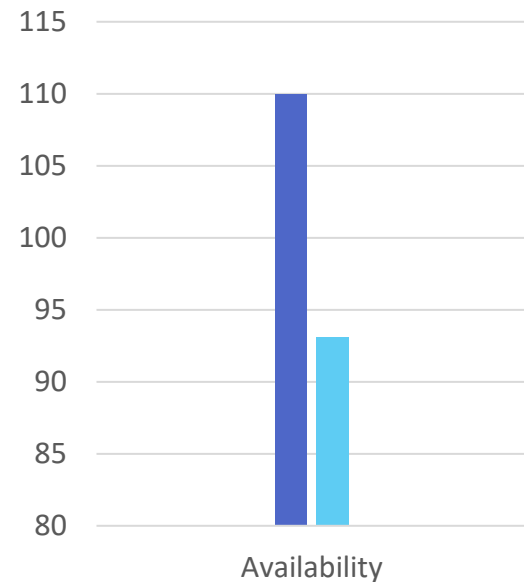
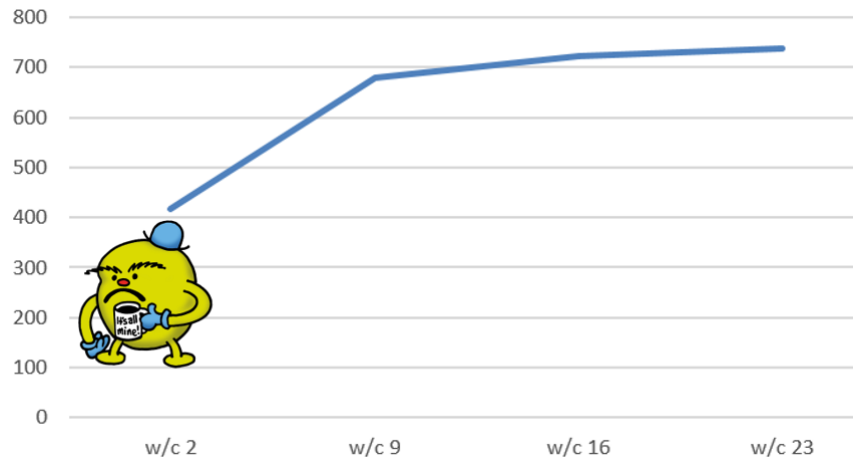
Our target of 1,000 unique visits was reached in just five weeks, and 1,533 unique visits (half the organisation) have viewed the character's tips.

Get people talking

221 comments and suggestions and every-one had a response. Changes in policy included new default alerts when staff missed calls (15,657 notifications).

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# Adjusting to hybrid working



- We increased use of the desk booking system by 76% with 2,800 bookings at the end of the campaign
- There was a 14% increase in the use of voicemail.
- Hunt and teams group usage also increased by 18%
- Looking at complaints data before and after the campaign
- We managed to reduce complaints around availability of service by 15.4%



# Issue four – responding to the financial crisis

## Background

A financial and Funding crisis pushing the Council to the brink of issuing a section 114-notice.

## Objectives

1. Explain – staff were fully aware of the financial challenges facing the council and knew what they could do to help
2. Reassure - staff believe the council is responding in the right way to unprecedented financial pressures
3. Engage – savings suggestions received from across the council
4. Cash – Comms campaign helps the council cash savings

## Considerations

How do we engage and reassure staff around our worsening financial position and use our committed workforce to provide solutions to help close a growing budget gap?

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⇒	Class	Tickets Needed	Price
	Urgent		£80m
From	Havering		
To	Exceptional Financial Support		
Havering Council			

⇒ Big Ticket Items

# Tickets Please

Let us know your big ticket items that will help save £50k. Send them to [budget24@haverling.gov.uk](mailto:budget24@haverling.gov.uk)

Havering Council

**Mind the  
budget gap**



# CHOOSE Havering

## ⇒ Big Ticket Items

"REASSESS THE VALUE OF PROPERTIES THAT HAVE BEEN IMPROVED IN THE BOROUGH, TO GENERATE MORE COUNCIL TAX REVENUE."

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## ⇒ Big Ticket Items

"WE'VE DECIDED TO REVIEW OLDER HOME IMPROVEMENTS TO MAXIMISE THE COUNCIL'S INCOME AND THIS BEGAN LAST YEAR."

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# Tickets Please



# Responding to financial challenges

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**Big Ticket Items**

**"THE MAJORITY OF OUR COMMERCIAL PROPERTY LEASES PROVIDES A CLAUSE THAT ENTITLES THE LANDLORD TO CHARGE INTEREST ON LATE PAYMENTS (4% ABOVE BASE RATE.)"**

**Havering Council**

**Big Ticket Items**

**"WE SHOULD MAKE MORE USE OF SOCIAL VALUE CONTRIBUTION BEING BUILT INTO OUR CONTRACTS WITHIN HAVERING."**

**Havering Council**

**Big Ticket Items**

**"IF WE TAKE A 1% OR 2% CUT FROM THE SUPPLIERS/ COMPANIES WHO PROVIDES OUR AGENCY WORKERS, WE WOULD SAVE OVER 50K."**

**Havering Council**

## Tickets Please

Let us know your big ticket items that will help save £50k. Send them to [budget24@havering.gov.uk](mailto:budget24@havering.gov.uk)

