

# Case Study

## Chichester District Council use TellJO to **digitally identify and engage vulnerable residents** for their **Supporting You** campaign

- Chichester District Council serves a rural population of 124,000.
- The Council had traditionally worked in a silo approach.
- New multi-disciplinary team established to help residents with cost-of-living pressures.
- TellJO used to digitally identify and engage vulnerable residents, creating a warm referral to the Supporting You team.

### Chichester District Council

With a population of around 124,000, Chichester District Council is a large rural district that includes Petworth, Midhurst, and Chichester. The council have faced a higher-than-average growth for England and the Southeast, with an increase of 20.8% in people aged 65 years and over.

### The **cost-of-living** crisis

Since 2011, the district's Population had grown significantly, with a high proportion of people aged 65 years or older. The Council had a much higher percentage of benefits cases at pension age than the national average; their residents experiencing vulnerability were as likely to be working as they were retired.

Many benefits cases had historical debt and complex issues. Coming out of covid, the Benefits team became increasingly concerned how the cost-of-living pressures would affect their growing number of vulnerable residents. A cross functional team was established to take a proactive approach towards prevention.

## The **cost of business-as-usual.** Making prevention pay

Across the South of England, many Councils are fighting a losing battle with homelessness. In the year to March 2022, Chichester council spent a total of £791,000 on temporary homeless housing, up significantly from £470,000 the year before.

Across England, an estimated £1.6 billion was used by local authorities towards short-term accommodation for people facing homelessness in 2021-22 – up 5% from the previous year and a 62% real-terms increase from five years ago.

## Supporting You

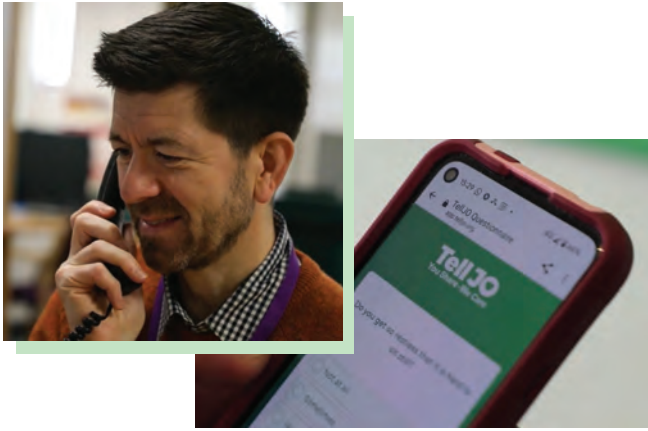
Supporting You is a two-year in-house project to help Chichester's residents with cost-of-living pressures. It is operated by a five-person multi-disciplinary team that launched in November 2023.

As Marlene Rogers, Chichester District Council's Benefits and Systems Support Manager explained, *"The Supporting You team are really important to helping prevent our vulnerable residents from facing a crisis. As a Council we can't afford to be reactive. If you don't deal with this early, it becomes much more expensive. Homelessness at crisis point is very difficult and incredibly expensive."*



## Having a **Multi-functional Multi Skilled Team** is critical for prevention

The team cover a wide area including advice on finances, household bills, housing, health and wellbeing, plus help for businesses. They take in-bound calls from residents who have seen the Supporting You team promoted on the Council's home page, with links that takes residents to a Supporting You page full of advice, videos and tips to help with the cost-of-living pressures.



They make out-bound calls to residents who have disclosed vulnerability via their personalised TellJO digital wellbeing assessment and have been referred directly into the Supporting You team. The Team have adapted TellJO's 'How do you feel survey' so that they can record the customer's feedback before following up with them a month later to ensure that discounts are in place.

The project management of the service dictates that success must be measured by actual outcomes.










**Dominic Maxwell** Founder of **TellJO** says:

*"It's relatively easy to get vulnerability disclosure digitally, but the critical part of the process is turning that knowledge into **positive outcomes for the residents**"*

## Supporting You Campaign

Many people are finding things tough at the moment due to current cost of living pressures. We have launched a new 'Supporting You' campaign to highlight the range of help that you can access. Find out more about the support that's available to you.

-  **Supporting You Team**  
The council now has a dedicated Supporting You Team. Their role is to help people access a wide range of help.
-  **Benefits & budgeting calculator**  
Free benefits and budgeting calculator.
-  **Help with finances**  
Including help to meet rent payments and bills, as well as debt advice.
-  **Help with household bills**  
Tips on saving energy and help paying energy, water and food bills.
-  **Help with housing**  
Support to help meet housing costs, and the different housing options.
-  **Help with health and wellbeing**  
How Chichester Wellbeing can support your mental and physical wellbeing.
-  **Help for businesses**  
Highlighting the support available for local businesses and entrepreneurs.

With access to council systems, Supporting You can do background checks before the call such as checking benefit claims, reading council tax records and general notes. Many customers don't claim for universal credit, even though they should, so having council information is beneficial. The team can agree to council tax repayment plans and provide housing advice, if for example, customers are unhappy with their landlord.

## TellJO. Supporting the **Supporting You team**

By using TellJO, Chichester District Council were able to achieve specific strategic objectives whilst realising significant benefits:

### OBJECTIVE

- Engage instantly and at scale with all residents demonstrating signs of distress.
- Engage digitally with vulnerable residents.
- Help identify and support residents who were choosing between 'heating or eating'.
- Provide soft signposting to external support services such as Samaritans and Refuge.
- Create a unique personalised consent-based vulnerability profile for each resident.
- Capture resident voice.

### BENEFIT

- ✓ No wait time or backlog to reach out to vulnerable residents.
- ✓ Residents respond instantly and are much more likely to disclose vulnerability digitally.
- ✓ CDC can match grants with TellJO's specific preidentified vulnerabilities, saving officer time identifying potential customers.
- ✓ Enabling residents to self-help digitally saving officer time.
- ✓ Saving time; Officers are not required to do a fact find exercise with residents.
- ✓ Officers understands anecdotally how the resident is feeling and can support the resident with their immediate problems.



**Marlene Rogers**

Benefits and Systems  
Support Manager  
Chichester District Council

*"TellJO is **excellent at catching vulnerable people** early on. It feeds **vital information** to our cross-functional team who can be proactive and work across our departments **to help them.**"*