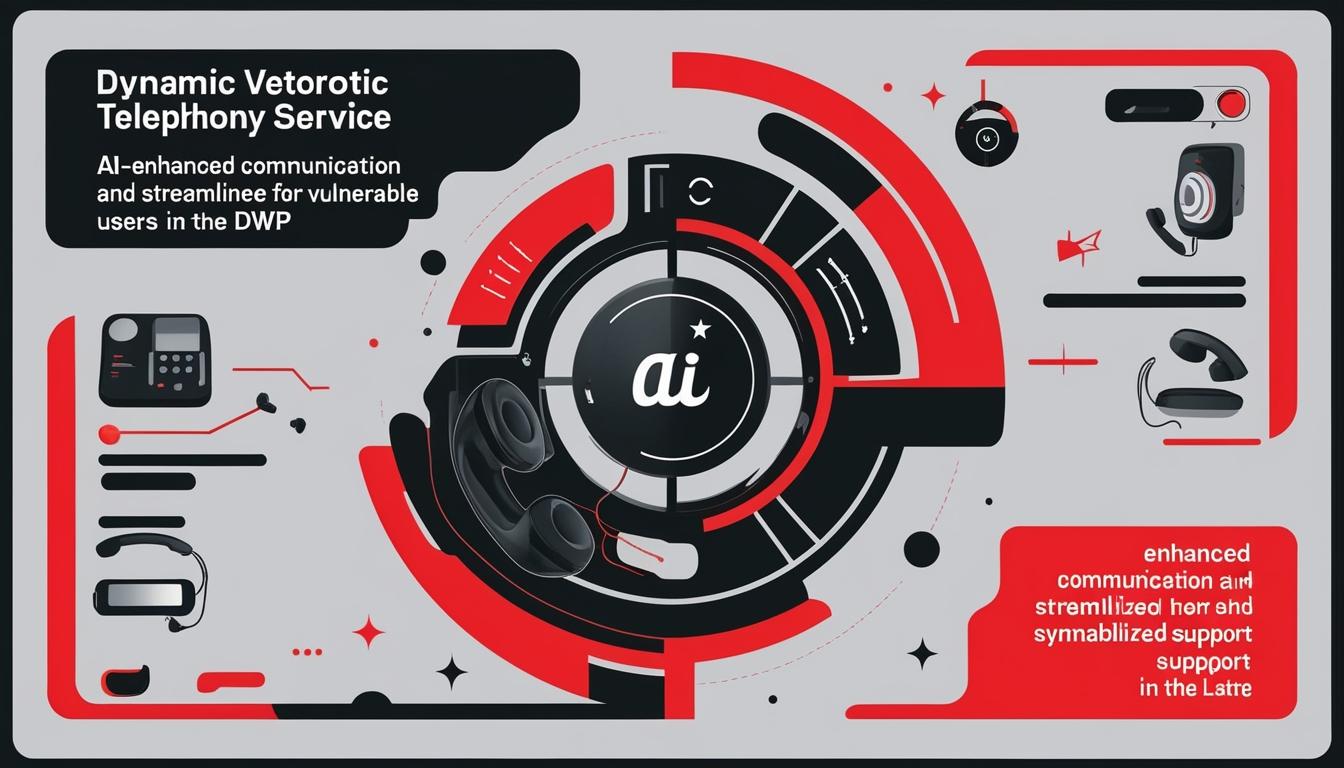
# DWP aims to enhance service delivery through automation and collaboration



The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is advancing its agenda to enhance service delivery through automation and improved technology, according to a recent statement from Sir Peter Schofield, the department's permanent secretary. In a letter addressed to members of the Public Accounts Committee, Schofield outlined plans aimed at refining how the department engages with its service users, particularly those deemed most vulnerable.

Central to these initiatives is the introduction of a “conversational platform,” designed to streamline the triage process for calls received by DWP helplines. Schofield detailed this platform's capabilities, stating, “It will modernise DWP’s telephony services using voice-led technology that can assimilate what a caller is telling us, routing their call to the team best-placed to support them.” This service is already operational in specific areas and is set to be expanded to more telephony lines shortly.

In addition to enhancing telephonic services, the DWP plans to further simplify user access to its offerings by leveraging technology. Schofield noted one innovative measure where customer inbound calls can be converted into text format, which will assist in identifying serious harm risks. This use of automation also extends to the processing of correspondence, with AI technology being employed to review the approximately 25,000 daily communications received by the DWP. "Artificial intelligence technology can allow us to digitally identify whether a customer may need support from what they have written and how they have written it," he added.

The department has also instituted an “assisted digital survey” aimed at auto-generating potential barriers faced by customers in their interactions with DWP services. Alongside these advancements, user feedback has become increasingly influential in shaping the design of Universal Credit and other services, providing insight into barriers and helping to tailor approaches to better meet user needs.

Furthermore, collaboration has been emphasised as a crucial component of the DWP’s strategy. The department is actively working with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to share best practices and enhance service delivery for customers through integrated digital service offerings.

Major initiatives mentioned by Schofield as part of the DWP's service upgrade framework include the Health Transformation Programme and the Service Modernisation Programme, both aimed at simplifying application processes and making services more accessible to customers with additional needs. Additionally, the department has committed to a £200 million investment into modernising contact centre operations over a seven-year span.

In recognition of the necessity for human interaction, the DWP is maintaining and improving non-digital channels for users who prefer to engage via phone, post, or in-person visits. Schofield highlighted an ongoing effort through the Customer Additional Needs framework to strengthen training and guidance for staff, ensuring that the diverse requirements of customers are addressed effectively.

To further enhance service options, the DWP is testing a more flexible Visiting Service to accommodate face-to-face interactions. Collaborations with the Ministry of Justice and Probation Services, particularly through Innovation Hubs, are being pursued to ensure that benefits are effectively integrated and delivered. Schofield concluded by underscoring the importance of a holistic approach to service provision, stating, “Working holistically with partners including the Salford Foundation, we can ensure DWP benefits are in place to prevent, in some cases, re-offending and help people get closer to work, secure housing and improve their lives."

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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