

**London Borough of Southwark**
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In partnership with

Vangent Limited

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**Industry**

Government

Challenges

- Accelerate and improve service delivery to citizens
- Automate paper-based processes
- Meet government service mandates

Solution

- Benefits and services delivery
- Rich Internet application

Working with services and IT integration partner Vangent Limited, the London Borough of Southwark is using the Adobe Flash Platform and the Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform to automate inefficient, paper-based registration processes to provide citizens with rapid, responsive access to government services.

Results

- Increased three-fold the number of services that many citizens access
- Improved services by reducing from 5 to 1 the number of calls citizens make
- Saved \$1.7 million by automating service processing
- Accelerated processing of some complex benefits requests, such as housing benefits, from 36 days to 1 day
- Accelerated CSR training for complex benefits processing from two years to as little as two days due to easier application for client services
- Achieved 99% accuracy rate on One Touch forms
- Enhanced security and minimized opportunities for fraud

London Borough of Southwark

Innovative government agency delivers more efficient, responsive citizen services with powerful One Touch system built on the Adobe® Digital Enterprise Platform and the Adobe Flash® Platform

Raising the standard of citizen services

Residents of the London Borough of Southwark have access to some of the United Kingdom's most comprehensive and integrated government services. Every day, the borough responds to thousands of requests from the area's 256,000 residents. Inquiries can be as simple as requests for library cards, voter registration, and parking permits to more complicated requests for social housing and employment assistance. In total, Southwark provides citizens with more than 230 services.

The innovative borough recognizes that delivering more responsive and personalized citizen services requires more than putting basic forms online. "It's not just about posting online forms and promoting citizen self-service," explains Dominic Cain, head of client services in Southwark. "We are always looking at ways to work smarter and more efficiently to address the high volume of citizen requests we receive. In some cases, it makes perfect sense to put materials online. But for more complex services, it's better to adopt intuitive, integrated tools that empower staff to increase the standard for citizen service."

To improve employee processes and citizen services, the borough partnered with Vangent Limited, an established U.K. provider of services and technology. Working closely with Southwark, Vangent devised the powerful One Touch system, which automates the process of registering citizens for services. Built on the Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform (ADEP) and the Adobe Flash Platform, One Touch transforms how customer service representatives fulfill citizen requests.

"People often need multiple services, especially when they just move here," says Cain. "Our aim is to look holistically at the needs of citizens and address all service opportunities in one interaction, not many interactions." To date, the borough's efforts have been a clear success. The service model developed with Vangent and implemented by Vangent customer service staff is making citizen-facing processes more productive, by giving staff more intuitive experiences that guide them through service calls and reduce training requirements for any employee involved in customer service.

Bringing scalability, flexibility to large volume of requests

The borough receives as many as two million service requests annually from residents. The high volume of requests is due, in part, to the more transient nature of residents living in Southwark. In an average year, upwards of 40,000 residents will move to or leave the borough. Additional service pressures come from the fact that Southwark manages one of the United Kingdom's largest housing assistance programs, as well as provides extensive employment and social services.

Given the demanding mix of requests, multiple inquiries from residents, and complex workflows for some services, moving from paper to more automated processing of client requests would deliver real benefits to the borough, its staff, and residents. For instance, a standard application for registering a resident for housing benefits can be 45 pages long and require entry of more than 1,000 data items.

"When you're dealing with manual, paper-based processes, many things come up that hinder client service delivery," says Cain. "Errors on forms delay processing, or clients might provide inconsistent information when applying for multiple services. We wanted to eliminate manual steps and adopt a more automated, reliable approach to evaluate resident needs and fulfill requests." The borough's smart use of technology is also delivering real returns, saving the organization more than \$1.7 million since it was implemented a few years ago.

Vangent's One Touch system, built on the Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform and the Adobe Flash Platform, automates the process of registering citizens for services provided by the London Borough of Southwark. During a call or in-person meeting, the One Touch representative enters citizen data into interactive PDF forms that are integrated with enterprise systems. The XML data is saved automatically to SAP, Oracle, and other systems, where it is processed to fulfill citizen requests.

"The combination of the Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform and the Adobe Flash Platform is ideal for making it more intuitive for people to participate efficiently in data-intensive processes."

Adrian Blair
Head of professional services and ICT,
Vangent Limited

Integrating intuitive front-end processes with enterprise systems

By collaborating with Adrian Blair, head of professional services and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) at Vangent, the Borough of Southwark examined solutions for better integrating people-driven and data-driven processes. In addition to the complexity of handling a variety of service requests, several other challenges were immediately apparent.

Like most government organizations, the borough's systems have evolved over time. This meant that any front-end system put in place would have to integrate seamlessly with multiple legacy systems, including those from SAP and Oracle. Equally challenging, the scope of services provided by the organization continually changes, so any system deployed today would need to be flexible and scalable enough to support future activities.

"The combination of the Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform and the Adobe Flash Platform is ideal for making it more intuitive for people to participate efficiently in data-intensive processes," explains Blair. "With the Flex® framework we built a RIA that runs in the ubiquitous Adobe Flash Player and makes it easy for service representatives to capture information from residents and quickly identify the types of services needed. The Forms and Process Management capabilities of the Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform can then quickly move the new data, and data already in systems, into the appropriate forms and route them to managers for fulfillment. We've brought tremendous efficiency to our processes and have more flexibility in maintaining and expanding services."

