

Multiple benefits following “slick” move to the Cloud



The BCU estate includes 2,759 student rooms across seven residential buildings. Six are in the city centre, the seventh being close to their City South campus, less than two miles away. All are recently built or modernised. One is managed directly, the others via partners.

Students, IT team, off-site managers and more, all happier following move to Room Service in the Cloud.

When Reina Lewis, the BCU estate's Allocation & Communication Manager, took on her current post, she did so knowing that an upgrade in the accommodation software was a priority. *“It was business critical – we were five versions and 26 patches behind. We had lots of practical issues which better software could resolve, but just six months in which to do it.”*



Central to those problems was an IT department with a huge number of projects and a web page interface which, in appearance and functionality, no longer matched the needs of students or managers. Realising that a major change was necessary, Reina and her team looked at several alternatives to Room Service, benchmarking each against BCU's needs. Reina says this was hugely important. *“Given the investment and risks involved, we had to demonstrate that we were selecting the best solution. In the end, Occam proved far superior. I wouldn't have had the confidence to do it with anyone else.”*

The slow part: internal buy-in & sign-off

Having decided to go with cloud-based Room Service, Reina says pushing that decision through ‘the system’ took more time than anything else. In part this was because the benefits were to be shared by several departments.

Customer Success

THE Software for Managing Student Accommodation

The roots of BCU date back to 1843 with the establishment of the Birmingham College of Art. Designated as a polytechnic in 1971, it gained university status in 1992.



Parkside Building, Birmingham City University

Mostly though, it was the inevitably time-consuming hurdles of procurement and data protection.

The fast part: physical implementation

The major task for the BCU was the 'five version leap' upgrade. This involved significant additional functionality, all of which needed to integrate with other parts of the BCU network. Even so, physical implementation was completed in just a few days, with the switch to the Cloud taking almost no time at all – or, as Reina put it *"It was really slick."*



Halls of residence: Staniforth House

Outcomes: hugely better student UX & more

The most obvious difference to the new BCU service is a greatly improved student user experience. Easier to navigate and understand, the new student portal includes a lot more information than before, including images and maps. Student enquiries about accommodation are significantly reduced as a result, even more so since a student survey identified areas for additional content. For the 18/19 intake, online induction using Campuslife will improve the student Room Service experience further still.

Enormously valuable as both a finance tool and a communication tool, Reina says both of these aspects have been further enhanced by being in the Cloud. As well as giving wonderfully convenient remote access to off-site staff, it is also secure, fast and ultra-reliable.

Finally, Reina says that an additional bonus is that the IT team at BCU is especially happy with the transition and the Occam-managed contract. *"In relation to such a major change, managing to keep everyone happy is a rare pleasure."*

BCU runs Cloud-based Room Service with induction content from Campuslife.