



How One Government Agency Used Data to Transform a Complex Legal Service

Learn how data was the tool used to transform the service levels of a government agency that was swamped with hugely complex tasks and a lack of true service demands.





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Delivering Service Excellence through Data, People and Planning. Not Technology

A major UK government organisation plays a vital role in supporting citizens through some of life's most sensitive events, each year, managing hundreds of thousands of applications and enquiries, ensuring critical legal processes are handled fairly, accurately and with care.

The organisation's national service centre handles both complex casework and high-volume contact-centre operations. As demand grew and cases became more complex, the teams struggled to see what was really happening across the end-to-end journey. Leaders knew they had data in case-management platforms, contact-centre systems and spreadsheets, but not insight they could trust.

Building on an existing relationship, the agency turned to FourNet to help them unlock this data, redesign the way work flowed between front-office and back-office teams, and improve the experience for citizens and colleagues alike.



“ ”
For the first time we can see, in one place, which cases really need our attention and who is best placed to work them. It's changed how we plan every day.
Project Lead, Government Agency



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Performance at a Glance

Before:

+20 mins

Citizens could spend over 20 minutes engaged with the contact centre (waiting, talking and on hold) for a single enquiry.

High rate

Average abandonment rates were high, with many callers hanging up before they were answered.

28

Case durations were reported as around 28 weeks end-to-end, but leaders had no view of how much of that time was actually within their control.

After:

42%

Reduction in customer engagement time, from roughly 1,400 seconds to 795 seconds per call, by planning telephony properly and killing the morning queue.

60%

Around 60% reduction in call abandonment, despite reducing overall hours on the phones.

8

Discovery that, on average, only about 8 weeks of the reported total 28-week journey were active working time; the rest was time waiting on citizens or other parties.

Before:

- Work was **allocated largely at random**; specialists often spent time on simple tasks while complex, exceptional cases bounced around the system.
- Senior **leaders had limited evidence** to brief their department head when MPs, the media or stakeholders challenged performance.

After:

- A new **work-allocation tool** giving leaders and experts a **daily, prioritised list of cases** – by skill, SLA and risk – for the first time since the case-management system was introduced.
- The department head can now respond to MP letters, parliamentary questions and media scrutiny with **clear, defensible evidence** of what sits inside and outside the service's control.

*All data taken from Teams Voice Project End of Project survey (mix of IT support Staff and End-Users i.e., Call-Queue Owners)



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Making a Complex Process Visible

Unlike more linear services, this department deals with highly variable, often emotionally charged cases with multiple dependencies:

- Around 70–80% of cases are simple, one-touch applications.
- The remaining 20–30% are highly complex, involving foreign jurisdictions, contested documents or unusual legal arrangements – but they account for the majority of the workload.

The agency used a case-management platform that had been in place for several years. While it captured every event in the life of a case, the data was effectively unusable for operations.

Teams saw only large queues with limited categorisation and no distinction between:

<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">1</h1> <p>Cases that were in service and actively being worked</p>	<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">2</h1> <p>Cases that were stopped because the citizen or another body needed to act</p>	<h1 style="font-size: 48px; margin: 0;">3</h1> <p>Tasks that required particular skills, such as foreign or resale work.</p>
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Operational decisions were made on gut feel and incomplete spreadsheets. Leaders could quote the overall "weeks to completion" number, but they couldn't tell MPs or citizens how much of that time reflected work done by the service, or where the true bottlenecks lay.





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Understanding the Real Journey

FourNet's first step was to rebuild the journey from the data up.

Working with event-level data from the case-management system, FourNet engineers wrote Python logic to transform millions of raw data points into a clean, reportable dataset that showed:

- 1 **When each case started and when it truly finished**
- 2 **Each time it was stopped, why, and for how long**
- 3 **Which periods were within the agency's control and which were waiting on the citizen or third parties**
- 4 **How many touchpoints and stops different case types typically required.**

This analysis revealed that while cases were reported externally as taking around 28 weeks, the average active working time under the team's control was closer to 60 days. The rest of the elapsed time was largely due to pauses while citizens supplied documents, responded to queries or corrected issues with wills and supporting paperwork.

For the first time, leaders could have an honest conversation about performance: what they owned, what they didn't, and where process changes or better communications might reduce avoidable delay. Just as importantly, it gave the department head a single, evidence-based narrative to use in MP briefings, select committee sessions and media lines – reducing the risk of the service taking the blame for delays it did not control.





