

# Walsall Council reinvents people-centric experience with digital and AI innovation

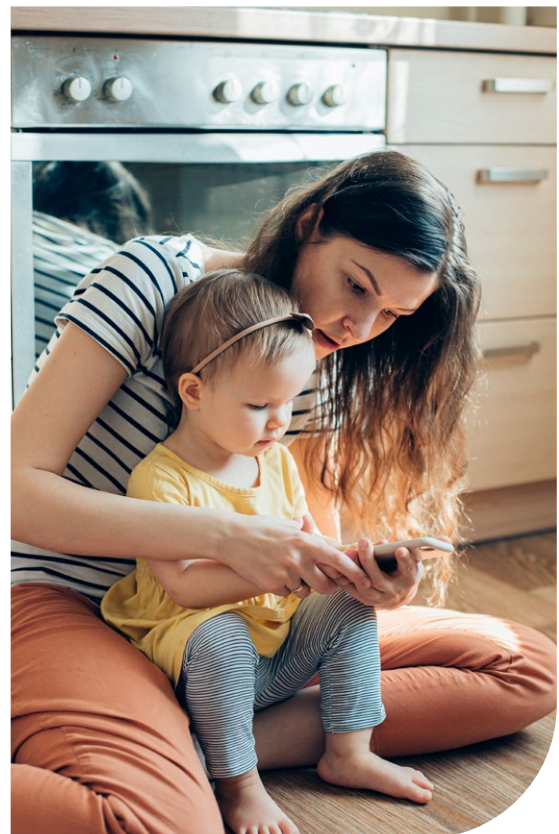


## UK public service delivery is transforming and Walsall Council is leading the way.

Partnering with Kerv Experience and Genesys, its Customer Experience Centre continues to reap the full benefit of digital and AI-powered solutions, culminating in step-change improvements in agility, data, communications, knowledge sharing, processes and personal development. In addition, the Centre is also used to showcase to other Council departments what good looks like for customer access.

For residents that means extended opening hours with the ability to access key information, resources and support services – whenever and however they want. Other big gains include substantial cost savings. For example, through the ability to better absorb seasonal demand spikes like election days and school admissions, keeping staff levels and expenses flat.

Recognised with the Local Government Chronicle award for Most Improved Council nationally, Walsall Council continues to raise the bar on customer and employee experience as it looks to build a more sustainable financial future.





## The Challenge:

In the heart of the West Midlands, Walsall Council supports around 280,000 local residents with issues ranging from education, social care and benefits to housing, waste management, and planning services.

In redesigning the best customer experience (CX) possible, the Council also wanted to better equip its 50-strong team of hybrid workers. Previously, most interactions took place over the phone. Customers could only call during normal office hours and might face one-hour wait times. With limited reporting tools supervisors could only see calls queuing and answered. They had no insight into CX metrics or agent performance.

Other transformational goals included reducing average handle time and increasing first contact resolution and employee productivity. In addition, a simpler cloud-based IT model would allow the Council to add channels, capacity and integrations at pace, while protecting vulnerable residents in particular from system downtime.

**“There’s no reason why local authority residents shouldn’t receive the same CX and service levels as they do from top-performing private sector companies. We believe that’s what they need and deserve.”**

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**Kiran Grewal-Lehal**

Customer Delivery Manager,  
Walsall Council

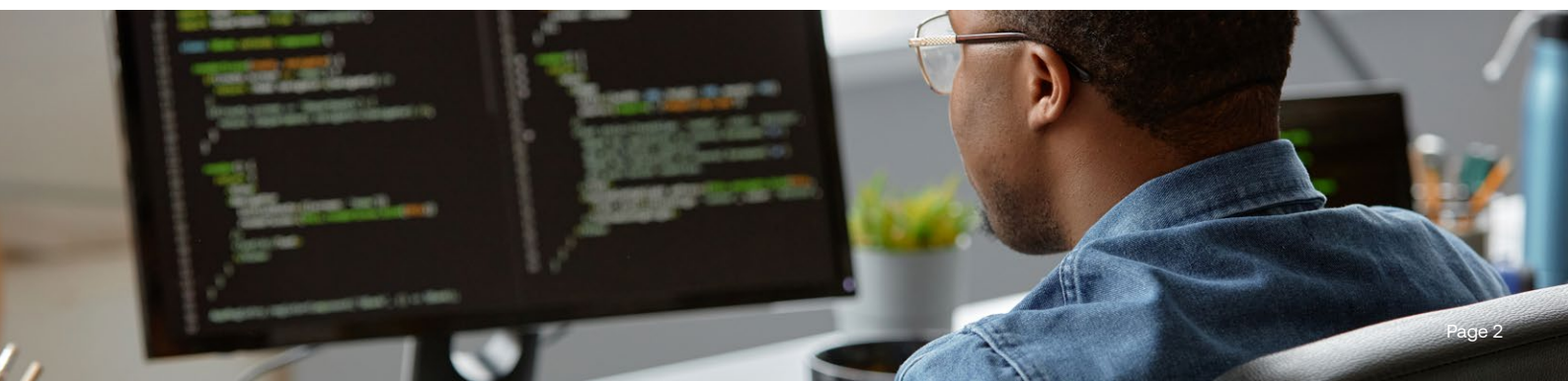


## The Solution:

**Adopting a Kerv-managed Genesys Cloud solution, Walsall Council set about transforming from solely call-based interactions to a more engaging contact centre model that delivered consistently great omnichannel service.**

As part of an ongoing strategic relationship, Kerv specialists de-risked and accelerated design and implementation, taking care to ensure zero downtime and service disruption.

