CASE STUDY

How Hillingdon Council strengthened payment resilience, fraud prevention and continuity with paygate.

paygate works well. It's been reliable for us for a decade now and is so user-friendly

HILLINGDON
LONDON

Hillingdon Council serves one of London's largest boroughs, delivering a wide range of essential public services including housing, social care, planning and environmental services.

Having used paygate for more than a decade, the council relies on the platform to support both corporate payment processing and housing benefit payments, providing a dependable payment infrastructure that has evolved alongside the organisation's wider digital transformation.

Handling significant payment volumes is a critical part of its day-to-day operations, with approximately ***£1.35 billion of corporate payments processed each year*** across around ***100,000 transactions.***

The challenge

As Hillingdon's operations have grown and digitised, its priorities have broadened beyond core payment processing.

Moving payments smoothly, securely and cost-effectively remains critical, alongside a strong focus on delivering savings, improving forecasting accuracy and modernising service delivery across the organisation.

The growing threat of payment fraud also highlighted the need for stronger validation of supplier bank details, while business continuity remained a key priority, ensuring critical payments could still be processed during unexpected system outages or periods of exceptional demand.

Ongoing organisational and budget change across the council has made resilient payment processes, clear auditability and operational continuity increasingly important. Philip Hedges, Head of Transactional Finance, explains:

"We wanted the best value for money, but also combined with the modern technology that paygate could provide."

The solution

Reliable Bacs processing

paygate continues to support Hillingdon Council's payment operations with what Philip describes as "*a slick and dependable mechanism for Bacs*", running across both corporate and housing benefit payments.

The platform provides a straightforward, user-friendly process that gives the finance team full visibility and control over each payment run, allowing them to increase processing from three payment runs each week to daily runs, with additional emergency payments whenever required.

paygate's multi-user, multi-SUN (Service User Number) capability has also supported the council as its operations have scaled, allowing different teams to manage and approve payment runs independently while maintaining clear audit trails across the organisation, an important safeguard for Hillingdon Council.

Strengthening supplier verification with Validate Plus

Last year, the council implemented Validate Plus across the organisation to strengthen verification of supplier bank details before payments are made. Hillingdon Council chose paygate as the most cost-effective and user-friendly option, providing greater assurance that account information is accurate while significantly reducing the risk of fraud.

Business continuity with Gold Star

Business continuity has also been strengthened through paygate's Gold Star service. On the rare occasions Hillingdon has experienced ERP system issues, the service has enabled urgent payments to continue without disruption, protecting vulnerable recipients and maintaining critical services.

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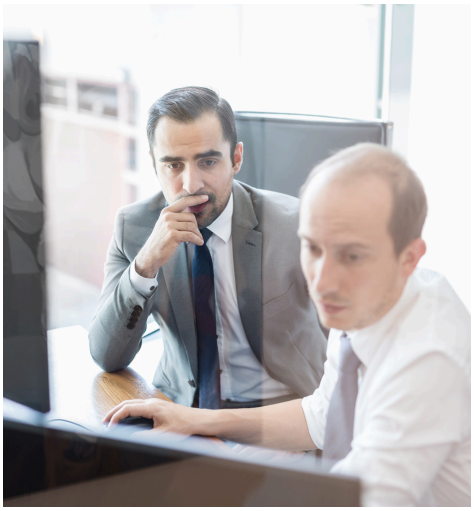

> *paygate and Validate Plus definitely give us a lot more assurance on what we pay now and reduces the risk considerably.*

Once using paygate, I'd encourage councils to automate their Bacs runs wherever possible, saving staff resource for value-added activity

"Goldstar is another safety blanket that I'd encourage other councils to purchase. I wouldn't like to approve a continuity plan without the Gold Star service as a backup."

A paperless future for Direct Debit collections

Most recently, the council has worked with paygate's support team on its progression to paperless direct debits, setting up and mapping new groups for mandate files and direct debit instructions. Moving away from paper-based mandates typically reduces manual administration and the risk of processing errors, while removing a layer of paper handling from the collections process.

The outcome

For Hillingdon's finance team, the benefits show up in the everyday detail of how payments are managed.

The move to daily payment runs, combined with automated invoice processing, has made cash flow forecasting considerably easier, while the intuitive platform allows the finance team to maintain control over every payment without unnecessary complexity.

That resilience has been tested and proven. When technical issues prevented payments going out as normal, paygate's Gold Star service stepped in, including a case where foster carers were paid on time despite an ERP system outage.

Customer support has consistently been responsive too, with the council typically receiving quick replies whenever the team has needed to reach out.

Philip would recommend paygate, and Validate Plus in particular, to other local authorities:

"paygate has been reliable for us for more than 10 years. I'd definitely recommend Validate Plus to help protect organisations from fraud attempts, and I'd encourage councils to automate their payment runs wherever possible to save staff resource and focus on value-added activities."

Looking forward

For Hillingdon, paygate is no longer just a Bacs processing tool; it is a core part of payment control, fraud prevention and business continuity.

What began as a straightforward Bacs processing arrangement has, over ten years, grown into a genuine partnership. One that has adapted alongside Hillingdon's changing priorities and continues to evolve today as the council moves forwards.

Interested in exploring what paygate could achieve for your organisation?

We're here to help

LET'S TALK

Key points

The challenge

- High-volume, high-value payments
- Growing fraud risk
- Complex business continuity needs
- Financial transformation pressures

The solution

- Decade-long trusted partnership
- Daily Bacs run processing
- Validate Plus fraud protection
- Gold Star continuity cover

The outcome

- Reduced fraud risk
- Stronger cash flow forecasting
- Proven payment resilience
- First class support