

Integrated Customer Service Programme



Enhancing customer service delivery for the future

Introduction

Our council has a strong reputation for providing good quality and effective customer service to the people of County Durham.

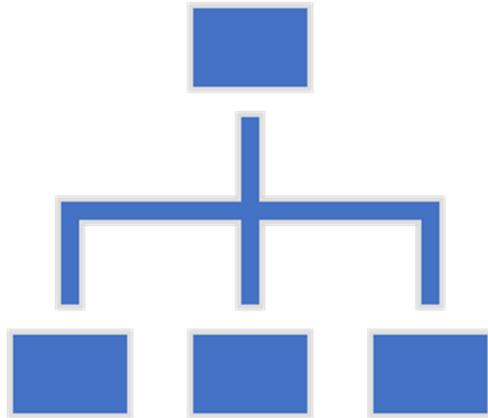
We have performed extremely well since we became a unitary council in 2009 despite financial challenges and increased demand for our services.

Whilst we have made many innovative changes to the way we serve our customers to meet the changing expectations of the resident of the future requires the development of a customer focused; corporate approach to service delivery the standardisation, harmonisation and centralisation of the council's existing offer delivering improvement to the customer experience along with efficiency savings and cost reductions.

Transformation of our customer service offer is not only the right thing to do but is essential in ensuring that our organisation is best placed to manage the various challenges that we will face in the future.

This presentation provides an update on the improvements delivered by the ICS programme and the future plans to enhance our contact offer and customer experience.

Why Integrated Customer Service?



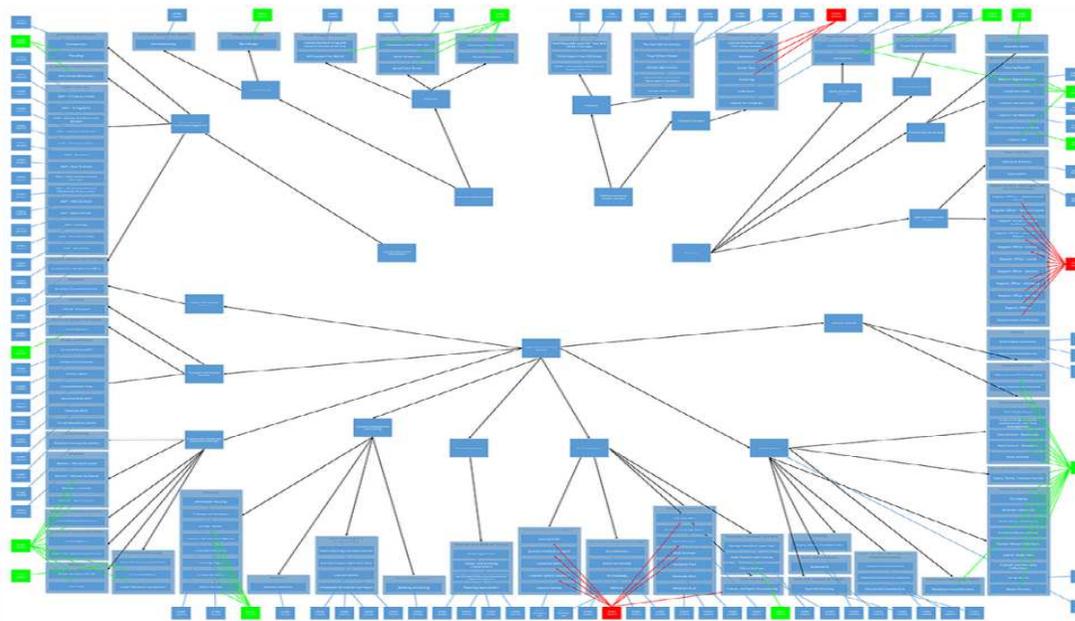
An organisation's ability to deliver its vision, priorities and outcomes is directly linked to its ability to deliver effective customer experiences.

The council's contact centre teams play a key role in ensuring our customers receive an enhanced experience and a great start to their customer journey from the first point of contact.

Why Integrated Customer Service?

In early 2019 we initiated a project to review contact centre demand and customer journeys across the council.

