access
freedom to do more

G-Cloud15
Access Engage
Service Definition

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1. Service Overview

What We Do

Access Engage Comms is a cloud-based internal communications platform designed to help organisations connect, inform and engage their workforce. Working like the social media apps employees are already familiar with, Engage Comms enables companies to reach staff quickly and effectively across any device.

Our platform transforms internal communications by bringing together social feeds, targeted messaging, community spaces and event communication into a single, intuitive solution that drives higher engagement than traditional email communications.

Suitable for organisations from 10 to 10,000 employees across single or multi-site operations.

Core Communications Features

- Social Feed: Company-wide wall for news, updates and announcements with likes, comments and sharing
- Communities: Create dedicated spaces for departments, locations, projects or interest groups (public or private)
- Pinned Articles: Highlight important content with up to three pinned articles at any time
- Events Management: Create and promote company events with physical or digital locations
- AI Content Generation: Help employees and admins create polished posts or articles quickly with built-in AI assistance

Multi-Channel Delivery

- In-platform notifications and social feed
- Email notifications for mentions and important updates
- Mobile push notifications via dedicated app
- Targeted messaging to specific audiences, departments or locations

Administrative Control

- Granular permissions for who can post, comment and like
- Admin-only posting options for corporate communications
- Post on behalf of senior leaders (e.g., MD, CEO messages)
- Tag management and notification preferences
- Integration with PeopleXD/People HR/Evo for automatic user synchronisation

Platform Features

- Single sign-on (SSO) via Access Evo platform
- Native mobile app for iOS and Android (Engage app)
- Real-time analytics and engagement dashboards

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Helping to Achieve Business Benefit

Engage Comms helps organisations deliver tangible business value through:

- Higher engagement: Social-style interface drives better open rates and interaction than email
- Connected workforce: Unite remote, hybrid and office-based teams in one digital space
- Culture building: Bring company values to life through shared stories and recognition
- Targeted reach: Ensure the right messages reach the right people through communities and audience segmentation
- Measurable impact: Track engagement with dashboards showing views, likes, comments and reach

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2. Onboarding

Implementation: Quick to launch, easy to manage

Engage Comms is designed for rapid deployment with minimal IT involvement. As a cloud-based solution integrated with the Access Evo platform, your organisation can be live and communicating within weeks.

Standard Implementation Timeline

Implementation is typically completed within **4 weeks or less** from contract signature to platform launch.

Deployment Complexity	Typical Timeline
Standard (standalone comms)	2-3 weeks
With HRIS integration (PeopleXD/People HR)	3-4 weeks
Part of wider Engage suite deployment	Aligned to suite timeline

Implementation Approach

All our implementation services have been designed to be remote-first, providing you with an improved low-risk implementation journey.

Week 1: Discovery & Setup

- Initial kick-off meeting to understand your communications strategy and goals
- Community structure planning
- User permissions and posting rules defined
- Integration setup (SSO, HRIS connectivity)

Week 2: Configuration & Training

- Communities created and configured
- Admin training delivered
- Initial content templates prepared
- Mobile app deployment guidance
- Test posts and user acceptance

Week 3-4: Launch

- Go-live support
- Employee onboarding communications
- Early engagement monitoring
- Transition to ongoing support

Implementation Team

Access Resources:

- Sales Executive participates in initial kick-off call for smooth handover

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- Account Manager serves as dedicated point of contact throughout delivery and post-go-live
- Implementation Team oversees configuration and setup
- Client Services team (Sandbach helpdesk) available to address questions post-launch
- Head of Operations oversees customer service delivery and acts as escalation point

Client Resources Required:

- Communications lead with authority to approve platform structure and content approach
- Someone who can provide access to basic employee data (or confirm HRIS integration)
- Individuals willing to test the platform before go-live

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3. Additional Service Options

On top of the services included within the standard implementation, the table below highlights the additional value-added services available.

Additional Modules and Features

Service	Description
Content Strategy Consultancy	Expert guidance on internal communications best practice, content calendars, and engagement strategies.
Custom Community Setup	Consultancy to design and implement complex community structures for large or multi-entity organisations.
Launch Campaign Support	Additional marketing materials and launch communications to drive initial adoption.

