

home
group

Reducing the pressure on Live Chat & Live Agents

**Customer
Service
AI Assistant**



Customer

Home Group

Sector

Social Housing

Size

56,000 Homes

Website

www.homegroup.org.uk

Employees

3,500 employees

About

As a social enterprise, Home Group supports some of the most vulnerable people in society, including those with mental and physical health issues. For over 80 years, they have been on a mission to build homes, independence, and aspirations for their customers - and areas determined today as when they started.

The Challenge

Home Group is one of the UK's largest, and most established providers of housing, health, and care. Supporting over 125,000 customers across 56,000 homes throughout England and Scotland means that there are thousands of customer enquiries and interactions to manage every day.

Home Group has a core focus on satisfaction and the customer experience strategy is based around a 'customer promise', a set of guiding principles created in conjunction with almost 300 customers which sets a benchmark against which performance is measured.

The digital team was tasked with improving its online access, enhancing self-service options and using automation where possible to provide instant enquiry resolution.

With around 60% of enquiries still being made by phone to the customer support centre, Home Group wanted to enhance the digital services and encourage adoption by answering routine enquiries better and faster. The agents working in the support centre then have more time to focus on more complex and sensitive enquiries.

Delivering great service is a priority at Home Group, and ensuring that it is as easy as possible for tenants to get their queries answered is a key part of the 'customer promise'.

The Project Aims

Home Group receives large volumes of incoming voice calls, webchats and email enquiries every month, and with a focus on reducing the number of calls being routed to it's human agents the Home Group team aimed to:

- Expand access to customer services 24/7 across digital channels
- Improve responsiveness to enquiries using automation where possible
- Offer first contact resolution
- Save time for human agents by identifying and verifying customers digitally
- Reduce repetitive and monotonous enquiries for customer advisors - giving them more time to focus on more complex enquiries and to check on vulnerable customers.

The Approach

Home Group worked closely with converse360 to design and create an AI Assistant which would understand and respond to its customers most 'frequently asked questions', to triage requests, and to guide customers. For complex enquiries it offers a seamless transfer to human advisers using an Enghouse Contact Centre.

With years of experience working with Housing Associations converse360 was able to share insights which helped the project to run smoothly. For example, by providing 'out of the box' components, including domain specific FAQs, and workflow templates; which could be easily edited to reflect the specific needs of Home Group customers.



Repairs



Reporting Anti-social behaviour



Finding a home



Damp and mould



Payments and rent



Checking contact details

Common FAQ topics



We found the knowledge converse360 had around delivering solutions for housing associations invaluable. The implementation of Homebot is one of several steps in our digital transformation for elevating customer experience

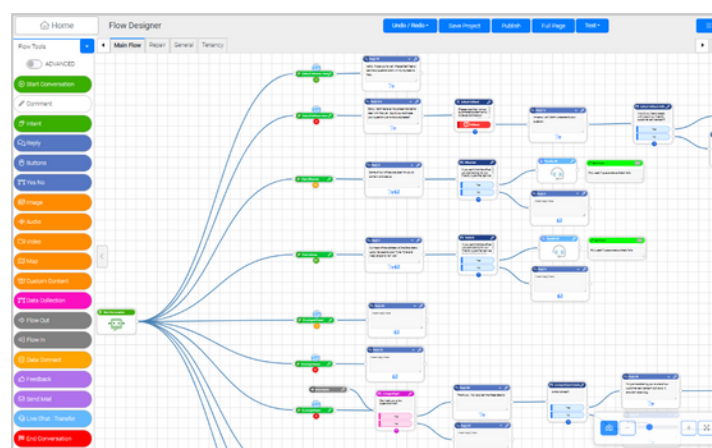
-- Home Group

The Assist-Me™ platform has been designed with ease of use in mind, and Home Group is able to build, edit and customise responses and workflows with just a few clicks. The no-code flow builder enables drag and drop functionality to add actions without the need for a developer.

