



## Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union Case Study

The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) was formed in Manchester in 1847 to improve wages and living standards for bakers. It is the largest independent food workers union in the British Isles, with over 25,000 members throughout the food sector from production to retail. Members come from many different origins, speak many different languages, and have a wide range of backgrounds. The union caters for all their varying needs.

BFAWU undertook a research project into improving its communications and IT systems. Following a detailed selection process, thankQ was chosen to assist the Union in realising its vision for better engagement with its members.

BFAWU's existing system was largely unsupported, outdated and disparate, managed in separate offices across each of their regions; data entry was cumbersome with the same information being entered in several different forms. The Union's structure, with seven Regions supporting seventeen Districts covering members in over 200 Branches, called for a simple, easy to use Membership Management and Benefits Processing system that had communication with the Union's membership at its heart.

### A good fit for processing new members

thankQ's standard Membership module was already a good fit for processing new members and collecting Direct Debit payments; the addition of a slick Data Entry form for contact and membership details saves staff time whilst the comprehensive de-duplication on the form improves accuracy. A facility to produce letters automatically, in the Member's own language if required, ensures the BFAWU really reaches its members in its communications.

The Union also operates a comprehensive Benefits scheme, including Sickness, Fatal Accident and Funeral benefits as well as Long Service Awards. In order to manage this, a Benefits Processing function was added to thankQ with built-in calculations for Benefit Rules (such as length of membership, number of days since last claim etc.) as well as the ability to print the resulting Benefit cheques.

A particularly useful aspect of this function is that Benefit processing can be carried out at one location whilst the Benefit cheques are printed and signed at another, thus providing remote cover for offices which may only have one member of staff. This is achieved by attaching printers directly to the Server via a VPN so that they are always available to anyone logged into thankQ.

## Regional member management

However, the most noticeable improvements have been achieved through the bespoke website thankQ has created to assist BFAWU Branch Secretaries, who deal with members on a day-to-day basis at Branch level. The website contains a mirror of the Data Entry form so that the Branch Secretaries can use the same functionality as Regional Office staff to maintain membership details. Even more importantly, they can now also obtain feedback on benefits and claims, such as start and end dates or the date a cheque was printed.

The availability of this information makes a huge time saving in answering Members' queries and greatly improves service, thus contributing to BFAWU's goal of greater engagement with its members. It leaves the Regional Clerks to get on with the important work of managing Union business instead of wasting time on routine administrative tasks, whilst giving the Branch Secretaries a greater sense of ownership of their data.

The success of the new thankQ system in improving its administration and communications has convinced BFAWU to move forward with even more ambitious plans for the future. Another bespoke thankQ function, the Legal Representation form, was introduced enabling the collection of details of ongoing tribunals, claims for accidents or negligence, etc. The next stage of development will see this information made available as feedback through the website, in the same manner as Benefit and Claims queries. Further plans include the use of email alerts and reminder pop-ups.



**0845 835 0192**

**[nfp@theaccessgroup.com](mailto:nfp@theaccessgroup.com)**

**[www.theaccessgroup.com/nfp](http://www.theaccessgroup.com/nfp)**

---

### About Access

Access Group is the UK's largest software supplier to the not-for-profit sector. We help organisations improve performance, increase cost efficiency, and make the most of their funds by delivering integrated organisation-wide solutions. Solutions that enable you to fully manage your CRM fundraising, membership and alumni, run your finances, projects and documentation, as well as streamline your entire HR management process.

Classification: Public