Complementary Solutions

Product	Description
Access Salary Extras	Employee benefits platform with salary sacrifice schemes, retail discounts, and wellbeing resources.
Access Applause	Recognition platform with peer-to-peer and manager recognition, points-based rewards, and long service awards.

Note: Additional modules and services may require additional licence costs which should be discussed with your Account Manager.

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4. Service & Support Management Details

At Access we know why you choose our products, it's because you want to be more successful. We want you to be more successful too. So, we've taken a good long look at how we support you, taken on board feedback and made it a whole lot better. We're not just here to support you when you need a hand - we're here with you at every stage of your journey.

Support Commitment

We recognise that the systems, software and services we supply may be critical to the well-being of your business. Our aim is to ensure that you have continuous operational capability from our products. We will help you to achieve this by providing efficient support, resolving the majority of tickets at first-line contact.

We will help you maximise your return on investment by providing the best in technical assistance, advice and customer care. We own your support queries and will ensure that they are resolved as promptly and efficiently as possible.

Support Channels

Channel	Availability	Description
Support Portal	24/7	Log and track tickets, access knowledge base
Telephone	Business hours	Direct line to UK-based support team
AI Chat Assistant	24/7	Instant responses for common queries
Email	Business hours	Support requests via email

Support Hours

Standard Support Hours: Monday to Friday, 09:00 – 18:00 (UK time), excluding UK public holidays

Target Response Times

Priority	Description	Target Response
P1 - Critical	Complete service outage affecting all users	4 hour
P2 - High	Major functionality unavailable, no workaround	8 hours
P3 - Medium	Functionality impaired, workaround available	16 hours
P4 - Low	Minor issue, cosmetic, or enhancement request	24 hours

Note: Response times are targets and represent the time to first meaningful response, not resolution.

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5. Account Management & Customer Success

Customer Success Manager

For complex deployments, a dedicated Customer Success Manager (CSM) is allocated to ensure ongoing value realisation and platform adoption. Your CSM provides:

- Regular business reviews to assess platform performance and engagement metrics
- Proactive recommendations for improving communications effectiveness
- Early access to new features and roadmap discussions
- Escalation point for complex requirements
- Coordination of additional services and consulting

Account Management

All customers have access to an Account Manager who serves as primary relationship owner for commercial matters, contract renewals, and service expansion discussions.

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6. Outage and Maintenance Management

Planned Maintenance

Planned maintenance is scheduled during low-usage periods to minimise disruption:

- Standard maintenance window: 02:00 - 06:00 (UK time)
- Notification: Minimum 5 business days advance notice for planned maintenance
- Emergency maintenance: Communicated as soon as practically possible

Unplanned Outages

In the event of an unplanned outage:

- Status updates published to service status page
- Affected customers notified via email
- Post-incident reports provided for significant outages

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7. Backup and Disaster Recovery

Data Protection

All customer data is protected through comprehensive backup procedures:

Recovery Point Objective (RPO) and Recovery Time Objective (RTO):

This time starts from when a support call is logged with Access.

Standard RPO & RTO times:

SQL Server

- 15-minute RPO
- 12-hour RTO

Non-SQL Server

- 24-hour RPO
- 12-hour RTO

Retention for Backups

Non-SQL Workloads: Standard retention for non-SQL data/servers is 30 days with stated RTO & RPO

SQL Workloads:

Backup Type	Retention Period
15-min SQL	7 days
Daily	28 days
Weekly	3 months
Monthly	12 months

Backups will be deleted upon client request following termination of contract, otherwise they will be aged out via retention policies.

Standard Restore Testing

We undertake restores automatically on a weekly basis via an automated process to a separate server to ensure that the backup is consistent and valid on restore.

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8. Business Continuity Statement/Plan

The Access Group's full and most up to date business continuity plan can be requested by emailing buyer.enablement@theaccessgroup.com.

Access has a BCP framework covering all elements of the business should there be a catastrophic event at any one location. Support, Technical Services, Professional Services, and Development teams are spread across at least two (2) distinct geographical locations and are not dependent on any single location to gain access to the primary or secondary data centre within which customer data resides and the SaaS Service is delivered from.

Additional operational support centres in Romania and Kuala Lumpur provide technical infrastructure support ensuring resilience and continuity of service

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9. Accreditations and Awards

As a business we have the following accreditations and awards:

- ISO Accreditation

ISO 27001 - accredited through our commitment to best practice with regards to our security controls.