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# **CHOOSE** **Havering**

## ⇒ Big Ticket Items

**IF WE BROUGHT BACK THE  
PANTRY CANTEEN IN THE  
TOWN HALL WITH A BETTER  
MENU I AM SURE IT WOULD  
BRING IN £50,000 PER YEAR**

*Havering Council*

## ⇒ Big Ticket Items

**WE SHOULD INVEST IN SOLAR  
FARMS AND SELL RENEWABLE  
ENERGY VIA POWER  
PURCHASE AGREEMENTS AND  
BRING IN MILLIONS**

*Havering Council*

# **Tickets Please**



# Results

- Awareness – Some 2,933 attended webinars
- Reassurance – 92% of staff were reassured and not concerned about their jobs
- Suggestions – 238 savings suggestions received from across the council
- 123 ideas were carefully considered
- Around £300 spent. Around 120 hours of staff time included managing responses to suggestion





# OUTCOMES



- Saved **£209k** on agency worker fees
- Clawed back over **£1million** in social care direct payments
- Increased council tax premiums for empty homes saving **£100k**
- Unlocked over **£365k** now every contract has a social value element
- Overall we have saved **£1.67million**

**and....**

- We still haven't issued a **S114**

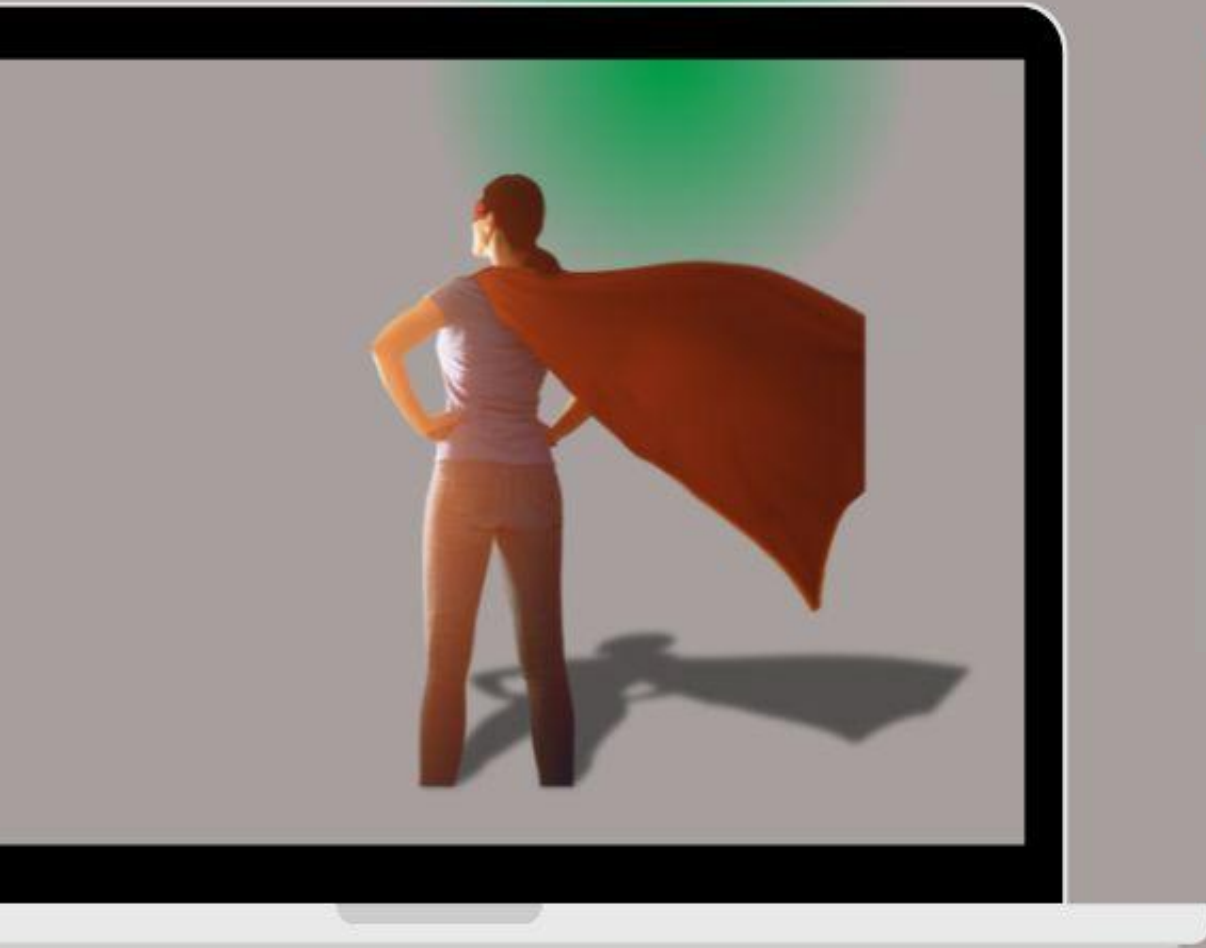


# Some take-aways

- Don't ignore the data
- It's a marriage – make the effort
- Experiment with marketing techniques
- Test with your internal networks
- Embrace AI (with checks)
- Be ambitious - internal comms can make a huge difference to your colleagues and your organisation







# LGcomms Webinar

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Internal Communications