



Lifesavers Scotland

Gamma's Inbound solution enables charity to keep pace with increased demand



About

Meet James Brown. By day an unassuming account manager for tech consultancy Jisc. By night and weekend a volunteer for the charity Lifesavers Scotland. Brown is just one of almost 100 people from all walks of life who selflessly give their time to helping the NHS in Scotland with urgent out-of-hours sample, blood or organ deliveries. As the charity's name suggests, more than once its volunteers' work has quite literally saved lives.

Based in Lanarkshire but serving wherever it is needed, Lifesavers Scotland is entirely self-funded, non-profit-making and is staffed exclusively by volunteers who take no income or expenses. Many of them Advanced drivers, they use their own transport or emergency vehicles as needed. Additionally, several well-known Scottish companies have stepped in with loan vehicles, for example buses provided free of charge.

The work of Lifesavers Scotland actually provides a double bonus to the NHS in as much as it helps give hard-working full-time staff more opportunities to spend time with their families as well as saving the NHS tens of thousands of pounds that might otherwise be spent on taxi, courier or other fees.

Some of the charity's recent work has included collecting emergency incubators from south east England and delivering them into the hands of doctors waiting in Scotland to help urgent cases. And Brown himself knows the importance of such urgent care. It was the critical surgery that saved his own life that inspired him to join the volunteers at Lifesavers Scotland.

The challenge

Organised through volunteers' own fixed and mobile phones together with paper records and rotas, volunteers would log on and off duty with NHS controllers and dispatchers who would allocate jobs, according to vehicle type, to the next volunteer on the list. There were sometimes teething troubles. A sample delivery might be allocated to a biker say, who would turn up and find 400 samples waiting - a job more suited to a large van.

The sudden onset of the Covid-19 epidemic and a large upturn in work brought new challenges for the charity. While the volunteer system worked very well for several years, the Covid outbreak meant we really needed to up our game," says Brown. "We started with one month bringing 400 jobs, then 1,200 then very soon 1,600. Controllers could change potentially five or six times in a shift. We needed to automate."

It was here that Brown's IT skills came to the fore. With no apparent off-the-shelf solution, he re-purposed a food delivery app which could match vehicle to assignment and re-allocate drivers according to location and urgency. That just left the challenge automating the routing of phone calls to the right person, at the right time, so making optimum use of volunteers' time.

The solution

Having worked with the telecoms firm Gamma several times in his day job, Brown turned to the company once again. Thinking initially that the Horizon hosted telephony would be the way to go, he was instead pointed onwards the Inbound call management platform Contact Path Geo. Designed for multi-site, multi-department organisations it can route calls based on caller's identity, location and appropriate manager. Gamma offered the service free for one year, joining the other businesses that support Lifesavers Scotland in kind.

More commonly applied to businesses where employees hot desk, work from home and on their mobiles, Contact Path Geo has proved to be invaluable to the charity. It helps coordinate the team of volunteers who have to fit their charity work around busy day jobs and family lives.

As the work for Lifesavers Scotland grows - one example being the collection of hundreds of Covid test samples a month from care homes - Contact Path Geo is also helping the charity keep up with demand, and it has simplified cooperation with partner charities.

The results

"Instead of me being on call 24/7 to handle changes, I can now set up everything at the beginning and at the end of each day," says Brown.

"It's taken a lot of the pressure off. The charity and the NHS no longer have to worry about the cost of calls and there's no worries about being able to contact the right person. Somebody will always answer."

The adoption of Call Path Geo has also allowed Lifesavers Scotland to set up hunt groups, call groups and other options like IVR. "It's made life for everyone easier," says Brown. "If necessary, even if I'm out on a quick-response assignment I can pull over, make changes from my phone in just a few seconds, then continue.

"Once we know who's working and who's available on a particular day and time it's really simple to configure everything for the day and yet still be able to make changes to accommodate last-minute alterations in shift patterns or driver's availability."

The benefits

- More **efficient use** of volunteer team
- **Eases the burden** on the NHS
- Very quick and **easy to set up** or modify call plans
- Helps **reduce the cost** of fundraising
- Calls always get through to the **right person**



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