



## Intelligent Virtual Assistant Integrates with Housing Applications

### Messaging Based Virtual Assistant



#### Customer

Grand Union Housing Group

#### Sector

Social Housing

#### Size

12,000 homes

#### Website

<https://www.guhg.co.uk/>

#### Employees

800 employees

#### About

Grand Union Housing Group owns and manages around 12,000 social housing properties for more than 27,000 people across Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire.

## The Challenge

Grand Union Housing Group is determined to stay out in front on its digital transformation journey, using the very latest technology to improve customer experience.

The Group's digital channel shift had improved efficiency and customer service, with an Enghouse omni-channel integrated contact centre enabling customers to communicate by phone, online or social media.

Grand Union wanted to push its digital transformation further and working with FourNet and converse360, Grand Union wanted to deploy a personalised chatbot/Virtual Assistant, who was able to handle everything from rent balances to repair appointments, leaving agents more time for complex queries.

Grand Union needed it to be able to integrate seamlessly with all their applications including their Capita Housing management system.

## The Project Aims

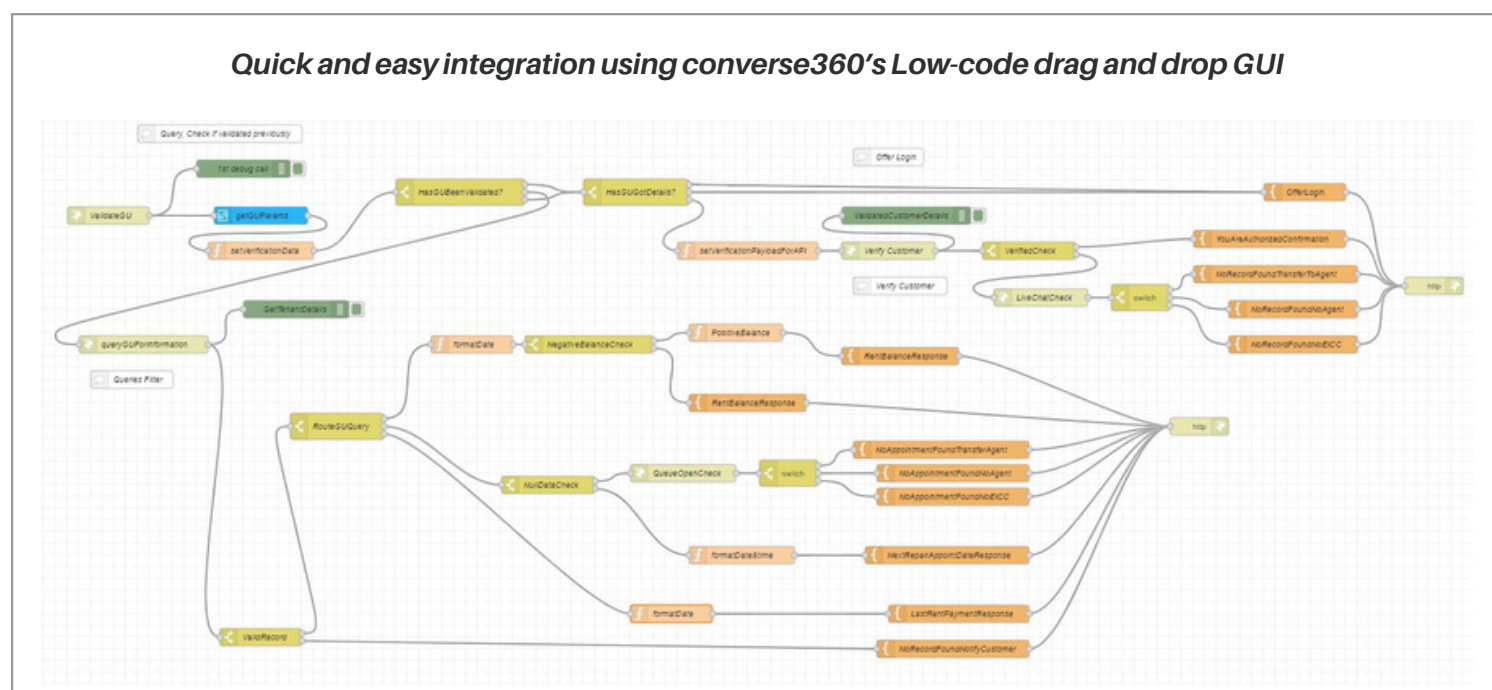
Grand Union Housing Group receives thousands of incoming voice calls, webchat and email enquiries every month, with the number of interactions continually increasing so they wanted to:

- Offer automated AI responses to customer that went beyond standard FAQs
- Utilise existing customer data to provide a personalised experience
- Migrate more customers to digital channels
- Be more responsive and automate web interactions where possible
- Offer improved first contact resolution
- Streamline processes and increase efficiency

The converse360 Service Automation platform provides all the functionality to offer a greatly enhanced Virtual Assistant that integrates to all applications and intelligently responds to customer enquiries no matter what information they need. The Virtual Assistant utilises AI technology and Machine Learning to understand conversations in whichever way a customer may phrase their enquiry and responds in a dynamic, interactive and conversational way. Grand Union Housing Group had recently started a project to build an Azure Data-Lake. The Data-Lake was to become a central point for data to be captured from their applications and other sources, and to provide a universal way for Grand Union Housing Group and their partners to consume the data. converse360 worked in collaboration with Grand Union to scope the API's required, the authentication methodology and to build the connectivity between systems.

