

## Revenues and benefits contact centre supports Enfield residents



### Partnership significantly reduces call waiting times

Civica partnered with London Borough of Enfield to provide flexible resource for revenues and benefits processing, business rates collection, Single Person Discount reviews and Adult Social Care financial assessments.

Working together, Civica and Enfield identified an opportunity for Civica to use its public sector expertise to maximise enquiry resolution at first point of contact by handling revenues and benefits related calls.

Previously calls were taken at Enfield's general contact centre, where wait times could be long and staff training in such a specialised area was a challenge.

### Outcomes

- ▶ **95% of queries resolved at first point of contact by fully trained revenues and benefits agents**
- ▶ **Continuous improvement as a result of insight into reasons for contact and reduction in failure demand**
- ▶ **Shorter wait times for citizens**
- ▶ **Optimised call-handling by advisors trained in skills such as active listening and complaint handling.**

**130k** calls handled on average per year

More than **94%** of calls answered

“From the first day Civica managed our Council Tax and benefit calls there was an immediate improvement in the quality and quantity of calls answered. The Civica team was experienced and knowledgeable, and focused on understanding our requirements before developing its solution to deliver the service.”

**Geoff Waterton**, Head of Service – Assessment and collection services, London Borough of Enfield

Through a combination of innovative collection initiatives, including improvements to the telephony service, Enfield increased its Council Tax collection rate in 2019/20 to 98%, boosting income by around £1.2m.

Running alongside the existing back office operations, a new specialist team was set up to answer telephone enquiries from Enfield's citizens. The team manages calls for the full cycle of Council Tax collection from initial billing, changes in circumstances, discount and exemptions through to recovery and enforcement enquiries. In addition, Civica handles all types of Housing Benefit calls including enquiries on eligibility, evidence, appeals and overpayments.

### **Insight to improve service delivery and collection rates**

From the beginning of the partnership, the council was keen to better understand reasons for customer contact to improve service delivery. Agents log each enquiry type and this is reported to Enfield on a monthly basis and discussed in service reviews. This insight is invaluable in identifying processes inefficiencies, such as issues with citizen communications, and enables the council to improve services. Civica also advises on enhancements to the council's website based on citizen feedback.

The Civica team consistently and professionally takes ownership of issues so that over 95% of queries are resolved at first point of contact.

**Advisors are trained to use techniques to help them listen actively, collect comprehensive information, and understand when to engage with the council's teams for further support.**

### **Flexible, specialist call management**

Due to the nature of the calls the team receives, there are significant peaks in demand. Every month the council issues reminders and summons for unpaid Council Tax and call volumes increase when citizens receive these. Civica works closely with Enfield's recovery team to understand how many documents they have sent and uses this information to forecast call rates. To ensure the contact centre is adequately resourced to meet demand, Civica has the flexibility to provide appropriate staffing levels.

### **Partnership working to improve citizen outcomes**

Working closely with Enfield on a daily basis enables Civica to grow the partnership from a small team of back office processing staff, to a substantial service efficiently dealing with thousands of citizens every month.

"The Civica team complements our in-house delivery teams and work seamlessly with our staff. We work together to continually improve the service to meet our changing needs and as a result of our overwhelmingly positive experience we are looking to extend the service into other business lines."

**Geoff Waterton**, Head of Service – Assessment and collection services, London Borough of Enfield