

Carer's UK



Over 18 months ago, Carers UK developed an idea to launch a project to reach carers without internet access. As part of its development they partnered with Focus Group, who collaborated with Telecoms World to develop a custom-designed IVR and phone service to support unpaid carers nationwide.

About Carers UK

Carers UK have a clear mission to improve the lives of unpaid carers right across the UK. Providing information and support whilst helping carers connect with each other, Carers UK are always on hand to help.

The project

Every year, 4.3 million people become unpaid carers. That's 12,000 people a day. Often these people do not recognise themselves as being carers. 61% of carers are uncertain about what practical support they can access, with some not having access to the internet, smart mobile devices or social support. The solution's aim was to reach these people.

The charity identified an innovative approach so carers without an internet connection could still access their support resources and services. With a plan in place, in-house scripts produced, and the flow of how they wanted to deliver the service developed, they then looked to partner with a company with the right experience in the industry to help make their plans a reality. That's where we stepped in. We love the work Carers UK provides and wanted nothing more than to deliver a service that would heighten their already exceptional communication efforts.

Carers UK knew they wanted to deliver something different. Their plan was for an automated system to deliver on-demand advice via telephony, driven by keypress on a handset. They knew that as well as this being accessible, it also needed to be free of charge to the end user, with carers facing enough financial pressures already. The last requirement was that it had to be modular, being able to grow and adapt as new audio resources were put online.

Focus Group proposed a completely bespoke and advanced Interactive Voice Response (IVR) audio solution attached to a freephone number. This would enable unpaid carers to contact Carers UK through a simple dialling system and find the right answers to their questions through an innovative information service tailored to their needs.



 **carersuk**
making life better for carers

The solution

Our custom-designed IVR system allows carers to dial into the Carers UK service, select specific departments or topics, and navigate through audio recordings using DTMF keys on their dial pad.

Key features include:

Scalability: The solution was designed to scale up significantly, expanding to accommodate a growing user base

Customisation: Unique modules were created, ensuring the service could be tailored to meet diverse needs

Accessibility: The service is offered through a freephone number, making it accessible to all carers without incurring charges

Easy to use: Carers can navigate the menus seamlessly and replay audio at any point to ensure they're getting all the information they need

Carers UK provided scripts for the service, along with audio recordings and a map of how they envisaged each subject to 'flow' through the system. Our team and collaborators, Telecoms World, then worked with them to convert these audio recordings and information flow into system scripts using market-leading AI voice technology, turning the ideas into a reality, resulting in a fully functioning, easy-to-use bespoke platform.

Through the hard work of tech experts and a strong collaborative effort across ours and the Carers UK team, Focus Group created an intricate flow of communication, one that makes financial, practical and well-being support information readily and easily available from a single number, without the need for an internet connection.

The result

Through this bespoke IVR solution, unpaid carers across the UK can now quickly and easily access vital information - across a wide range of topics - simply by calling a freephone number, ensuring they receive relevant and timely information. Plus, the solution's flexibility allows for ongoing adjustments, meaning even better services for carers and their valued needs.

With an estimated 5.7 million carers in the UK, and around 10% potentially lacking any access to online support resources, this solution targets a critical segment of the carer population. By leveraging advanced technology and a user-centric approach, Carers UK now has a scalable, customisable, and highly accessible service that puts the people on the phone line first.

This initiative not only enhances communication and support for carers but also demonstrates the potential of innovative solutions to address complex challenges in the social care sector.

“Working with Focus on this project has been a really positive experience. Focus works with real attention to detail, and their genuine commitment to getting this service up and running to help those who need it is fantastic. Thank you, Focus Group.”

Geoff Taylor, Senior Technology Officer