



CUSTOMER STORIES /



Rebuilding lives, removing fear

Refuge, the largest domestic abuse charity in England, receives a call for help every two minutes from survivors in the darkest times of their lives. With the Genesys Cloud™ platform, Refuge now has the tools and resources to reach hundreds more survivors every week while making its services more empathetic and responsive to their needs.

**30% to
40%**

more survivors
supported

**Increased
operational**

visibility and
control

**Better
balance
of
workloads**

and well-being
for employees

Advisors can focus

on survivors
not systems

AI- guided journeys

to help
advisors
prepare

75 hours per week

of advisor time
saved

AT A GLANCE

Customer: Refuge
Industry: Charity
Location: UK
Company size: 450

CHALLENGES

Advisors hampered by standalone legacy systems, Lack of service insight, control and innovation

PRODUCT

Genesys Cloud

CAPABILITIES

Inbound, Email, Chat, AI (voice and chatbot).

Eradicating domestic abuse

On any given day, Refuge services helps thousands of survivors — mostly women and their children — to overcome the physical,

emotional and financial impacts of abuse so they can rebuild their lives.

In 2019, the UK Home Office awarded Refuge a contract to operate the 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline (NDAH) as its sole provider.

Extra funding helped develop new digital and mobile resources such as live webchat and email enhancements. Shortly after, a British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation line was added, followed by a line dedicated to providing survivors of domestic abuse with information about refuge vacancies.

"Improvements achieved with Genesys Cloud are helping our teams to change more lives. We're now able to have between 30% and 40% more interactions, which translates to supporting an additional 300 to 400 more survivors per week."



Ellen Patterson

Deputy Service Manager, Refuge

Time-consuming systems

Unfortunately, it wasn't long before the limitations of this bolt-on IT approach began to appear. The disparate collection of legacy telephony, chat, web form and reporting solutions included Gamma Horizon Collaborate and Resource Connect.

"Having to navigate various systems and remember many different logins was taking time away from survivor support," said Ellen Patterson, Deputy Service Manager at Refuge. "So, we started to search for an easy to access and manage cloud-based system."

Greater flexibility was another reason for unifying communications. The goal was enabling staff and volunteers to transition from a central contact center in London to remote and hybrid working from anywhere in the country; this would, in turn, widen its recruitment reach and the availability of specialist skills.

"Workers need a dedicated confidential space where no one can overhear or enter the room," added Patterson. "The new technology had to be highly reliable in terms of sound deadening and audio quality so the person on the other end of the phone, who could be in a really difficult situation, is assured the line is secure and can hear you properly."



Bringing everything together

As part of a strict tender process, Refuge considered seven different proposals. Two groups quickly emerged: self-managed solutions aimed at smaller organizations and full-featured corporate offerings with comprehensive technical assistance.

"There was a clear gulf," said Patterson. "Fortunately for us and callers, Genesys made it possible to close that gap with an attractive support wrap, favorable licencing terms and a highly configurable platform that required minimal software development."

To ease the migration, Genesys devised an extensive training framework to deepen understanding of NDAH advisers' needs and opportunities and enhance their communication strategies. Refuge staff also benefit from Genesys Beyond online learning subscriptions, which develop expertise in building call flows and other efficient response tools.

The new Genesys Cloud CX® solution consolidates all Refuge support channels — the NDAH, a referral line, BSL interpretation service, its website, webforms, live asynchronous chat and a chatbot — on one single platform.

To manage the migration as seamlessly as possible, it was scheduled for a time when the NDAH has fewer calls and multiple advisers on shift. It was imperative that the NDAH experience no downtime to avoid the risk of help being unavailable to the survivors who rely on the service.

"Our team are incredible and do a difficult job — some of them for over 20 years," said Patterson. "So, while it's easy to get ingrained and anxious about learning a new system, as soon as they started using Genesys Cloud, they found it was intuitive and not scary at all."

Special adaptations

Determined to create a trauma-informed approach, the Refuge and Genesys project team wanted to ensure every survivor journey would be supportive and sensitive to the unique challenges they faced.

Personal safety and security are built into Genesys Cloud. For example, chat messages and browsing histories are automatically deleted from survivors' devices to prevent them from being discovered by abusers.

Another significant modification was an extensive IVR system redesign. Recognizing that traumatized callers may find numerous questions overwhelming, the project team simplified menus —

making support services more accessible and the experience less intimidating.

Language is no longer a barrier, either. Previously, Refuge was unable to facilitate three-way calls and non-English-speaking survivors were referred to an interpreter service. Now, they're able to indicate language needs in advance, enabling advisers to promptly arrange for appropriate support and avoid adding unnecessary distress.

Clear visibility and control

Callers phoning in have the option of using a voicebot with non-identifiable demographic data and the outcomes they want to get out of the conversation. That information is then presented on-screen when the call is routed to help better prepare the support worker.

"It's a big thing to pick up the phone and speak to someone about something so personal, so we would never want AI to replace the human touch," said Patterson. "However, after speaking with Genesys about their future roadmap, we realized we would be doing our users a disservice not to consider AI for certain use cases."

Unlike before, supervisors are also able to effectively group and prioritize calls. They can see who is calling and how long they've been waiting. Should a call drop for whatever reason, they can quickly initiate a callback.

Previously, feedback could only be collected over the phone. Now, that data has been enriched with insights from chatbot conversations, too. In the words of one survivor: "I just needed someone to tell me objectively what is happening in my relationship. I had the added bonus of someone making me, myself, seen and heard as well. I cannot tell you what a difference it made to be viewed with some kindness."

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Implementing Genesys Cloud Web Messaging has enabled the NDAH to expand its live chat coverage by five hours each weekday. This in turn has improved access into the service for younger survivors who often feel more comfortable seeking support via text-based platforms than the phone.

Crucially, it is also easier to balance employee workloads and well-being. "Matching a survivor calling in for the first time to a support service worker on the last ten minutes of their shift might not be the best choice," said Patterson. "However, that advisor might have time to deal with a professional looking to make a referral. Likewise, we can see if an advisor looks exhausted from continuously handling calls and move them to our messaging channels to reset."

"Improvements achieved with Genesys Cloud are helping our teams to change more lives," concluded Patterson. "In correlation with consistent staffing, we now project we are able to have as many as 40% more interactions, which translates to supporting an additional 300 to 400 more survivors a week."

Feedback from the NDAH team described the migration process with Genesys Professional Services as incredibly smooth, with no question too trivial for the Genesys team. It highlighted the ease of contact and flexibility of the Genesys project team, which contributed significantly to the success of the implementation and ongoing optimization.

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