Initial conversation workflows were provided to Home Group as templates. The ready-made flows are part of converse360's **Housing Accelerator Pack** and are based on thousands of real customer conversations. The templates cover the main FAQ topics, and provided a fast-start to the team who could then simply edit or tailor the actions or information to be more unique to Home Group.

Throughout the project Home Group and converse360 worked closely to ensure that they were meeting the project goals, and to ensure that there was scope to develop the service when business objectives change. The team continues to meet regularly to review what is working well and check on any fine tuning.

From the outset it was important to Home Group that they would be able manage the system, edit workflows and update information in-house. Therefore the solution needed to be user friendly, without the need for ongoing technical support.



No-Code Workflow Creation



Assist-Me's inbuilt Management dashboard (for illustration purposes only)

Monitoring inbound enquiries and reporting are also important to Home Group, and Assist-Me™ dashboards enable the customer service team to keep a close eye on performance.

Visibility on all feedback helps the team to take a proactive approach when it comes to improving the service.

Introducing Homebot

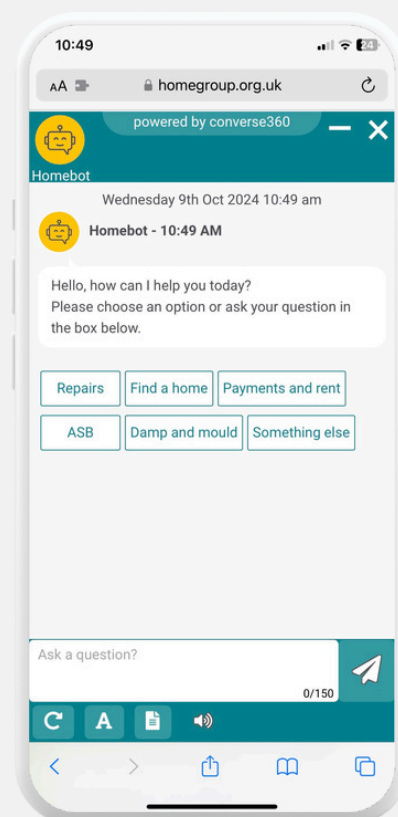
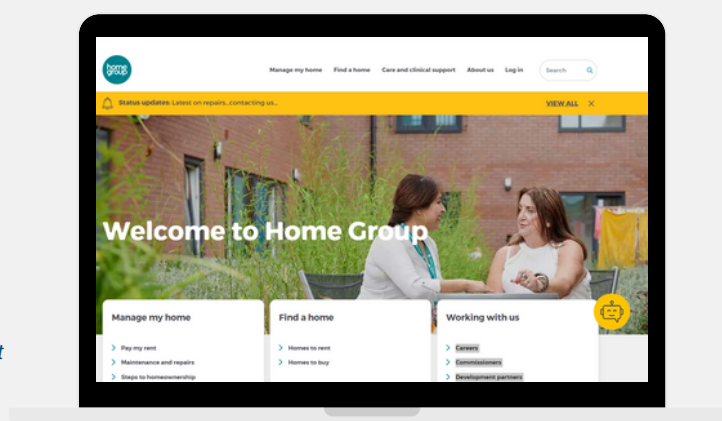
Using converse360's Assist-Me™ Service Automation Platform Home Group was able to create and launch a unique AI Assistant named 'Homebot' which is available as a messaging service providing 24/7 customer service.

Homebot provides answers, signposts to information, or transfers customers directly to a customer service agent if the question cannot be resolved. Homebot was enabled using a wide range of housing knowledge provided by converse360, and with regular fine-tuning is now able to recognise and provide responses for up to **96% of all inbound enquiries**.

Homebot's design met the brief to provide an easy to use, intuitive service that customers would enjoy engaging with. Homebot is fully aligned with the Home Group brand and looks completely 'at home' on their website.



