



ABOUT

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council serves 534k citizens in West Yorkshire, UK. As part of a wider communications strategy, Bradford uses the GovDelivery Communications Cloud by Granicus to deliver a public email bulletins service for 127k subscribers, comprising 50+ subscription topics - from recycling advice to council job vacancies.

Multi-channel communications improve community resilience during severe weather

SITUATION

Extreme weather puts pressure on council to communicate and help keep people safe

In February and March of 2018 the UK experienced its coldest weather in years, with heavy snow and sub-zero temperatures lasting several days. This had significant implications for Bradford Council and its services, including: gritting roads, emptying bins, social care provision, and many other services.

Bradford had a responsibility to let local people know about service disruptions as well as specialist support available to help keep communities safe and well. Citizens needed regular updates to help them make informed decisions, and they expected information fast.

SOLUTION

Multi-channel integrated communications keep people informed in difficult circumstances

During the severe weather Bradford Council used its website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, media releases and email updates to share timely information about service disruptions, planned gritting, advice on how to help vulnerable people, and photos of staff and local people working hard to help others. This brought a friendly human touch to the messages, which may even have had a positive impact on the public's patience in these challenging times.

METRICS

(for "UK Snow Week")

2X

MORE ROUGH SLEEPERS
HOUSED THAN ON A
"NORMAL" COLD NIGHT

6.2K

NEW SUBSCRIPTIONS TO
"EXTREME WEATHER"
UPDATES

400%

HIGHER SUBSCRIBER
GROWTH THAN A
"NORMAL" WEEK

1500%

MORE NEW
SUBSCRIPTIONS THAN A
"NORMAL" WEEK

27.8K

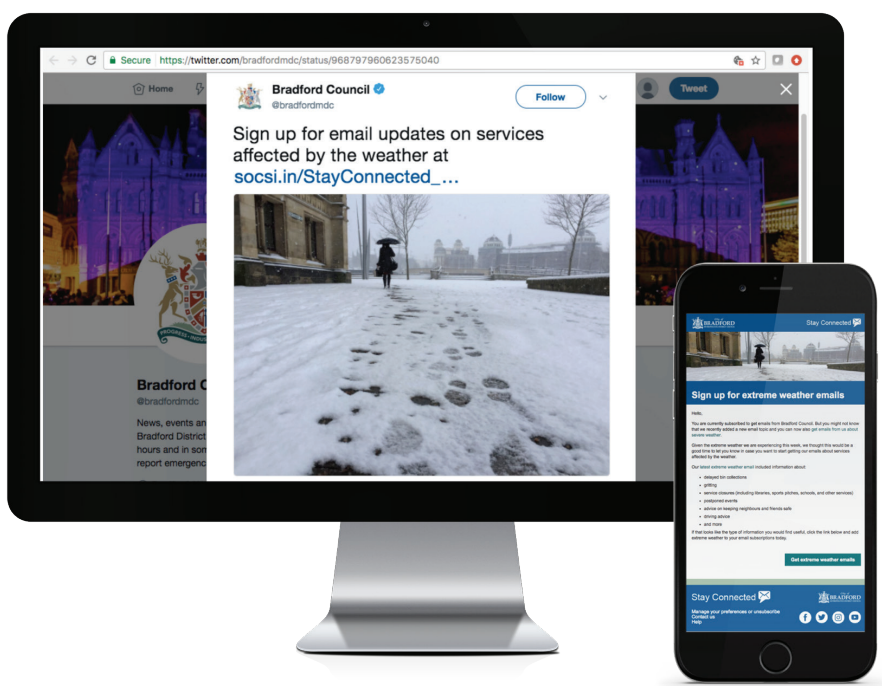
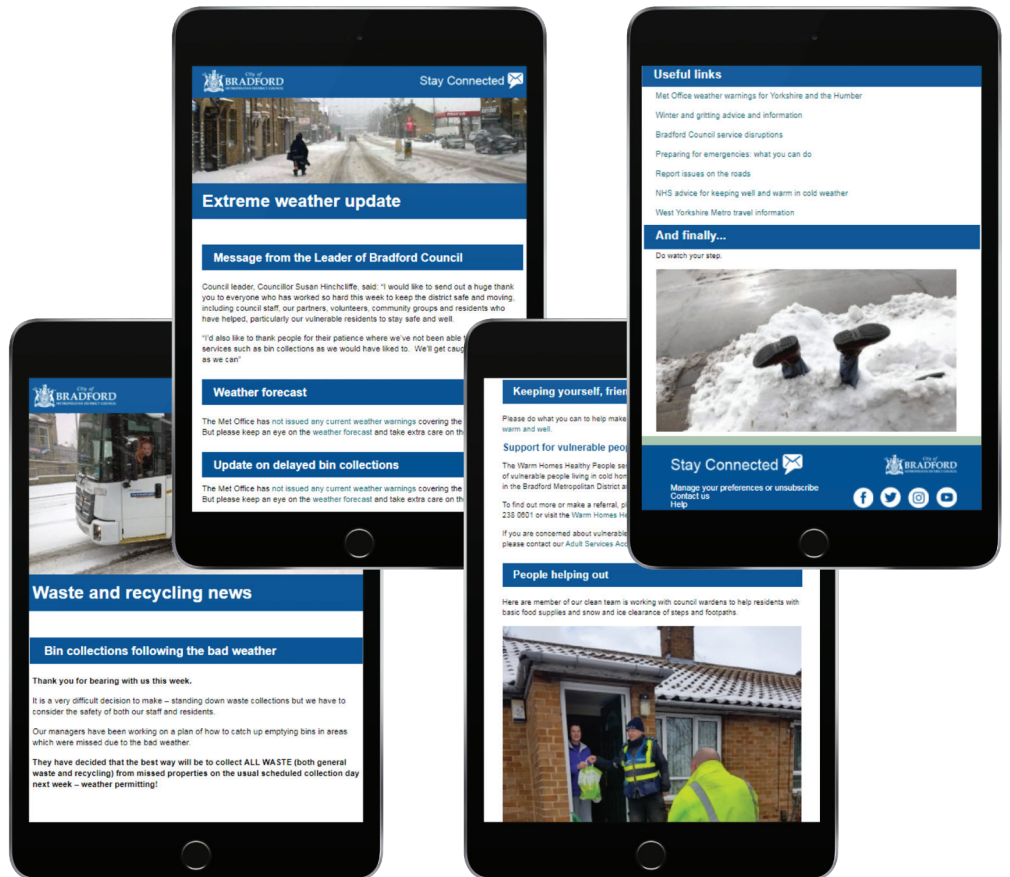
WEB VISITORS IN ONE DAY
(BUSIEST EVER)