The results identified the complexity of our offer and how difficult it could be for our customers to interact with the right person, with the right information at the right time



Catalysts For Change

- Customer journeys often had multiple touchpoints leading to a complex and elongated journey and reduced customer experience.
- Multiple entry points for customers, falling into smaller teams outside of corporate customer service led to variance in performance, service offers, quality assurance methods and levels of customer satisfaction.
- Multiple touches extended service delivery times, increased repeat or avoidable contact and reduced our opportunity to resolve queries at first point of contact.
- Variance in data collection impacted the performance, demand and satisfaction data being reported at a corporate level.
- Different technologies used by different teams did not support a one team approach or customer experience.



Vision for enhancing our customer service offer

New ways of working

- Enable new ways of working that support a flexible and capable workforce in delivering high quality services to customers, wherever and whenever they are needed

Demand management

- Support demand management through the reduction in unanswered contacts, avoidable contacts and increase the number of calls resolved at first point of contact

Consistency

- Deliver joined up services at front-end delivery points with a focus on a consistency

Insight

- Use customer insight and analytics to drive greater understanding of our customers supporting continuous improvement and transformational activity.

Voice of the customer

- Capture customer experience and satisfaction data to ensure we keep the voice of the customer at the heart of our decision-making.

Technology

- Utilise existing and explore new technology to continue to increase 1st call resolution releasing capacity to focus on supporting our most vulnerable customers

Value for money

- Deliver a modern customer experience at a reduced cost.

Customer advocate

- Act as the customer advocate enabling customers more choice in their contact methods and availability of service

Programme Themes

To achieve our vision, in early 2019 we launched our integrated customer services initiative to drive change and innovation and to help us provide the best outcomes for our customers.

The initiative focuses on three priority themes; the standardisation, harmonisation and unitisation of our first point of contact customer service offer supporting the development of a unitised model for customer service across the council



