Calderdale College case study: Microsoft Teams Phone Direct Routing

How BT's VoIP solution helped build better connection and future-proof infrastructure with Microsoft Teams Direct Routing.

31 March 2026 5 minutes



The challenge

As Calderdale's leading provider of further and higher education, Calderdale College needed a modern telephony solution to replace its legacy infrastructure. We worked with the college to deliver the right fit for its staff and students.

The solution

Staff already had a great experience collaborating and helping students through Teams, so Microsoft Teams Direct Routing was a natural next step for everyone to improve communication amongst staff.

The result

Implementing Microsoft Teams Direct Routing has helped Calderdale College to

optimise its communications, enabling staff to simplify workflows and work more efficiently, leading to an increase in productivity since moving to all-IP.

Overview

For the last few years, Calderdale College knew its ISDN lines were approaching end-of-life. They needed to find a solution that would centralise their connection, improving the end-user experience. So when they started searching, it wasn't just our existing relationship with the college that made us an ideal fit. Having worked with them as far back as 2018, from providing a large fleet of mobile devices to responding to remote working requirements during the COVID pandemic, we knew they could benefit from more than a standard VoIP solution.

In 2020, the college implemented Microsoft Teams which quickly became the foundation of communication for staff, complementing the Microsoft 365 suite already in use. Coming from a long-outdated Avaya system, there was an initial debate as to whether a standard VoIP solution would achieve what they were looking for or whether to explore additional features from Microsoft Teams.

It was after they learned more about Teams Direct Routing that they realised it would simplify their internal processes, with all communication requirements managed on a single platform as opposed to introducing something new altogether. Staff already had a great experience collaborating and helping students through Teams, so Microsoft Teams Direct Routing was a natural next step for everyone to improve communication amongst staff.

The challenge

As a public sector organisation, Calderdale College felt more heavily scrutinised than

other businesses in the same position and knew finding a cost-effective solution was a must. In reaching out to different providers for options and quotes, they were conscious to keep their costs in line with what they were paying previously, whilst getting the best technology service for collaboration and communication. Even with the success of using Microsoft Teams as their central collaboration platform, they were unable to make phone calls via the PSTN in the app, leading to disjointed communications and general frustration.

Further exacerbating the situation was the upcoming PSTN switch off, meaning the college had to find their solution, fast. Even if sticking with their existing Avaya system was a viable option, they knew it would fail over time, creating a significant overhead and would cause more trouble to patch the issues bit by bit. Coming from an analogue system, they found they also struggled to adapt to changing business needs, such as removing outdated IVRs and updating call queues.

With these considerations in mind, the college decided on Microsoft Teams Direct Routing. After confirming the solution, the final challenge was working to a critical timeframe in which changes needed to happen. In order to minimise disruption during term time, the update had to be completed when its students were on their holiday break.

> **Because we had Teams, it made a lot of sense that everything worked in the same**

basket. Microsoft Teams Direct Routing has worked really well and complemented Teams, as well as the Voice element of it.



Ray Cutler
IT Helpdesk Supervisor

The solution

Unlike other service providers Calderdale College reached out to, our knowledgeable BT Local Business team was able to recommend a fit-for-purpose solution at the most competitive price. After listening to what the college needed and considering their requirements, we discussed the details of Microsoft Teams Direct Routing from BT and how it would benefit them, offering clear pricing throughout the process.

Because using Microsoft Teams is a requirement before implementing Direct Routing, our recommendation ensured that moving their voice service over would be a fairly fluid process.

We rolled out the solution, working to the college's critical timings during the Easter break. We were quick in making sure that the main numbers were ported over from the previous provider, including business-critical numbers, with internal

users receiving new numbers via Direct Routing.

When external factors beyond BT's control pushed delivery briefly into term time, we diligently focused on the most crucial areas and worked outwards from there. Before classes started up again, we ensured that the reception and the eight main departments were connected and ready to go, finalising the remaining implementation with as little disruption as possible.

In addition to making the process as straightforward as possible, our existing positive relationship was invaluable. Calderdale College's certainty of the level of quality, communication and support they would receive when they chose BT meant we could work together closely to discuss their ambition, find their perfect solution, and offer ongoing advice from beginning to end.

The result

Implementing Microsoft Teams Direct Routing has helped Calderdale College to optimise its communications, enabling staff to simplify workflows and work more efficiently, leading to an increase in productivity since moving to all-IP. With less pushback than the college anticipated, the staff felt that the solution worked well and complemented Microsoft Teams in a way that made communication feel effortless.

The transition to using Teams Direct Routing as their primary phone system, as opposed to traditional landlines, was simpler thanks to the staff's existing experience with using Teams.

Since implementation, the uptake within the college has been entirely positive, with several staff members eager to learn more about what Direct Routing can do for

them. The college's IT team continues to educate their colleagues, showing them how simple it is to make the most of its features and how to unlock its full potential, such as auto attendants and call queues.

Initially, handsets were provided to staff who were uncertain about the change, however they haven't been used. The ability to take calls from their computer, rather than separate hardware in more central and busy locations, means that staff have the freedom and flexibility to take and make calls wherever works best for them.

In one example, a member of staff who teaches and works in quality found that after finishing with her class she could take advantage of the quiet room to make the calls from her desk, and then complete her work without having to change locations or disrupt her flow.

Working with BT Local Business, the college benefitted from applying intelligence into their call routing, offering staff a more tailored experience. For example, they were able to assign numbers to different departments and staff room across their sites. This helped callers reach the right department or person quicker, avoiding previous issues like accidental call redirections.

Overall, we were able to expand on our positive relationship with the college, ready to provide support with any queries following implementation. The college had such a strongly positive experience with BT that, without our request, they sent us a heartfelt thank you message afterwards, saying they didn't think it could have gone any better.

Moving forward, we'll work with Calderdale College to add more users to the solution and continue with their contract for mobile devices, providing the same excellent service for years to come.

About

Company

Calderdale College

Industry
Education

Company size
500 employees

Location
West Yorkshire, England

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