



Almost Half of UK Consumers have Missed Public Sector Appointments due to Communication Issues Since Start of Pandemic, According to Research from Vonage

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- *Figure soars to 70 percent of 18-24 year-olds, suggesting that the UK public sector may be failing to provide customer experience that is fit for purpose*
- *Research from Vonage underscores the need for organisations to integrate voice chat, SMS and social messaging apps for a unified and streamlined agent and customer experience to serve customers on their preferred channel*

LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Vonage (Nasdaq: VG), a global leader in cloud communications helping businesses accelerate their digital transformation, today announced [new research](#) revealing that 44 percent of public sector service users have missed an appointment due to communication issues with the organisation. This soars to a staggering 70 percent of 18-24 year-olds.

Vonage's independent survey of 2,000 UK adults who have contacted public sector organisations since the Covid-19 lockdown started*, revealed that more than a third (36 percent) felt extremely frustrated following their last interaction. Nearly half of those (46%) attributed this to not being able to make contact through their preferred communications channel. In fact, 27 percent of respondents reported that their favoured channel wasn't available, despite 71 percent of those questioned stating this would have enhanced their experience.

According to the survey, 88 percent of respondents want public sector organisations to send them important messages directly, with email being the preferred channel for 43 percent, closely followed by SMS (41%). Twelve percent of 18-24 year-olds would like to be notified via Facebook Messenger, while 15 percent of 25-34 year-olds chose WhatsApp. These figures will likely increase as the younger generation matures.

When asked about their favourite overall channel for contact from public sector organisations, respondents again chose email (33%) followed by SMS (25%). Top reasons cited for email were 'the message is documented for reference' and 'I can easily respond if needed' (both 47%). Those preferring SMS chose the channel as they 'can be reached instantly, anywhere, any time' (56%) and they are 'unlikely to miss the message' (55%).

NHS [data](#) shows that missed general practitioner (GP) appointments alone cost the NHS £216 million a year, meaning the annual cost to the public purse of all these missed appointments across the sector is likely to be significant.

David Darmon, Vonage Vice President of Sales for EMEA, commented, "The fact that almost half of those surveyed, and almost three-quarters of 18-24-year-olds, have missed appointments due to these issues points to a growing problem in how the public sector communicates with its citizens.

"Sending out letters may have worked well enough in the past, with only 18 percent of those over 55 having missed an appointment, but preferences are changing rapidly, with our research highlighting that this age group now favour email (46%) and SMS (23%).

"We are at the start of a communications revolution as organisations worldwide accelerate their digital transformation journeys to offer a better customer experience, increasingly recognising that it's a key competitive differentiator. This research highlights that in an increasingly virtual world, it is essential for public sector organisations to stay connected to service users from anywhere through their preferred communications methods as the demand for exceptional customer experiences has never been greater".

Vonage is a supplier on Crown Commercial Service's (CCS) G-Cloud framework for its [Messages API](#), together with its [Vonage Business Communications](#) and [Vonage Contact Center](#) solutions. The G-Cloud framework enables public sector organisations to search, evaluate and procure cloud services from select suppliers. CCS supports the public sector to achieve maximum commercial value when procuring common goods and services. In 2019/20, CCS helped the public sector to achieve commercial benefits worth over £1bn, supporting world-class public services that offer the best value for taxpayers.

Vonage delivers an end-to-end communication experience, from unified communications to contact centres to communications APIs that enable the integration of video, voice, messaging, chat and verification into customers' applications, products and workflows. The Vonage Messages API integrates with SMS, MMS and popular social chat apps -- such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Viber -- so organisations can communicate with customers throughout their journey to engage them, fulfil their requirements and provide real-time support.

For further information, [download](#) the research report.

*Research conducted via London-based insights agency, [Opinion Matters](#). Sample: 2,003 UK-based adults who have had reason to be in contact with public sector organisations since the Covid-19 lockdown started. Field dates: 27.05.2021-03.06.2021.

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About Vonage

[Vonage](#) (Nasdaq: VG), a global cloud communications leader, helps businesses accelerate their digital transformation. Vonage's Communications Platform is fully programmable and allows for the integration of Video, Voice, Chat, Messaging and Verification into existing products, workflows and systems. Vonage's fully programmable unified communications and contact center applications are built from the Vonage platform and enable companies to transform how they communicate and operate from the office or anywhere, providing enormous flexibility and ensuring business continuity.

Vonage Holdings Corp. is headquartered in New Jersey, with offices throughout the United States, Europe and Asia.

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