In addition to developing the One Touch system, Vangent is the borough's strategic partner for delivering customer services, staffing the Customer Service Call Centre and three One-Stop Shops for in-person citizen meetings.

Personalized, responsive citizen services

With the rollout of One Touch more than a year ago, Vangent's staff has a more reliable and efficient way to handle citizen requests for borough services. When calls come into the service center, customer service representatives (CSRs) determine the type and breadth of services a citizen requires. If a resident needs multiple services or if the service requires a complicated application, the CSR routes the call to the One Touch team or uses the scheduling system to arrange a follow-on meeting with a One Touch representative.

With the rollout of One Touch more than a year ago, Vangent's staff has a more reliable, secure, and efficient way to handle citizen requests for borough services. Built-in validation in the dashboard and PDF forms help ensure that the proper type of information is captured and entered for every request, with One Touch CSRs achieving a 99% accuracy rate on forms entered through the system.

The image is a screenshot of a web-based form titled "Housing and Council Tax Benefit - Capture Form (1.6pp)" for Southwark Council. The form is part of a "VANGENT" system and is titled "Essential Applicant Questions - Part 2". It contains several sections of questions and input fields. The first section asks "Are you claiming for your self?" with radio buttons for "Yes", "No", "Self", and "Partner". The second section asks "Do you have a partner who lives with you?" with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". Below this are input fields for "Partner Title", "Partner Surname", "Partner Firstname", and "Partner Other Names". The third section asks for "Partner Date of Birth" with a date picker and "Partner National Insurance Number" with a text field. The fourth section asks "Have you (or your partner) ever claimed Benefit or Council Tax Benefit before?" with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No". The fifth section asks "Are you (or your partner) getting any of the following benefits?" with checkboxes for "Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)", "Pension Credit (Guaranteed)", "Income Support", and "Housing Benefit". The form is interactive, with fields for "Partner Title", "Partner Surname", "Partner Firstname", "Partner Other Names", "Partner Date of Birth", "Partner National Insurance Number", "Gender", and "Have you (or your partner) ever claimed Benefit or Council Tax Benefit before?". The form is titled "Essential Applicant Questions - Part 2" and includes a "Print" button at the bottom right. The top navigation bar includes "CRM data", "Forms & services", "Historical forms", "Proofs", and "Bookings". The top right shows user information for "MR. RONALD MATTHEWS".

"It's exciting when an application like One Touch so clearly delivers on its promise. Service representatives have more efficient interactions with constituents and are delivering higher quality services. It's a winning solution for everyone involved."

Dominic Cain
Head of client services,
London Borough of Southwark

During the call or in-person meeting with the One Touch CSR, the representative enters citizen data into interactive PDF forms that are integrated with enterprise systems. The XML data is saved automatically to SAP, Oracle, and other systems, where it is processed to fulfill citizen requests.

"This is a big leap in the quality and efficiency of services we can deliver," says Cain. "Instead of having a resident call five or six times or schedule multiple visits to our offices, Vangent CSRs can manage requests quickly in one call, with all data captured quickly and accurately in relevant systems. It's a tremendous benefit for citizens and for the borough."

Greater efficiencies deliver big returns

The integrated One Touch system also enables Southwark to meet "avoidable contact" requirements outlined in the United Kingdom government initiative NI 14 with, on average, five service calls now reduced to one. And that is just the beginning. Service requests are also handled faster than ever.

In some cases, benefits forms for unemployment insurance and other services that typically take some agencies as long as 36 days to complete can be completed and processed by Southwark in less than 24 hours. This directly impacts the quality of life for benefits recipients, often giving them the means to keep a roof over their family.

Equally impressive is the improved management of citizen requests. Already, more than 20,000 service requests have been handled through One Touch, with customer service representatives now using the system for as many as 1,000 calls per month. What's more, 74% of the citizens who had services initiated through the system accessed at least three services, instead of the single service to which they initially thought they were entitled.

"One Touch has become a model of efficiency for government organizations across the United Kingdom," says Blair. "With the Adobe solutions, we deployed interactive processes that speak to how people really want to work, and avoided automation just for the sake of automation."

Accelerated processing and improved accuracy, security

The impact of One Touch is not only measured by what the borough can achieve more rapidly and efficiently, but also by what it can avoid.

Built-in validation in the dashboard and PDF forms help ensure that the proper type of information is captured and entered for every request, with One Touch customer service representatives achieving a 99% accuracy rate on forms entered through the system. The streamlined interactions with the systems have had a dramatic impact on training requirements. "For some of the more complicated benefits application processes, it could take a representative two years to be fully trained on the intricacies of completing and submitting all the forms," says Cain. "With One Touch, training on complicated processes can happen in days."

Systems at a glance

- Adobe Digital Enterprise Platform.
Key capabilities include:
 - Forms
 - Process Management
 - Reader® Extensions
 - Output
- Adobe Flash Platform
 - Flex framework
 - Adobe Flash Player

Additional advantages from One Touch result from the fact that the system includes built-in controls for safeguarding citizen information and minimizes the chance for fraud by making it harder for citizens to provide conflicting information to different government groups. Data captured once can be automatically populated in multiple PDF forms that are shared across teams for more effective and personalized communications management.

Even down to more timely payment of taxes—thanks to streamlined citizen registration—and reimbursements to and from housing providers, the returns from One Touch are impressive. "It's exciting when an application like One Touch so clearly delivers on its promise," says Cain. "Service representatives have more efficient interactions with constituents and are delivering higher quality services. It's a winning solution for everyone involved."

For more information

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