Derby City Council's AI-Powered Phone Assistance handles 62,000 calls in 2 months, deflecting 43% away from human advisors

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Derby City Council and Derby Homes are on a journey to innovate how they engage with residents, supplementing their main switchboard with phone-based artificial intelligence (AI) assistance. Embracing the power of AI for digital self-service, Andy Brammall, Director of Digital & Physical Infrastructure and Customer Engagement at Derby City Council, speaks about their forward-thinking move, *"It quickly became clear that AI had the potential to dramatically streamline our* customer service operation. We started first with an AI-powered website assistant and followed by supplementing our main switchboard with phone-based AI".

Inbound phone calls represent 60%+ of resident contact with the Council, and therefore was the cornerstone of Derby City Councils self-service strategy. Brammall comments, "Trained in over 1,000 council services, it has exceeded our deflection target of 21%, handling over 62,000 calls and achieving an incredible 43% deflection. This success has allowed us to maintain our service levels while streamlining operations".

The new AI assistants, Darcie, servicing the Council's customer service centre, and Ali, serving Derby Homes, are currently answering over 1,000 questions each day, directly handling up to 45% of inbound calls. Beyond answering citizen queries, they can also direct calls to over 40 different departments.

The new AI system employs advanced natural language processing, providing a user-friendly, 24/7 service in natural language to simplify interactions. Brammall adds, *"Our new AI assistants not only* allow citizens access to a range of council services and information around the clock and across multiple channels, but by automating routine tasks they also free up time for our colleagues to focus on more complex queries which require human conversation. This ultimately aims to provide a more personalised service for our residents, improving service delivery and achieving higher levels of resident satisfaction".

The Council partnered with ICS.AI and leveraged their SMART AI platform for this transformation. This development sets a benchmark for using AI to streamline public services and enhance citizen engagement. Brammall comments further, *"We chose the SMART AI platform from ICS.AI for several reasons. Their* strong reputation and proven experience in the local government sector reassured us of their capabilities. They offered a "human parity" council AI language model trained in over 1,000 council topics, which could be rapidly deployed, and we were confident in their performance and their proven commitment to innovation in the phone channel. Above all, what really appealed to us was ICS.AI's genuine interested in working as a true collaborative partner".

Martin Neale, CEO at ICS.AI expresses his satisfaction, "*Derby City Council's AI initiative actively addresses the surging demand for council services.* Our AI assistants aim to streamline operations and manage demand peaks, enhancing citizen satisfaction and providing a seamless experience. By handling large volumes of inbound calls and common queries, they help reduce waiting times, improve call efficiency, and lighten the staff workload during peak times. This strategy commonly opens opportunities for staff redeployment to other tasks, contributing to potential operational cost reductions".

Derby City Council is committed to further exploring the potential of AI technology across additional contact channels and service areas. This initiative showcases their dedication to improving customer service and increasing efficiency for its citizens.

Neale concluded, *"Derby City Council's commitment to innovation was critical to successfully deploying one of the most sophisticated AI engagement solutions in the public sector. This significant development* demonstrates the Council's leadership in the sector. We're delighted to continue supporting them in developing their new AI-driven strategy, which I can see is already making a substantial impact on their contact centre".

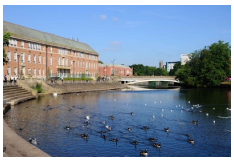
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About ICS.AI: ICS.AI, the UK leader in conversational AI for the public sector, has enabled this significant transformation through their SMART AI platform. In addition to their well-established offerings, ICS.AI is leading the way in leveraging generative AI and Copilot AI capabilities, showcasing the potential of these technologies to further enhance resident engagement. This commitment to innovation aligns perfectly with Derby City Council's forward-thinking approach, creating a partnership that aims to set new standards in public sector customer service.

Webinar with Derby City Council: Join us on Wednesday 23rd August for a deep-dive webinar with Derby City Council to find out more about their AI transformation - register here.

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