Standardise



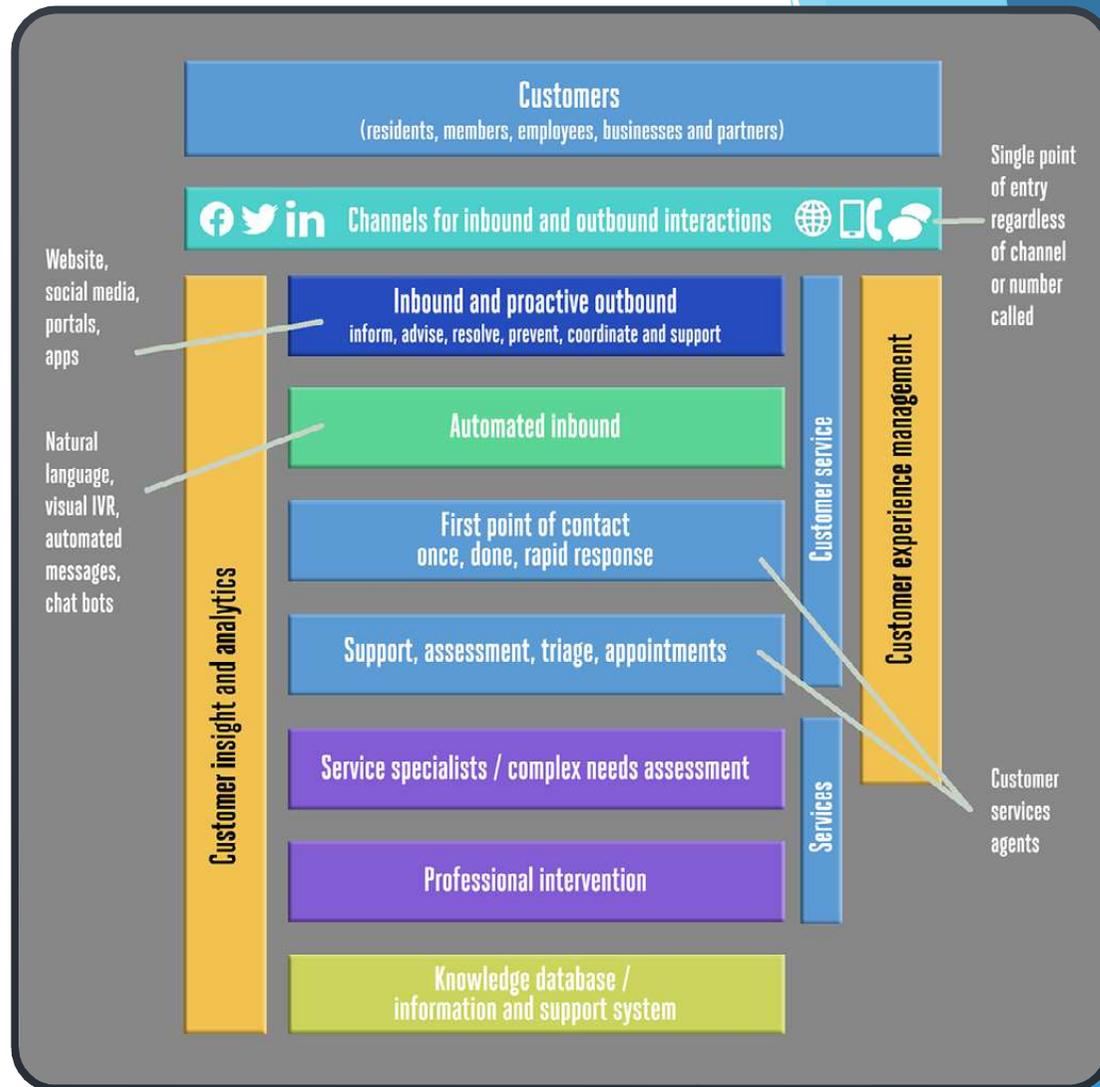
Harmonise



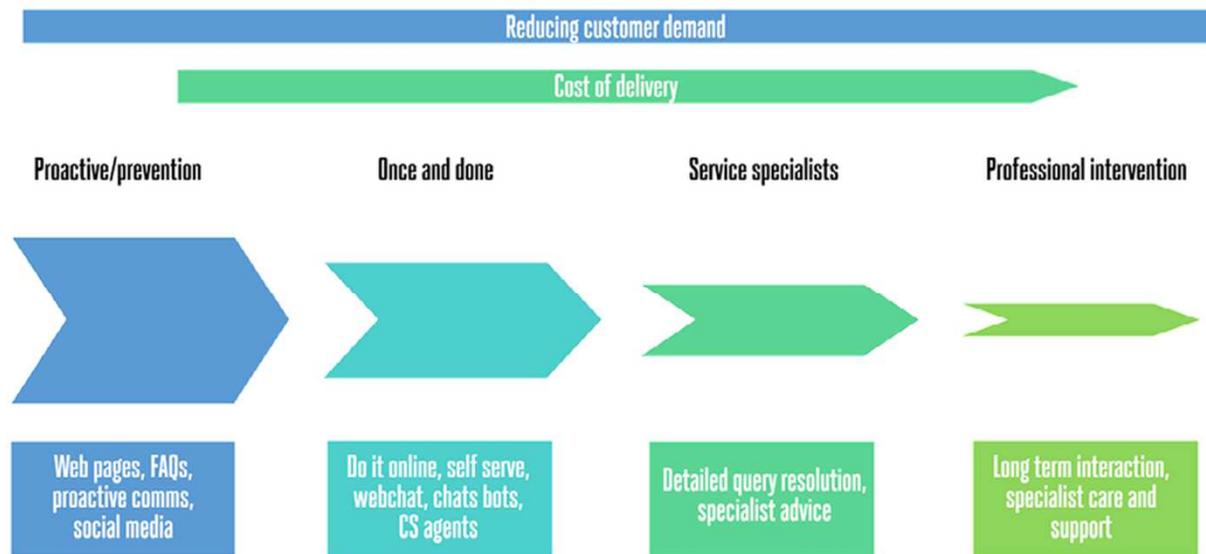
Unitise

The Future of Customer Services

To create a true “single front door” for our customers requires a significant shift in the way in which we will carry out our activities underpinned by a change in organisational thinking.