ISO 27701 - an international standard that provides a framework for managing privacy information, specifically focusing on Personally Identifiable Information (PII), a privacy extension to ISO 27001.

ISO 42001[1] - this is an international standard that provides a framework for organisations to establish, implement, maintain and continually improve an Artificial Intelligence Management System (AIMS). It helps organisations ensure responsible and ethical AI development, deployment and operation. The standard focuses on risk management, transparency, accountability and alignment with ethical principles throughout the AI lifecycle.

Cyber Essentials: a UK government-backed and industry-supported certification scheme that helps organisations of all sizes protect themselves from common cyber threats by implementing basic technical controls

- Payroll Assurance Scheme - Our Payroll Services Division (APS) are CIPP *no recommendations we can make; The Access Payroll Team pass with flying colours!*"
- HM Revenue & Customs - Access payroll services meet the requirements of the published HM Revenue & Customs Payroll Standard and the relevant sections of HM Revenue & Customs Quality Standard. It incorporates online filing and supports Extra Pay Frequencies, Directors' NI, Contracted Out and Net Pension Deductions.

Awards

- Fosway Group, Core Leader for Digital Learning 2025
- Fosway Group, Core Leader for Learning Systems 2025
- Tech UK, President's Award Winner 2024
- PayTech Awards Winner 2024
- UK IT Industry Awards, Vendor of the Year Award Winner 2023
- UK Tech Awards, UK Tech Company of the Year Award Winner 2023
- UK Business Tech Awards, Tech Company of the Year Award Winner 2023
- Great British Care Awards, Care Innovator Award 2022
- Business Awards 2022 Large Business of the year
- Kofax UK & Ireland, Outstanding Growth Award 2022
- UK Tech deal of the year, UK Tech Awards 2022
- VEEAM Best VCSP Partner of the year 2022

[1] We are one of the first companies in the UK to be accredited ensuring responsible use of AI

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10. Development Life Cycle

As one of our core products Access Engage Comms has a detailed roadmap of improvements driven both by customers and by our own product vision. Ongoing development against each application is supported by a development plan that has high levels of detail for the next 3 months including user stories. Beyond that top line plans are in place by quarter for a further 12 months.

New functionality is added when ready with releases deployed nightly upon availability. Platform enhancements and core functionality updates included in your subscription are made available to all customers simultaneously.

Recent & Upcoming Features

- AI-powered content generation (released)
- Post on behalf of other users (due shortly)
- Enhanced community management
- API feeds for external content (LinkedIn, X, BBC) - on roadmap

Security First Programme

Product development is governed by Access Group's Security First programme, a formal secure software development policy based on the OWASP Software Assurance Maturity Model (SAMM).

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11. Technical Requirements

Browser Compatibility

Engage Comms is accessible via modern web browsers:

- Google Chrome (latest two versions)
- Microsoft Edge (latest two versions)
- Mozilla Firefox (latest two versions)
- Safari (latest two versions)

Mobile Applications

Native mobile app (Engage) available for:

- iOS (App Store)
- Android (Google Play Store)

Push notifications supported for real-time alerts.

Integration Options

- Single Sign-On (SSO): SAML 2.0 and OAuth 2.0 supported via Access Evo platform
- HRIS Integration: Native integration with Access PeopleXD and People HR for automatic user synchronisation

Data Synchronisation

Employee data updates from Evo integrated systems are synchronised automatically, with changes reflected in the platform within 1 hour of receiving updated data

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12. Service Constraints

Maintenance windows as detailed above are minimal with the service so that we use all reasonable efforts to ensure that the SaaS Services are **available for 99.80% of each calendar month**. That is our standard SLA across all Access products.

As a true SaaS solution customisation is available, the product can be configured to meet all standard setup requirements including:

- Community structure and permissions
- Posting rules and approval workflows
- Notification preferences and channels
- Administrator permissions and roles

Offboarding Process

When a customer wishes to exit the service:

- The Renewals team receives notification and undertakes discussions with the client and Account Manager
- Once termination is confirmed, the solution is closed down at the agreed contract end date
- Customer data will be available for export to facilitate transition to alternative providers
- Post-termination, all customer data is handled in accordance with our data retention policies and deleted upon request

All customer data is held in UK-based data centres.

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