## The Solution

A workflow can easily be designed to ask customers for personal information that can verify who they are and then request the information they require or update systems with new information provided. Should Grand Union want to offer customers a new service they can simply drag a new component onto the canvas and point to the relevant field in their Azure data-lake and publish within minutes.

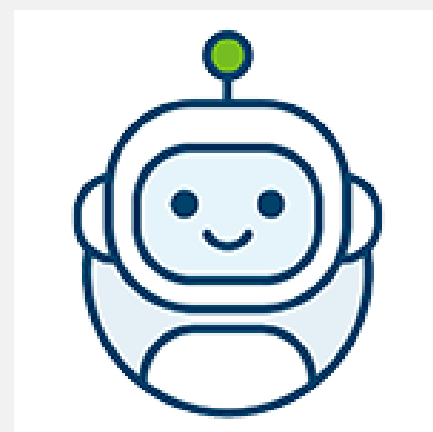
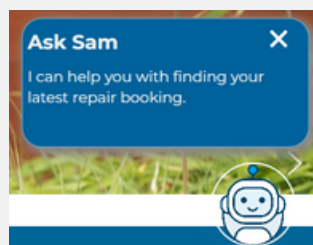
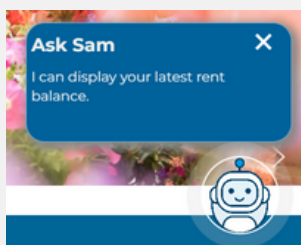
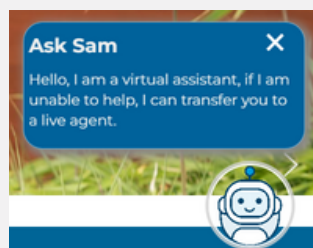


converse360's platform answers questions across numerous housing topics whilst also connecting to the applications to provide rent balance, last payment received, dates/times of repairs scheduled and info such as gas service dates.

With the data export function every interaction and conversation can also be pushed into the data lake allowing all data from multiple systems to be processed and analysed by Grand Union Housing Group as required.

## The Solution

converse360's Assist-Me Service Automation Platform Chatbot/Virtual Assistant was developed with Grand Union Housing Group branding and a unique avatar for the Virtual Assistant called Sam. Grand Union used a mixture of converse360 templates and their own FAQ's to train the system to answer the most frequent questions and closely monitored the system over the initial weeks to review additions required.



## The Benefits

- 24/7 Webchat for handling customer queries at customers convenience
- Integration to Enghouse omni-channel contact centre
- Seamless hand-off from automated to assisted service
- Replicates agent activities by looking up data in the housing applications
- Triaging of enquiries reduces agent chat handling time with more capacity for complex queries



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*The digital transformation we have undergone as a housing association has brought us closer to our customers and to the way in which they currently use technology through mobile phones, laptops and social media. This digital channel shift means that we offer an improved service to our customers via all the modern channels of communication, allowing them access 24 hours a day, seven days a week to a whole range of service enquiries, through all our systems ... we have moved away from disparate, separate legacy telephone systems to a fully centralised, single system including pioneering chatbot, where 66% of all our inward contacts both starts and finishes through digital channels.*

**Simon Penaluna, IT Director, Grand Union Housing Group**



## The Results

**30%** 

reduction in calls handled by live agents

**12%** 

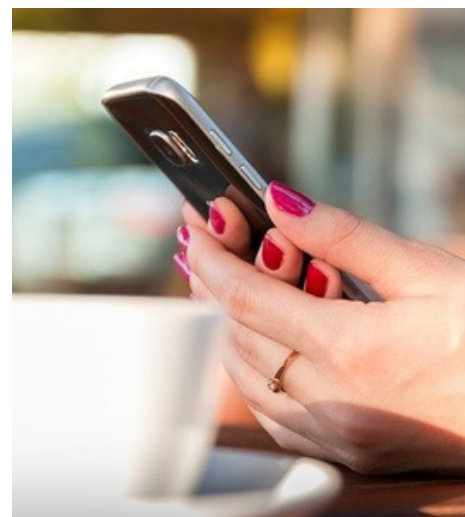
increase in time spent by live agents on complex issues

**66%** 

increase in enquiries through digital channels

**1m 15s**

average chat time with virtual assistant



## Areas of Support



- Repairs and maintenance (house & garden) information
- Tenancy
- Rent & payment enquiries
- Property information
- Adaptations & Improvements

- Pets & pests
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Complaints
- Fly tipping
- Building insurance

- Allocations
- Right to buy
- Opening times
- Telephone numbers
- Office address

## Leading-Edge Technology

The Grand Union Housing Group digital transformation project with Fournet and converse360 was shortlisted in the Best Digital Transformation category of the Housing Digital Innovation Awards 2022.

## Why Work With converse360

converse360 specialise in customer service automation and have a long track record working in the social housing sector. converse360 offers proven integrations into housing applications, contact centres and UC systems.

## About converse360

converse360 helps businesses deliver a first-class, always-on service to today's connected customer. Providing powerful self-service and automation technology to instantly engage and serve customers 24/7 through Intelligent Virtual Assistants, Speech Assistants, Chatbots and Digital Humans. Connectors provide seamless interoperability with business applications, Contact Centre and UC systems.