Channel of Choice with a Focus on Self Serve



Design Principles

First Point of Contact

Customer contact will be handled through a single unitised corporate customer services function where the customer needs:

- ▶ Information already available in the public domain e.g. Via the DCC website.
- ▶ Information that is/could be held and maintained within a central knowledge or contacts database.
- ▶ A service request update/additional information or progress update, which can be accessed through a relevant, database/integrated notes accessible within a CRM.
- ▶ To make an appointment to see a specialist.
- ▶ General advice or information on council services.
- ▶ A request for service to be logged on their behalf - this may include taking payments or evidence (resolved).
- ▶ A request for service to be logged on their behalf, which is then routed to a business application for action/assessment/decision. This may initiate a complex or multi-stage process.
- ▶ Triaging of an emergency request to ensure timely transfer to specialist team.

Design Principles

Specialist Support

Customer contact handled via specialist provision where the customer needs:

- ▶ To have direct contact with an officer, who has the appropriate level of qualification and has a specialised level of technical knowledge and training and able to give a decision/advice at first point of contact.
- ▶ To have direct contact with an officer who provides specialist advice which is governed by professional standards.
- ▶ To have direct contact with an officer who can make an immediate determination, which requires specialist intervention at the point of the contact.

Digitally Transforming Customer Service



New technologies are needed to deliver on our commitments.



These components form part of our long-term IT architecture providing a toolset that can be used across the organisation.



Unifying our communications approach, will support new ways of working and greater flexibility, capability and agility.