The Customer Experience Centre now has a totally different look and feel. Hybrid workers effortlessly manage phone and webchat conversations from a single desktop interface, with email communications shortly to be fully integrated as well. Language is no longer a barrier. The Kerv CX Translate tool automatically detects and interprets in real time what the customer is keying in their native language and conveys the precise meaning to the receiving agent, and vice versa.







“Like many Councils, Walsall serves a diverse range of communities and that’s where CX Translate has been a game changer,” said Customer Delivery Manager, Kiran Grewal-Lehal. “It allows residents and businesses to interact digitally with us in their language of choice so they don’t feel so awkward communicating. And we’re saving money on third-party interpreter costs and resolving their issues quicker.”

Agents also enjoy new digital and AI-powered features like callbacks (offered to contacts after 90 seconds waiting time) and Genesys Knowledge and Agent Assist (presenting helpful articles which are rated to drive continuous improvement).

Opening hours have been cost-effectively extended through SMS communications and a self-service chatbot for handling basic tasks like appointment scheduling and school appeal requests. For the first time ever, the Council is able to capture feedback and measure performance.

“Our strategy leveraged various change management tools, engagement techniques and continual team coaching and development sessions,” added Kiran. “Sentiment analysis has provided a richer data set to appraise and develop our agents. Also, indicating pain points where processes could be improved.”

These improvements have subsequently been integrated as business-as-usual across eleven Walsall Council public services (Adult Social Care, Blue Badge, Building Control, Core Services, Electoral Services, Free School Meals, Planning, Members, Counsellors, School Admissions and Switchboard) with three more (Disabled Facilities Grants, Council Tax and Benefits) about to migrate.



**“ There’s been a noticeable channel shift and uptake in residents and businesses self-serving via our chatbot. They get fast answers and don’t have to take more time out of their busy day. In turn, reducing our call volumes and wait times, saving money and making better use of resources.”**

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**Kiran Grewal-Lehal**

Customer Delivery Manager,  
Walsall Council



## The Results:

Previously, with its old system, the Council struggled due to limited reporting and lack of insight into key areas such as customer access. Since partnering with Kerv and creating a strategy, the Customer Experience Centre has been able to support additional Council services without recruiting.

These productivity gains have been enabled by Genesys Digital and AI solutions, combined with Genesys Workforce Engagement Management (WEM) which has automated quality assurance and reporting processes, saving around 8 FTE. Other WEM benefits achieved include improved forecasting accuracy, reduced manual effort and ensuring operations are always correctly staffed.

Before, the Council was only able to assess a small sample of calls. Now, all calls are quality checked. In addition, agents receive transcripts ahead of reviews with managers, thereby improving coaching outcomes and saving 45 minutes per meeting (reduced from one hour to 15 minutes). Routine tasks like system changes, reporting, agent scheduling and performance monitoring, annual leave and PCI DSS fully compliant payments are also completed in a fraction of the time that it used to take.

**“With Kerv’s support, we invested significant time understanding how Genesys technology could make our contact centre more self-sufficient, reducing dependency on our IT team and manual spreadsheet-work,”** said Kiran.

As a result of these efficiency gains the Council is now much better placed to absorb service demand spikes without increasing staffing levels. School Admissions is a good example. Around March-time agents deal with eight times as many calls from parents, 98% of which are answered within 30 seconds. Similarly, for a recent Election Day the Council made several changes on the spot, creating a makeshift reception to welcome voters entering the building. Service levels that simply weren’t possible under the old contact centre approach.



Offering callbacks means that customers, especially the elderly and vulnerable, are no longer forced to rack up phone charges and still hold their place in the queue. Before, the Council was unable to capture feedback with its old phone system, which blocked caller ID. Now, customers are invited to participate in a short survey as part of a fully automated process.

The employee journey has also been transformed. Leveraging the Genesys Knowledge Base and Agent Assist tool, agents receive real-time useful tips and articles to help steer live conversations, improving job satisfaction and personal development. Likewise, supervisors benefit from customised dashboards and can view reports at the push of a button – tracking wait time, agent utilisation, idle rates, callback performance, agent skills on queues and more.

“Previously, we were not reporting at all,” said Kiran. “Now, I can produce a detailed report for our Senior Management Board in under a minute. If I had to do that manually across all our queues it would probably take 10 hours.”



**“Our transition with bots, knowledge and agent assist has been nothing short of phenomenal. We now understand why customers are contacting us, how they’re feeling and what we can do to make them feel better. And, in the last 18 months we’ve taken on five new Council services and not had to recruit any additional staff.”**

**Kiran Grewal-Lehal**

Customer Delivery Manager,  
Walsall Council



**Future plans include migrating email (from numerous Outlook accounts) to Genesys, enabling customers to attach pictures for property maintenance issues, while also integrating website communications and content, such as FAQs.**



CSAT improved with webchat and phone conversations answered in under 60 seconds.



Abandonment rate reduced to 3%, significantly below industry average.



More efficient one-to-one review meetings (75% time saving) and reporting processes (90% time saving).



Significant financial saving on call handling and seasonal staffing costs through digital and AI tech.



## Final Word

**Digital and AI is the way forward as local authorities continue to face economic challenges, mitigate risk and deliver the best service possible for the vulnerable and residents going through tough times. And, in Kerv Experience, we have a partner that really gets it.”**

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**Kiran Grewal-Lehal**

Customer Delivery Manager,  
Walsall Council

### Get in touch with us

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