inform INFORM 360° self service

24/7 Customer Contact Solutions

Cornwall Council was formed in 2009, when local government reorganisation saw the merger of Cornwall County Council and the six Cornish District Councils, to form one Cornish local authority. The new unitary council aimed to deal with enquiries from over half a million residents as quickly and efficiently as possible. Multiple legacy phone lines were replaced over five years, by a new centralized contact centre acting as a single highly trained front-office, resolving over 80% of customers' enquiries and routing others to relevant services and departments.

In March 2014 *Self Service* from Inform was brought in to support resources and handle the huge increase in Council Tax enquiries generated by the dispatch of the annual bills. Inform immediately handled over 50% of incoming enquiries automatically, 24/7 without the need to transfer to a live operator.

Introduction:

Challenges existed at the Contact Centre with call and enquiry handling, as call waiting times and abandonment rates were increasing. Council Tax was identified as the biggest challenge, and a solution was required before enquiries peaked during and after the main billing period and peak recovery periods.

Objectives & Priorities:

- It was proving difficult to achieve Customer Service goals, to answer and resolve the majority of calls at the first point of contact, as many callers with complex enquiries were waiting in lengthy queues whilst trained officers handled simple enquiries. An improvement in service, and the Customer experience, was a priority.

- Skilled advisors needed to be freed up from dealing with a high volume of straightforward enquiries, to focus on only urgent or complex matters.

- A service was required that could operate 24/7, 365 days a year, to provide support during opening hours and a comprehensive range of self-service opportunities out of hours.

- The service needed to integrate seamlessly within the existing call centre structure, handling enquiries, and redirecting to the Council's own payment line, website or trained officers where relevant.

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CORNWALL COUNCIL

Testimonial:

"The number of calls being resolved has remained around 50% which is far better than we had hoped.

We have added several important extra options since we went live, the most significant was a landlord option to connect straight to a trained officer. This was created in a few days and after user testing was live within a week. (Inform) are very obliging and responsive with any adjustments that we have asked for.

Last week I reported delivery of my £150k (full year) savings without dropping service. This was mainly due to 360 Self Service."

Wayne Smith
Assistant Head Of Shared Services - Customer Contact, Cornwall Council

Operational & Financial Benefits:

- ✓ On average, over 21,000 calls are answered per month by *Self Service*.
- ✓ Over 53% of enquiries are resolved within the service, exceeding the expectations of the project team.
- ✓ Within six months *Self Service* has provided a solid Business Case providing savings and efficiencies significantly in excess of costs.
- ✓ Launched within 4 weeks, with minimal input from councils operational & ICT resources, and introduced at the peak period, the service was fully functional immediately.
- ✓ All future changes and updates can be made quickly and easily, without additional charges, ensuring that *Self Service* meets changing needs and continues to deliver optimum performance.
- ✓ Based on the early success of *Self Service*, Cornwall Council is now considering other areas of use.

Demonstration:

Council Tax Service: Tel 01183 150866