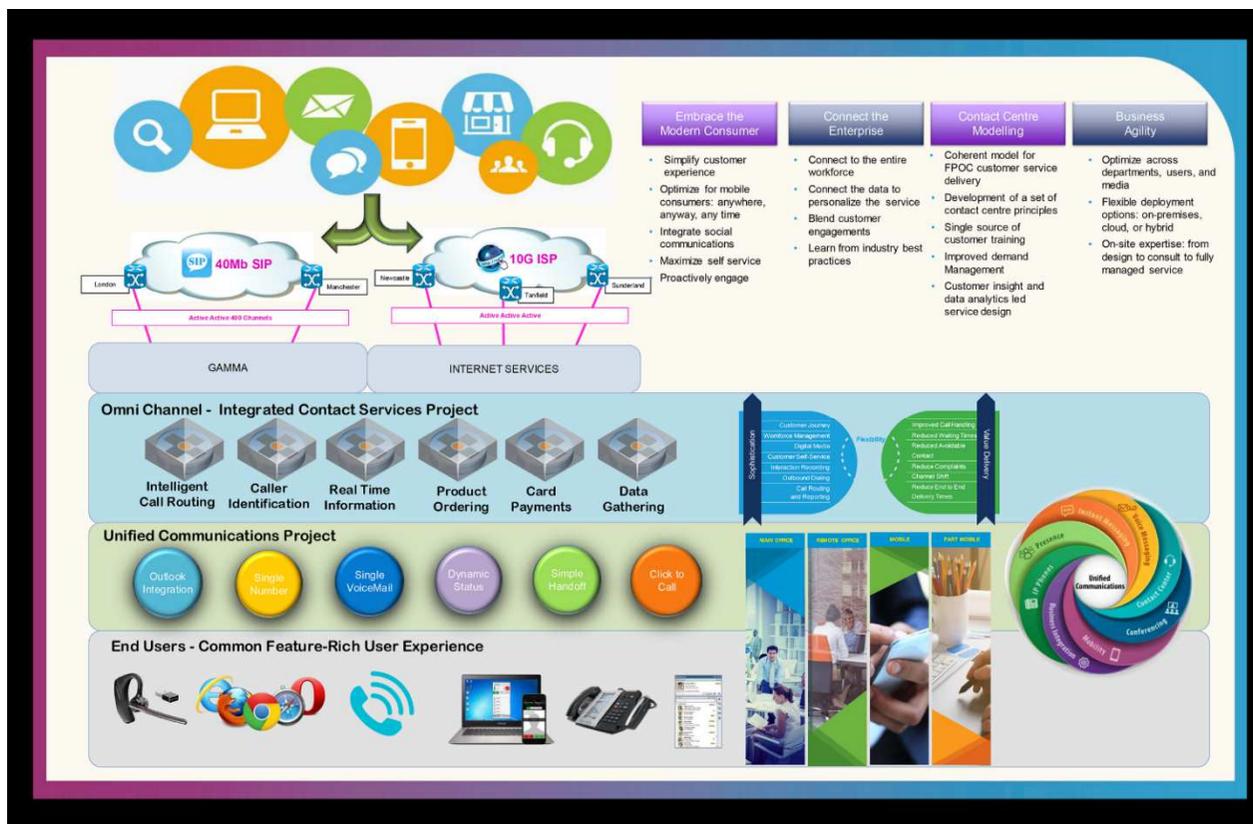


Natural language technology, virtual IVR, web chat, automated chat bots, underpinned by an organisational knowledge database will support easy access to consistent and reliable information.

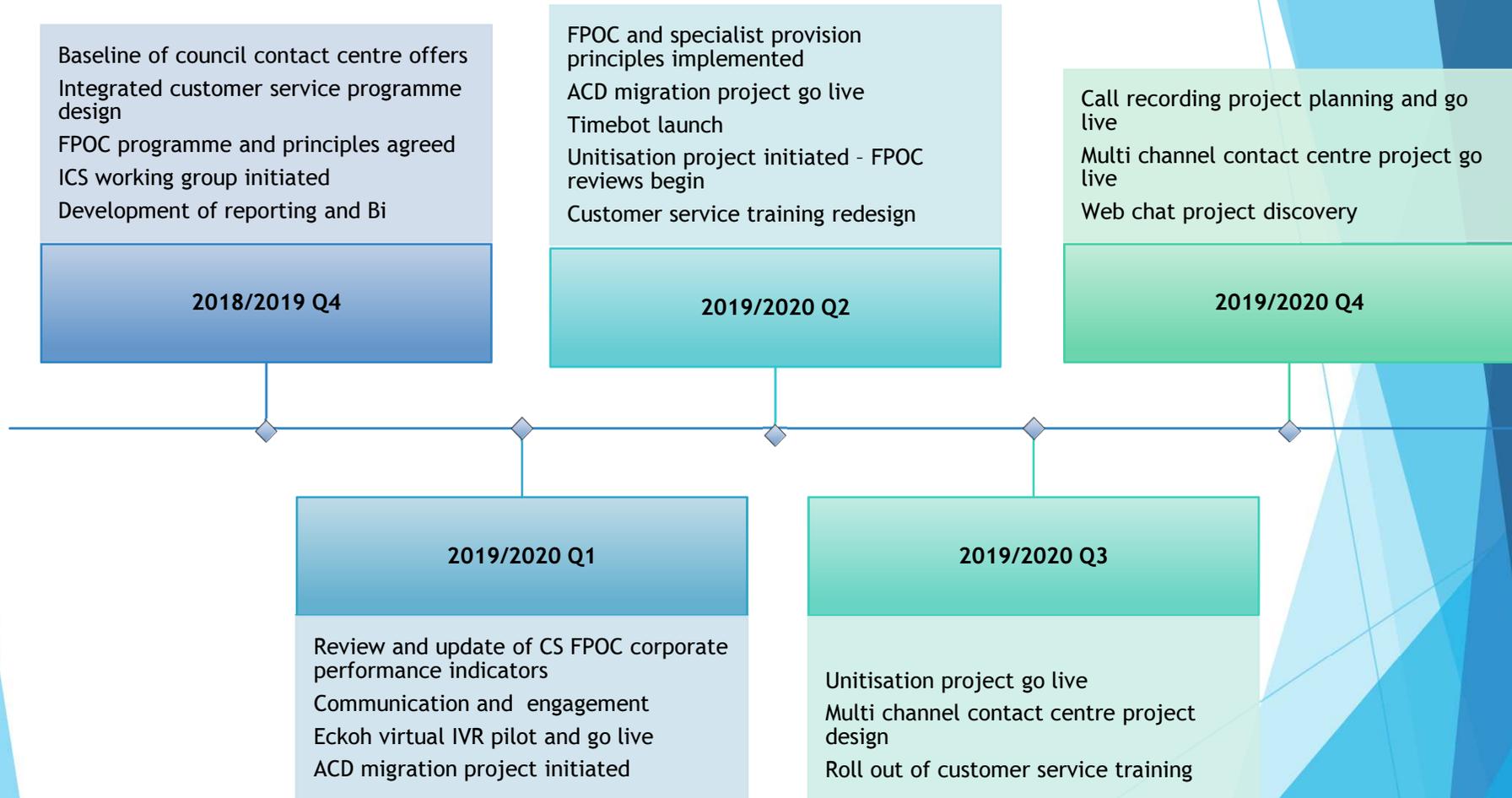


With continuous improvement we can deliver high quality services to customers, wherever and whenever they are needed.