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Turning Data into a Work-Allocation Engine

With a trustworthy dataset in place, FourNet and the agency co-designed reporting that was immediately useful to teams on the ground.

A new work-allocation tool now:

- Lists every case that can be worked today, grouped by skill, work type and SLA.
- Shows whether each case is in service or out of service, and what needs to happen to bring it back into flow.
- Flags older, high-risk or high-complexity cases so they don't get buried under new, simple work.

This enables what one senior leader described as "effective demarcation of skills and work" – ensuring that:

- Specialists focus on complex or contested cases that only they can handle.
- Generalist staff work the high-volume, straightforward applications.
- Certain cases are automatically routed to specialist registries when they require higher legal expertise.

The tool doesn't replace human judgment; **it gives leaders and experts the information they need to decide what to work first, every day.**





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Optimising Telephony and "Killing the Spin"

The contact centre operates Monday to Friday, but phone lines are only open for a four-hour window each day. This created an intense spike in demand at opening time, as citizens tried to call about sensitive, often urgent matters before the lines closed at 1pm.

Before the project:

- There were not enough agents on duty in the first 30 minutes of the day.
- A large queue formed immediately and sat there all morning, with some callers waiting over an hour to be answered.
- Many of those calls were "spin" – citizens chasing progress because they hadn't heard back on their case.

FourNet used historic dialling patterns and contact-centre MI to build a simple but robust plan:

- Increase staffing in the first 30 minutes of opening to prevent the queue from forming in the first place.
- Reduce staffing later in the session once demand tapered off.
- Focus on customer engagement time (wait + talk + hold) rather than traditional metrics that ignore wrap-up.

The Result:

1

Customer engagement time **fell by 42%**, from around **1,400 seconds to 795 seconds** per call.

2

Abandonment rates **dropped by around 60%**.

3

Total hours spent on the phones **reduced**, as the team no longer carried an all-day queue.

Citizens now either get through quickly or, if they call during the peak, wait a far shorter time. Agents have breathing space between calls instead of working through a permanent backlog.





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Measurable and Sustainable Results

Across front-office and back-office operations, the joint team delivered significant, measurable outcomes:

1

42% reduction in citizen engagement time per call, with fewer repeat contacts.

2

Around 60% drop in call abandonment, achieved with fewer total staffing hours.

3

New transparency on case journeys, showing which parts of the 28-week window the agency can control and which are external delays.

4

Data-driven allocation of complex work, so that experts handle the 20–30% of cases that generate most of the workload, while straightforward cases flow through quickly.

5

Stronger public accountability, with clear evidence to support ministerial briefings, responses to MP letters and accurate media lines when performance is questioned.

6

A reusable analytics pattern that can be applied to other services using the same case-management platform.

These improvements were delivered **without replacing core systems** – instead, by making much better use of the data those systems already contained.

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The Impact for Citizens and Colleagues

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For citizens:

- Shorter waits on the phone and fewer abandoned calls mean distressing queries are resolved more quickly.
- Clearer internal visibility of which cases are truly in progress, paused or at risk supports fairer, more consistent service – especially for complex or vulnerable situations.

For colleagues:

- Agents no longer face a permanent queue; natural breaks between calls allow them to reset and prepare, improving wellbeing and quality of interaction.
- Specialists can focus on the work that genuinely requires their expertise instead of trawling through mixed queues.
- Team leaders have trusted dashboards and tools to manage performance proactively rather than firefighting.

For the wider department:

- Leaders can brief their DG and ministers with confidence, using robust data to explain where the service is performing well, where it needs support, and where external dependencies drive delay.
- When MPs or the press raise concerns, the organisation now has clear, transparent evidence to underpin its responses – reducing the likelihood of unfair headlines and helping maintain trust.





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FourNet's Impact

FourNet brought a blend of contact-centre operations, workforce planning and data-engineering expertise:

1

Turning unusable case-management data into a practical, governed dataset and dashboards.

2

Designing and implementing a work-allocation engine that bridges front-office and back-office activity.

3

Re-planning telephony to eliminate the morning queue while reducing overall staffing hours.