6.5K

WEB VISITORS REFERRED
FROM EMAIL BULLETINS

6K

WEB VISITORS REFERRED
FROM SOCIAL MEDIA



Examples of the comms deployed to help keep people informed and safe.

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“Keeping everyone in the loop with as much up to date information as possible is a top priority in these extreme weather events. We’re using a much wider range of channels to do so now – social media, email, broadcast, print and face to face all have a part to play. It’s clear people feel better supported, much more in control and able to play their part in their and the communities’ resilience as a result.”

- Kersten England, Chief Executive of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

SOLUTION (continued)

Swift audience growth tactics get important messages to thousands more people

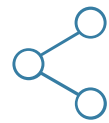
The recent addition of an “extreme weather” email topic to Bradford Council’s suite of email updates for citizens had already attracted 1k subscribers and gave the council a primary channel for sharing information as soon as they heard the forecast. Anticipating the increase in public demand for information during the unusual circumstances, the Communications team were quick to build an audience to this new email topic by:



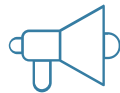
placing an overlay across majority of website to drive sign-ups



publishing an intranet article inviting staff (and their family and friends) to subscribe



sharing the sign-up link in Tweets and Facebook posts to attract new audiences



cross-promoting the new topic in other bulletins, telling people what they could expect



briefing frontline staff so they could share it with more local people



promoting the email service in press releases about the extreme weather

RESULTS

- **Thousands more people are informed and better equipped to stay safe and well**

During the first week of heavy snow, the number of subscriptions to the “extreme weather” topic increased by more than 6k and the council gained 1.3k net new email subscribers - more than an average month’s worth in a week! With over 16k new subscriptions across the whole range of topic options, the winter weather drew in a significantly larger audience than usual, boosting the council’s ability to communicate important info to local people then, now, and in the future.

- **Successful integration with social media increased audience for critical updates**

The emails achieved an average open rate of 68%, peaking at 75% on the fourth day. The average click rate was 14.6%, more than twice the average click rate for all emails in February. As a result of cross-promotion on social media, the bulletins were viewed a further 8.3k times. This demonstrates the extra power of integrated multi-channel communications.

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OVERVIEW

(of Bradford Council's email bulletins service)

- > 127k subscribers in total
- > Email reach equivalent to 24% of the local population
- > 67.4% average engagement rate
- > Popular topics: Waste and Recycling, Extreme Weather, Job Vacancies, Emergencies, Clubactive, Events, Flooding
- > Powered by the GovDelivery Communications Cloud by Granicus

- **Council website had its busiest ever day**


Email bulletins and Facebook sent more than 12k people to the council website which was kept rich with new info ready to service citizens' needs. One email bulletin alone drove more than 1k recipients to the website for bin collection updates, providing more residents with the revised collection timetable.

- **More rough sleepers housed in temporary accommodation**

The council saw a significant increase in referrals for cold weather provision for homeless people and on average were able to house 18 people each night; more than twice the average for a normal cold night. The regular promotion of the referral phone number across social media and email bulletins undoubtedly helped to increase the number of rough sleepers housed that week.

- **Clear and timely communication helps boost resident satisfaction**

A number of residents sent positive feedback via the council's website or through social media, including:

 *"I just wanted to say thank you! Thank you for providing up to date information during the bad weather, it's much appreciated. Bulletins were issued throughout the days and sometimes more than once a day. Have a bouquet Bradford Council, you deserve it!"*

- Feedback from a local resident during the severe weather

ABOUT GRANICUS

Granicus provides technology and services that empower government and public sector organisations to create seamless digital experiences for the people they serve. By offering the industry's leading cloud-based solutions for communications, content management, meeting and agenda management, and digital services to more than 160 organisations in the UK and 4,000 worldwide, Granicus helps turn government missions into quantifiable realities. Granicus products connect 12 million citizens in the UK and 160 million globally, creating a powerful network to enhance government transparency and citizen engagement. By optimising decision-making processes, Granicus strives to help government realise better outcomes and have a greater impact for the citizens they serve.

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