Digitally Transforming Customer Service



The Journey so far



THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Virtual contact centre technology implemented
Covid-19 community support hub mobilised
PPE and volunteer support hubs mobilised
Business rates support line developed

2020/2021 Q1

Email migrated into multi channel software.
Softphone project initiated
School holiday meals project planned and delivered
ICS programme review

2020/2021 Q3

2020/2021 Q2

Unitisation of priority services
Web chat go live
Virtual appointment project planning and go live

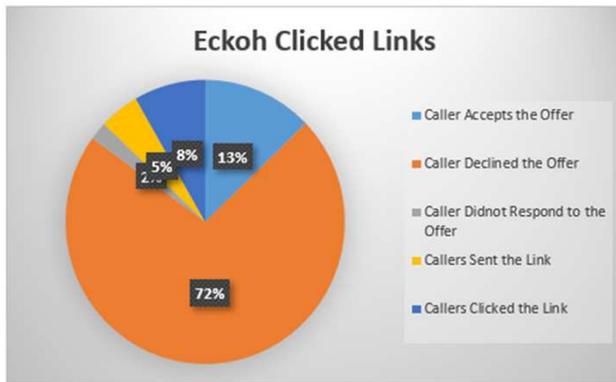
Realising The Benefits

- ▶ Since its launch, the integrated customer service programme has made great progress in developing of a customer focused; one council approach to customer service delivery, supporting the standardisation, harmonisation and unitisation and delivering improvements to the customer experience along with efficiency savings.

