



CREATING A SINGLE VIEW OF THE CUSTOMER WITH A UNIFIED AGENT DESKTOP, VIRTUAL CONTACT CENTRE AND WEB CHAT SOLUTION

Together Housing Group is a leading provider of quality homes in the North of England, managing an impressive portfolio of 37,000 homes and employing over 1,250 staff. Together Housing experiences high levels of customer service enquiries from over 50,000 tenants, managing a wide range of customer enquiries including repairs and maintenance, lettings, welfare reform and anti-social behaviour, resulting in over 38,000 calls a month.

Following the coming together of the five housing associations in April 2011, the customer service centers were all relying on different telephony platforms with some centers having up to 15 different phone numbers for customer service enquiries. As a result, Together Housing was struggling to deliver a consistent level of customer service across the group and therefore started looking for ways to knit these disparate systems together to provide a “one call for all” customer service offering.

After looking at a number of different providers, Together Housing selected IFS for the design and implementation of the solution as a result of the high levels of flexibility offered to suit its specific business requirements. Alongside this, IFS's solution had the ability to scale and accommodate any new features in the Together Housing Group, enabling them to extend the solution when needed, rather than having to procure third-party systems for additional channels.

Working closely with Together Housing's team, IFS designed a unique contact center solution that brings together all calls from the multiple social housing brands within the group into one secure system. Although currently operating on an East/West basis, the system allows the possibility of the five regional contact centers to work as one virtual team with calls being intelligently routed from one call center to another, enabling them to effectively share resources and significantly improve productivity.

“IFS's solution has played a big part in helping us transform the level of customer service we deliver through our customer service centers. We are now able to work as a group, rather than as separate organizations, and this has benefited us as a business as well as our customers and the service they receive through the customer service center.

ABOUT TOGETHER HOUSING GROUP

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BENEFITS

- Bringing together disparate contact centers in to one virtual solution
- Call backs are now completed within minutes
- Dramatic improvements in first contact resolution with Agent Desktop
- Multi-channel management, queuing & routing, calls, email and webchat

With the implementation of the intelligent IFS Customer Engagement™ unified desktop, the customer service team is now able to resolve customer enquiries regardless of the housing group involved, while maintaining the local identity of each association. The agent desktop identifies the customer as soon as the call is connected and presents their data on a single user interface, allowing the agent to deal with the call more efficiently.

Stephen Batley, Group Head of Customer Services, said: “Each of the partners was operating on separate telephony systems, which was clearly not suitable if we were to realize the benefits of a group structure. IFS Customer Engagement has allowed us to achieve this, while ensuring we maintain the local identity of each of the individual associations, which is an important part of our Board’s priorities and customer service delivery.

The system from IFS has also ensured we are connecting the customer to the most skilled agent with their intelligent skills-based routing capability. This was important to us as previously agents specialized in certain areas such as repairs or lettings, so we were able to maximize their knowledge in a more productive way across the group.”

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The IFS Customer Engagement solution also provides customers with a call-back option, which means once their enquiry reaches the front of the queue an agent will call them back, avoiding customers having to spend long periods on hold. These call backs are often within a 10–20 minute timeframe and subsequently exceeding customer expectations.

Together Housing has now deployed phase two of their multi-channel customer service solution, which introduced an advanced web chat function, alongside their existing telephone and email channels. A customer can now start a web chat conversation with the contact center at a click of a button. The IFS Customer Engagement platform routes the enquiry to the most suitable agent, based on skill or location, connecting the customer to the contact center almost instantly. Agents will be able to manage up to three live web chats at one time.

Together Housing now have a single, secure and reliable solution that has helped achieve their objective of working together as a group and as a result, customers are now experiencing faster response times and a consistently high level of customer service.



Further information, e-mail to info@ifsworld.com, contact your local IFS office or visit our web site, IFSworld.com

