

# Council responds swiftly to pandemic by fast-tracking launch of cloud contact centre.

Sefton Council 

sefton.gov.uk



## Industry

Local government



## Headquarters

Merseyside, England



## 8x8 Products:

8x8 Contact Centre and Secure Pay



## Primary Reason Chose 8x8:

Fully-featured, cloud-based solution that could be delivered at speed

## Highlight Metrics

- Cloud contact centre goes live in less than 10 days
- 40 work-from-home contact centre agents begin taking calls, followed by secure payments, web chat and emails

Sefton Council employs over 3,000 staff and provides essential services to 275,000 citizens across its metropolitan borough of Sefton in Merseyside, north-western England.

## The challenge: Reacting quickly to maintain vital services

The local authority was planning to replace its ageing contact centre platform. But the sudden arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic made this an imperative. The Council had to act swiftly to enable more staff to work from home while maintaining vital services to local people.

Priorities shifted overnight. "I remember arriving at 7 am to an email that said we needed to create a virtual contact centre, immediately," recalls the Council's Procurement Manager, James Aldred.

Within hours, the Council assessed the market, found the right solution and got a deal together which fully met its commercial and service requirements. Sefton Council was on its way to delivering one of the fastest IT projects of its type ever seen in local government.

## The solution: Taking advantage of new G-Cloud rules

Following expert advice from its trusted ICT and helpdesk partner, Agilisys, the Council discovered the cloud-based omnichannel Contact Centre from 8x8.

"Moving to this technology meant we could get our team working from home taking calls right away, with chat, email and secure payment capabilities to follow," explains Mark Quillan, Customer Service Manager.

The Council took full advantage of the flexibility offered by the Crown Commercial Service's G-Cloud procurement framework. This provides a catalogue of thousands of cloud-based solutions, allowing public sector agencies to fast-track purchasing.

A contract was agreed within just 48 hours – and less than 10 days later, the cloud contact centre went 'live'. A process that would have typically taken 3 months in the public sector arena.

## The results: Getting home-workers set up quickly

The Council acted with vision and drive to find effective answers in the face of the emergency – and 8x8 proved to be the ideal partner.

The 8x8 team was experienced with the G-Cloud process and how to implement quickly and effectively. In fact, they were already working closely with 5 other public agencies.

Soon, 40 work-from-home contact centre agents began taking and making calls, so Council services could continue seamlessly and, importantly, the team were able to continue to support people who were shielding.

**“COVID-19 has created huge challenges for the public sector. But it’s also presented a moment to rethink and transform specific services. The ‘new normal’ calls for extra safety, greater agility and enhanced services for citizens – which we’ve achieved with 8x8”**

**Paulette Lappin**, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.

The Sefton team has adapted to the 8x8 solution and working remotely very well. Each agent's identity and personal details are protected. Calls are managed via 22 queues and are routed to the team members that specialise in each topic.

Supervisors can now easily access extra functionality, such as being able to change the IVR, workflows and call routing options, as the Council's hours and recorded greetings have changed frequently during the pandemic.

Previously, they would need to engage IT for even simple or standard changes due to system inflexibility.

## Transforming experiences for the long term

Just weeks later, the second phase of deployment began – revealing the true power of the 8x8 cloud contact centre platform.

Soon, home-working staff will be able to take secure card payments from citizens using 8x8 Secure Pay, as the contact centre becomes PCI compliant. As well as the addition of chat and email, enabling cross-channel communication with complete visibility and tracking of the customer experience.

With 8x8, Sefton Council isn't just responding to COVID-19 – it's transforming communications to increase first-time contact resolution and give its citizens the best-possible experience.

“We’ve got a robust and reliable contact centre platform with 8x8,” comments Quillan. “8x8 was responsive and focused on us as a customer and our outcome. They did all they could to make this a positive experience for us – and we achieved our objectives exceptionally quick.”

For more information, call **0333 043 888** or visit **[8x8.com/uk](https://www.8x8.com/uk)**

**8x8**

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