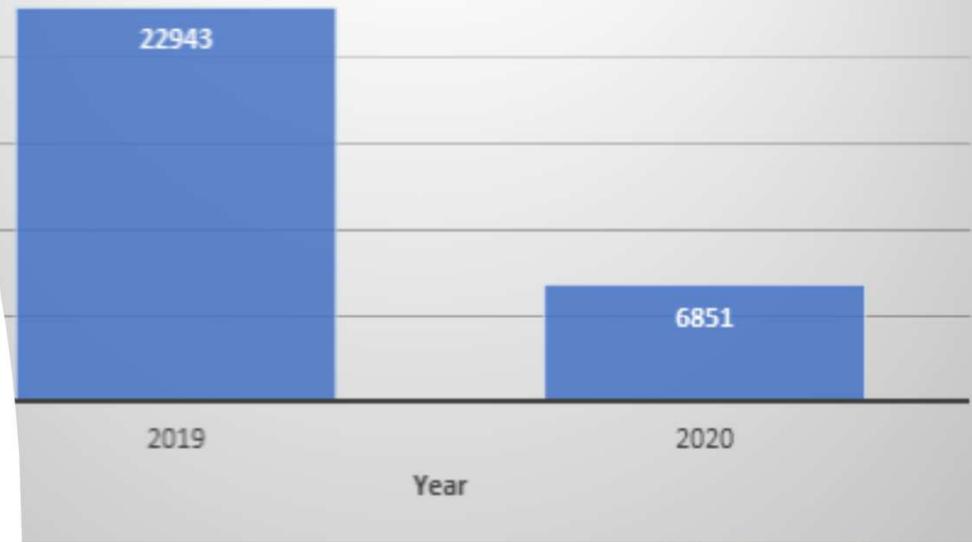


Enhanced Demand Management

Virtual IVR



Calls transferred to other services

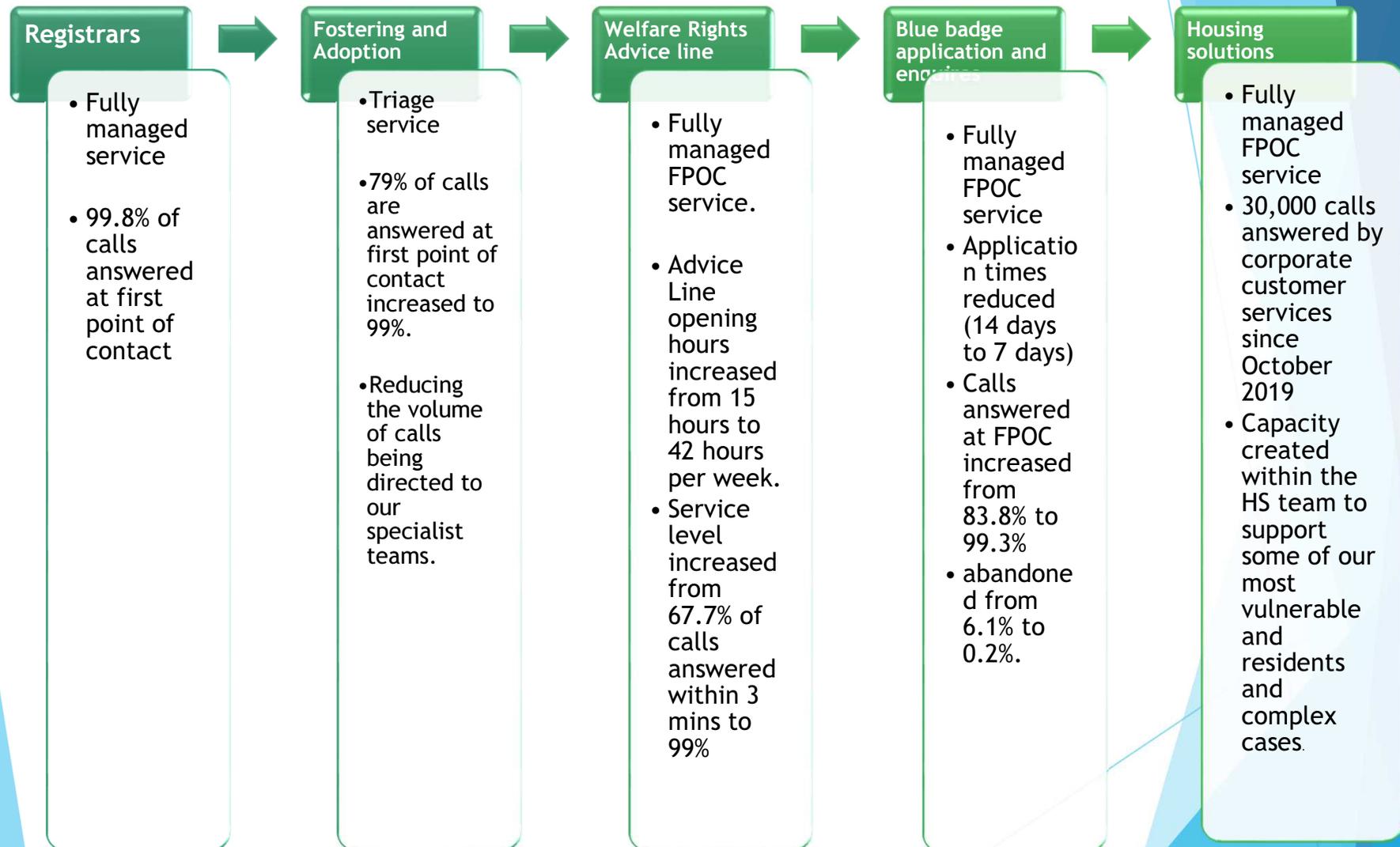


Our virtual IVR has created a reduction of 16,000 calls transferred by our general enquires team in 2020 in comparison to 2019.

Enhanced call routing has enabled 12332 calls to be routed direct to service areas reducing unnecessary touches in the customer journey.

Customers can now receive web links direct to their mobile phone as well as automated service messaging.