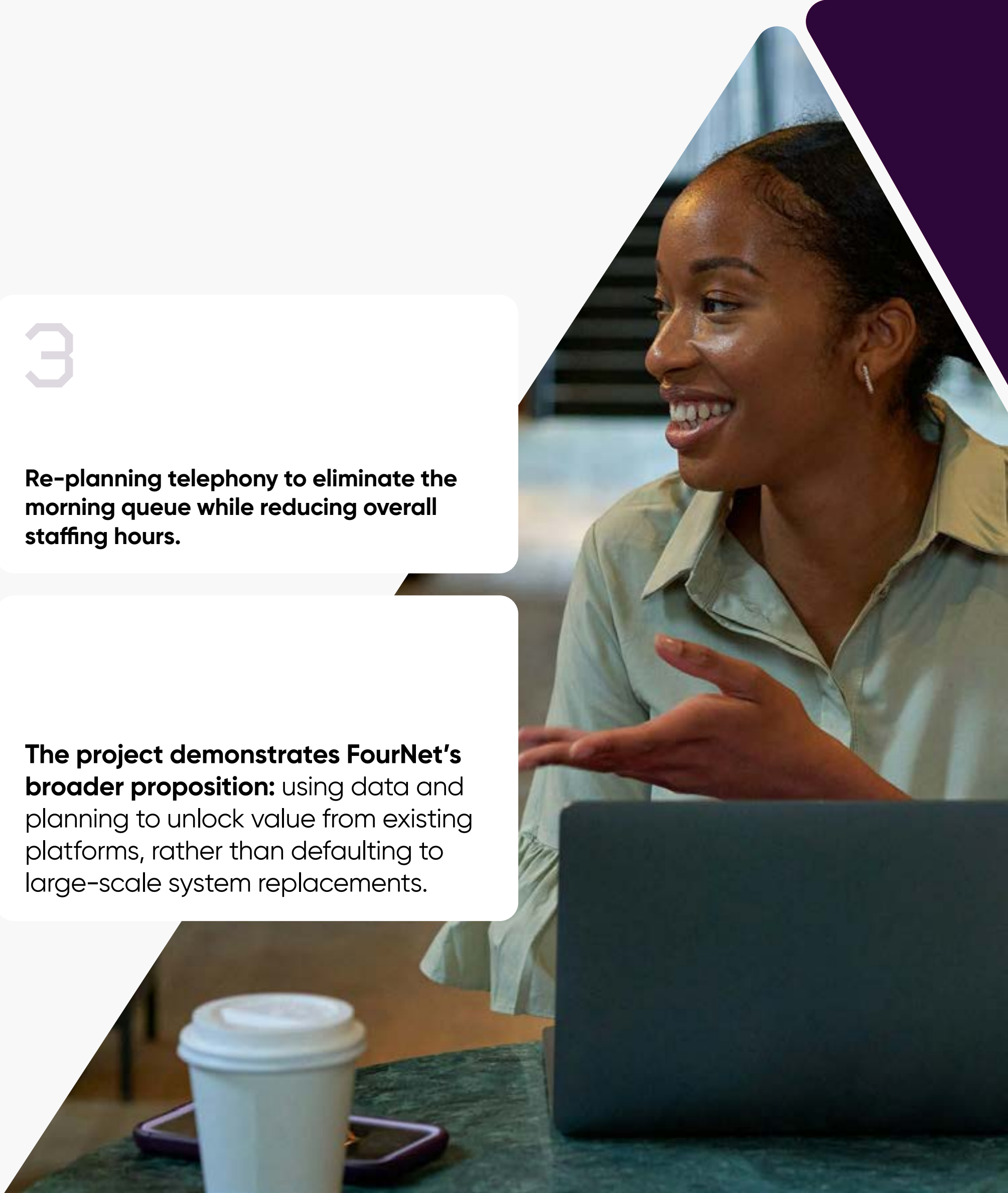
4

Coaching leaders and teams to use the new insight in daily stand-ups, huddles and performance reviews.

5

Helping senior leaders translate operational performance into clear narratives for parliamentary and public scrutiny.

The project demonstrates FourNet's broader proposition: using data and planning to unlock value from existing platforms, rather than defaulting to large-scale system replacements.





A Commitment to Continuous Improvement

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The agency now has:

- A repeatable pattern for turning complex operational data into decision-ready insight.
- Clarity on where further process or policy changes could reduce external delays.
- A stronger foundation for conversations with stakeholders, from ministers to citizens, about what performance really looks like.

Future work will focus on extending this approach to other services that share the same case-management platform, and on using the new insight to inform policy, staffing and digital-service design.

“ ”

We used to see 7,000 cases and a wall of numbers. Now we see what's in service, what's stopped, and who should pick up which case today. That's a different level of control – and it means we can stand up in front of MPs with the facts on our side.

Operations Manager, Government Agency



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