ForHousing

Enhancing service to its tenants through a "single pane of glass" solution

DRIVE BETTER VALUE FROM EVERY INTERACTION

Social housing provider, ForHousing, owns and manages 24,000 homes in North-West England, and delivers housing management services for other landlords. Part of the ForViva Group, they are focused on improving lives for their communities, customers, and staff, along with delivering affordable accommodation for their tenants.

ForHousing are passionate about the service they provide to their tenants. Back in 2016, most of their customer interactions were predominately voice-based. With calls on the rise ForHousing wanted a scalable "single pane of glass" solution which would integrate with critical business applications and support new digital channels, such as webchat, emails and social media to relieve the pressure on call handlers and resolve tenants' queries more quickly and efficiently.

"We also wanted to support additional capabilities including skills-based call-routing, and the ability to take card payments and not record, which together would allow us to offer an even more efficient service to our tenants."

Angela Worthington,
Group Assistant Director of Customer Experience,
ForViva (parent company of ForHousing)

INDUSTRY
Housing Association

GOALS
A "single pane of glass" solution to support new digital channels and enhance the customer experience.

SOLUTIONS
Communications Center
Quality Management Suite

BENEFITS

- It supports a one-stop-shop, enabling ForHousing to have a single point of contact for contact centre solutions and applications

- It provides greater visibility of customer and agent interactions through call and screen recording, helping to deliver coaching in real-time

- A flexible solution, it makes it easier to onboard agents and extend the use of multimedia across the organisation, as well as setting up new queues for emails, etc

- It seamlessly integrates with chat bots, web bots, virtual assistants

- It supports a wide range of business applications including skills-based call routing and the ability to remain PCI compliant when taking card payments

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Their existing contact centre solution did not offer the functionality needed to support this new initiative. It was also inflexible when it came to making small changes to the system such as rerouting calls or putting a recorded message in place.

Each new request had to be submitted to the IT team which made it difficult to be reactive to anything. ForHousing decided to go out to tender to find a solution that could deliver on their requirements.

THE SOLUTION

Working with their IT partner, Amillan, they selected the Enghouse Interactive Communications Center (CC) solution. CC provides multi-channel capability, giving tenants greater choice in how they engage with ForHousing. To complement CC, ForHousing also implemented the Enghouse Interactive Quality Management suite (QMS), including call recording and score card functionality to monitor agents performance, and the Teleopti workforce management tool.

The initial Customer Service Centre implementation had around 40 users. With CC in place, Amillan has helped ForViva bring onboard over 100 additional users and extend the use of multimedia throughout when it bought Liberty Group, scaling CC to accommodate this growth. ForViva was quick to see positive results.

REAPING THE REWARDS

One of the advantages of choosing Enghouse as its contact centre provider was the range of solutions it had to offer. Previously, ForHousing had multiple customer-facing solutions in place from different suppliers. By standardising on CC, it was able to utilise other applications such as their web-based Wallboard. This meant that agents had full visibility of performance data and call queue status no matter where they set up work for the day.

ForHousing also benefits from Call-back functionality. When call volumes are high and it is difficult to get through to an agent, tenants can now request a call back. This has helped to increase customer satisfaction as they no longer have to wait around in a queue, but it has also contributed to increased agent productivity and improved call centre efficiency.

The new solution also integrates with their CRM solution, Aareon. This gives agents instant access to more detailed information about their residents, enabling them to make more informed decisions and has resulted in increased first contact resolution.

Moreover, with the previous contact centre solution in place, it had been difficult to on board new users or support people working from home. With CC, it was possible to mobilise the contact centre team, with no disruption to service. It was easy to train people; add new users, route calls and set up new queues. The solution also offered ForHousing greater flexibility during lockdown. Some agents had to home school making it difficult for them to take calls, but using CC, ForHousing were able to allow them to focus on email instead.

Challenges in the management and processing of calls were also addressed by CC's call recording capability. The system was PCI compliant as it automatically paused and resumed recordings when agents were taking card details. Screen and call recording along with score card functionality enables Team Leaders to access agents in a fair and consistent fashion. This has helped increase agent morale, reduce staff attrition, and improve the customer experience.

"Over the last year the Team Leader's role has changed significantly", added Angela. "With their teams now working from home they have lost that face-to-face contact and the ability to offer support when they can see an agent struggling. The Quality Management Suite has been invaluable during this time, allowing team leaders to monitor activity and intervene when an agent needs help.

"We also have greater visibility of the types of calls we receive, enabling us to spot any trends in the nature of enquiries, or provide evidence of any burning issues or repair complaints that may need actioning. And with the integrated survey module we can get a full picture of the customer experience".

Angela Worthington,
Group Assistant Director of Customer Experience
FORVIVA

CHATBOTS AND AUTOMATION
EXTENDING THE BENEFITS OF THE CONTACT CENTRE

ForHousing wanted to bring more automation into the contact centre and extend their hours to offer a 24/7 service to its customers. Working with Amillan they selected Converse360 to provide a service automation platform that can deliver web bots, speech bots and virtual assistants, all seamlessly integrated with CC.

The virtual assistant feature has been invaluable in taking pressure off the contact centre through the pandemic. Also, if the interaction with the virtual assistant needs to be passed through to the contact centre the details are automatically passed onto the agent so that they have a full history.

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The virtual assistant is now handling around 60% of the chats that come through the ForHousing website and they have seen a 26% uplift in the number of monthly web chat sessions, within three months of it going live.

The average handling time for live chat has gone down by around 90 seconds per session as a result.

With the virtual assistant dealing with many of the simpler interactions ForHousing can devote more time to calls coming through the Enghouse CC and has therefore improved its first call resolution rate.

At the same time, agents can deliver an enhanced experience to tenants.

Reporting and management has also been transformed. ForHousing now have full "cradle to grave" reporting across all customer interaction types, whether it is the virtual assistance, voice or social media channels. This has provided greater insight into contact centre performance which in turn has helped drive down costs.

DELIVERING AN EXCEPTIONAL TENANT EXPERIENCE

Angela said: "It is not just about housing anymore. It is about improving lives and creating communities that grow and in which people are happy and want to live in. Equally, it is no longer just about tenants phoning up to pay their rent or report a repair. Calls are becoming much longer. Our average handle time has increased 10-25% in time terms because tenants have more complex needs, but thanks to the virtual assistant and the Enghouse Interactive CC, our agents are able to spend more time with them and add greater value to each interaction."

Angela added: "We have found CC flexible and easy to adjust. We can now open the contact centre outside office hours and bring staff working from home online to deal with queries whenever we need them.

Also the flexibility of the solution has made it easier to bring on new lines for specific functions, such as pharmacy calls during lockdown, and simpler to route calls to specific experts, as and when required."

Over the longer-term, ForHousing is confident in the ability of the contact centre platform to deliver sustained benefits. The association is looking at moving away from on-premise solutions towards a cloud-based platform and it recognises the potential this offers in enabling it to make use of the data and analytics it has at its disposal to offer an even better service to tenants.

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ABOUT ENGHOUSE INTERACTIVE

Enghouse Interactive's integrated suite of solutions includes multi-channel contact centre, self-service, attendant operator consoles, video collaboration and workforce optimisation. This wide portfolio places us in the unique position to offer customers and partners a complete, fully featured solution from a single vendor.

These solutions support the full range of deployment methods from premise-based to private, public or community cloud and even hybrid requirements.