Always there for local communities

Ceredigion County Council keeps services open during the crisis, while transforming the citizen experience

At a glance
- Customer name: Ceredigion County Council
- Industry: Local government
- Location: Wales
- Company size: Around 20 users

Challenge
- Enable home working with minimal service disruption, while maximising cloud and omnichannel innovation
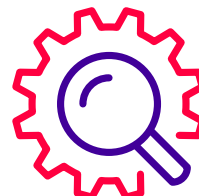
Solution
- Genesys Cloud CX for inbound, digital, and automated communications

9,000+ calls/month
with same headcount

17 agent skillsets
distributed to better effect

More insight and control
of service levels

Substantial time saved
on post-call work

Over-the-weekend move

Based in the town of Aberaeron, Ceredigion County Council serves around 72,000 citizens, 25% of whom are over 65-years-of-age. Like most local authorities, it faced the perpetual challenge of doing more with less: improving public services against ever-reducing budgets. A task made even tougher when the pandemic forced contact centre staff to work from home.

"Thankfully, we were already onboard with Foehn and Genesys Cloud," says customer services manager, Anna Gawthorpe. "That meant moving our supervisors and 20-plus advisors to remote working was pretty painless. They took their laptops home Friday and were up-and-running on Monday morning."

Agile solution chosen

Those foundations were laid two years earlier when the Council was managing multiple numbers and hunt groups, and battling siloed communication, without the benefit of central reporting.

Choosing to replace its on-prem telephony system with an agile Genesys Cloud contact centre, Foehn specialists worked alongside the Council's IT team to ensure everything was set up to get the best from the new platform.

> **"Now, we're always in control and can see at a glance how we're performing on call handling, queue times, service levels, and much more."**
>
> Amy Pereira, Contact Centre Supervisor, Ceredigion County Council

Meeting extra demands

The Genesys Cloud solution ensured there was no productivity loss. Home-based agents continued to handle 9,000+ calls a month, supporting local communities with a reassuring voice at the end of the phone during times of great uncertainty. The situation was worsened by the launch of the NHS Track and Trace app, which generated extra calls from customers seeking guidance. The system handled them with ease.

"It was important we were there when our customers needed us most, assisting with issues ranging from COVID-19 advice and refuse collection to free school meals and housing benefit enquiries," says corporate manager, Joy Lake.

Greater care and understanding

Although at the start customers tended to make allowances, their tolerance levels changed during lockdown. Aided by improved reporting and call handling, the Council was able to closely match agents to specific situations, making flexible use of 17 different skill sets.

"Showing empathy and understanding is a natural part of the job, although it was needed more than ever during the crisis," continues Lake. "This was reflected in our KPIs with, for example, average handling time increasing by a couple of minutes."

Working smarter, not harder

With the old set-up, agents used to work in the dark, not knowing whether the customer had called before or who they had spoken to. "Foehn helped integrate Genesys with our CRM system," says Gawthorpe. "Now, it automatically calls up customer histories and case notes. So, they don't have to repeat everything. And we're able to resolve issues faster, while saving time on post-call work like logging details and follow-up actions."

The Council is already planning its next Genesys-assisted innovation. "We can see a number of use cases for introducing web chat," concludes Lake. "For example, a customer might want a date for their next bin collection, a blue badge form, or to book something into a recycling centre. Simple changes that, once again, will make a big difference."

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