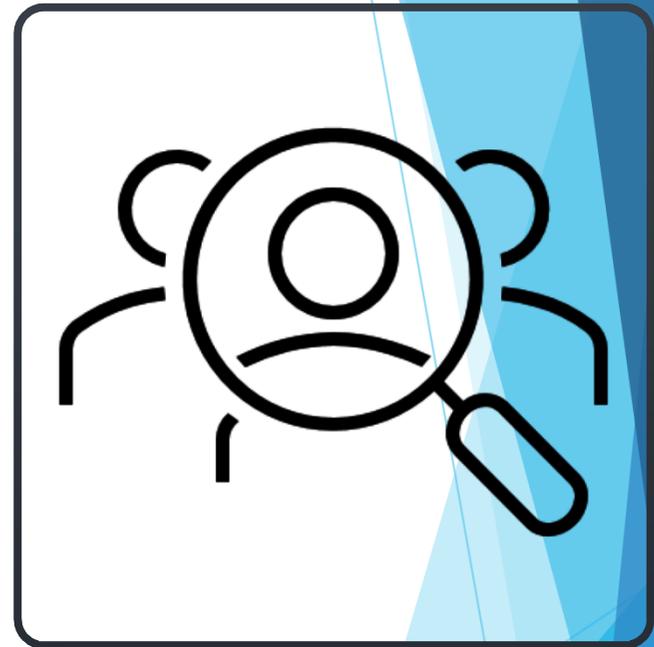
Delivering joined up services at FPOC



Customer Insight

Customer insight and data analytics support us in understanding our customers, their journeys and how we can enhance their experience.

Whilst widening our corporate reporting information through the transfer of non-ACD lines to our ACD system is enabling a true understanding of demand and service performance across the council.

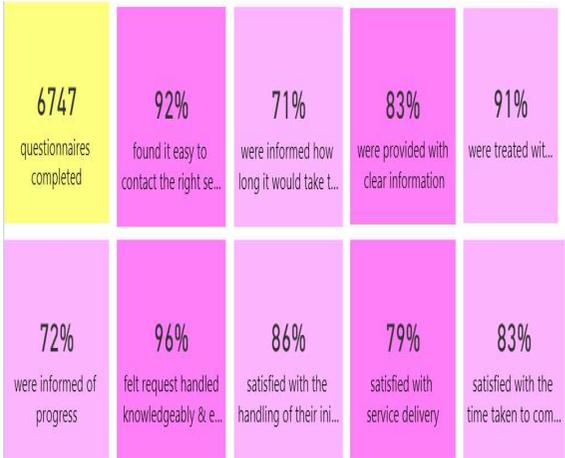


Voice of the customer

Capturing customer experience and satisfaction data ensures we keep the voice of the customer at the heart of our decision-making.

Over the last year we have seen an increase in customer satisfaction and improved first point of contact customer experience.

2019



2020



2020 to date

Technology

Through deployment of a range of new technology approaches we are enhancing management of demand, reducing avoidable contact and the number of unanswered contacts.

- The introduction of **webchat** channel is supporting our drive toward a multi-channel contact centre and has helped almost 3,000 customers access service support and advice across more than 20 web pages. As agents can support two concurrent chats and chat times are lower than alternative channels, the 3.5% conversion of telephony contact to web chat is driving significant capacity creation which will support reallocation of resource to other priority services.
- Our **time bot** ensures customers are kept informed of where they sit in a queue and how when their call will be answered. Whilst our voicemail service supports requests for a call back. Deployment has supported a reduction of call answering times of 10 seconds and a service level improvement of 1.3%
- **Virtual appointments** to support with more complex queries and requests provide an alternative to our traditional face to face offer.

Multi channel service delivery

To support the efficient delivery of a modern customer experience and service through a range of channels a new multi-channel contact centre platform programme has been developed and is currently being rolled out across the corporate contact centre.

This technology is a flexible and efficient tool for handling emails, chat, SMS, telephony and open media interactions in one space providing a single view of the customer journey.

Focused on the customer and employee of the future the solution allows users to work effectively from any location without the need for additional home working equipment.

Whilst enhanced reporting, resource management and workflow capabilities support enhanced service delivery.

Review, reflect, Refresh

Review all baseline data to refresh our forward plan in light of challenges faced this year.

Further stakeholder engagement to fully understand how service delivery and customer expectations have changed as a result of covid.

Harmonisation of organisations contact channels determined by the future customer.

Driving forward organisational outcomes over the coming 2 years.

Questions