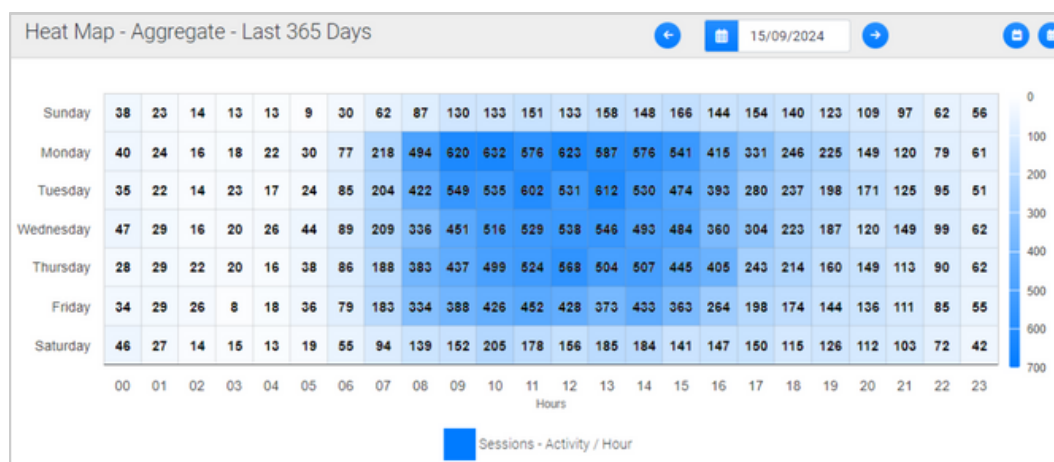
Homebot chat icon, website and mobile messaging client



Using Conversational AI

Assist-Me™ uses conversational AI to understand customers questions, including different phrases and local terms; Homebot responds in real-time using a natural, interactive, and conversational style.

The platform manages and governs the conversational AI, with inbuilt guardrails ensuring that any output from Homebot is appropriate and that conversations remain in context.



A heatmap provides insight into the number of chat sessions Homebot handles and highlights the busy times each day. It also displays other key metrics to help manage enquiries more efficiently.



As soon as the chatbot was introduced we experienced a significant reduction in the number of interactions with live agents. This has allowed our agents to focus their time on the more complex enquiries

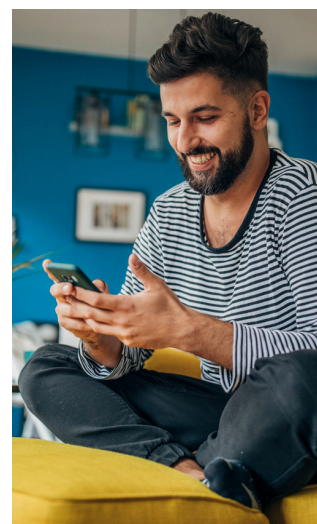
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Since going live Homebot has helped Home Group to achieve some impressive outcomes. Including a 60-70% reduction in the number of sessions being routed through to its customer contact centre from its website.

Homebot is also helping to reduce the average call length by up to 45 seconds with customer ID&V carried out digitally, with transcripts provided to the customer service advisor to save them asking repeat questions.

Providing automation for most routine customer enquiries has freed up hours per month of customer service time, which can now be spent helping the most vulnerable customers.

However, the most important feedback has been from Home Group customers themselves, who have praised the Homebot service for its convenience and usefulness. When asked for their feedback, customers particularly appreciated that if Homebot is unable to assist then it efficiently hands-off to a customer service agent without them needing to repeat themselves.



Project Results So Far...

2,600 

Average no of enquiries successfully resolved per month

> 3,700 

Typical number of chat sessions handled per month

70% 

reduction in the number of chat sessions being transferred to live agents

45s 

average time saved with customer ID&V by Homebot if transfer required

Next Steps for Home Group

Home Group is dedicated to improving the customer experience and maintaining strong relationships with their customers.

Looking ahead, Home Group also plans to test language translation and the new Generative AI features of Assist-Me.

Why Work With converse360

converse360 specialises in AI and Automation and have helped numerous clients in the social housing sector to launch and run successful customer experience projects.

The Assist-Me™ platform integrates with popular housing applications, contact centres and UC systems.

About converse360

converse360 helps businesses deliver a first-class, always-on service to today's connected customer. We provide 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.