



# **VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS**

White paper

# UK financial services firm:



## Introduction

**Maximise your ability to treat ALL vulnerable customers fairly – by fully monitoring 100% of your contact centre calls**

The pandemic has led to a dramatic rise in the number of UK consumers showing signs of vulnerability.

This has resulted in new regulatory pressure on financial services firms to identify and respond appropriately to vulnerable customers whenever encountered.

Often, customers reveal telling characteristics of vulnerability during their conversations with insurance contact centres. But these aren't always noticed by the agents handling the calls.

What's more, conventional call monitoring and quality assurance processes fail to spot most of these important signals – **because most companies are only equipped to monitor 2% – 5% of their contact centre calls effectively.**

It's a classic case of the "tip of the iceberg".

Fortunately, there's a proven solution:

With Voyc, you can monitor **100% of calls through all your customer contact centres**, from sales to claims. This lets you alert your quality assurance team and contact centre managers, without delay, to calls indicating any form of customer vulnerability.

Additionally, Voyc saves valuable time – because it highlights the precise parts of a call that need to be assessed. This means that your team spends far less time on manual work and listening to recordings – and more time adding value through delivering better feedback, coaching and training your call handling agents.

And with Voyc, there's a range of tailored, user-friendly features to support your operations. These include critical keyword alerts (especially important in identifying vulnerable customers) as well as bespoke dashboards that give your management teams real-time, actionable insight into key trends and indicators in your customer communications.



## Monitoring customer vulnerability is now more important than ever

It's always been important for responsible insurance companies to consider and respond to vulnerability.

However, it goes without saying that the pandemic has had a profound impact on the UK population since the start of 2020.

And the stress and hardship has impacted many customers more than others.

In fact, the FCA's Financial Lives 2020 survey showed that in February 2020, 46% of UK adults (24.1 million people) had characteristics of vulnerability.

By October, the FCA's COVID-19 panel survey indicated that this had increased to 53%, with the increase of over 3 million people due to the pandemic and its effects [1]. And since then, the percentage will almost certainly have increased further.

As a result, the level of regulatory focus on vulnerability has significantly increased for financial services firms. According to the FCA, firms should "monitor and assess whether they are meeting and responding to the needs of customers with characteristics of vulnerability, and make improvements where this is not happening" [2].

What's more, vulnerability is an issue not only for the customers affected. Dealing with vulnerable customers can often be a highly demanding and even distressing experience for front-line call handling team members.

All in all, spotting and responding effectively to calls indicating customer vulnerability can be an invaluable support to the well-being of your customers and staff. And hence to the success of your business.



## Understanding vulnerable customers in your individual business

Of course, customers are highly unlikely to announce in any conversation that they are "vulnerable".

Instead, firms have a regulatory obligation to spot the signs of vulnerability in their own interactions with customers and take appropriate action in response.

The FCA defines a vulnerable customer as “someone who, due to their personal circumstances, is especially susceptible to harm – particularly when a firm is not acting with appropriate levels of care” [3].

This is a broad definition. Every firm should take all reasonable steps to predict and define the likely characteristics of vulnerability within its own specific target market and customer base.

The FCA notes that all customers are at risk of becoming vulnerable and this risk is increased by characteristics of vulnerability related to 4 key drivers [4]:

### Health:

conditions or illnesses that affect ability to carry out day-to-day tasks.

### Resilience:

low ability to withstand financial or emotional shocks.

### Life events:

such as bereavement, job loss or relationship breakdown.

### Capability:

low knowledge of financial matters or low confidence in managing money (financial capability). Low capability in other relevant areas such as literacy or digital skills.

But how can you use this guidance to spot potentially vulnerable customers when they're talking to your contact centre teams?

We think a useful approach is to think about the emotions and behaviours that your vulnerable customers might reveal in conversation.

Perhaps the most obvious indicator of vulnerability is **acute emotional distress**. This is also the most important for immediate escalation and attention. Shockingly, in UK financial services call centres, 1 in 4 frontline staff were reported to have spoken to at least one customer they considered taking their own lives over the previous year [5].

Other examples for insurance companies could include:

- **Difficulty coping with even simple financial decisions.** This can result from factors such as cognitive impairment and lack of experience. Newly bereaved or separated customers might comment, for example, that their spouse or partner always used to deal with insurance matters.

- **Comprehension and memory issues.** Difficulty with understanding and remembering even simple information provided before and during the call could be a clear indicator of vulnerability.
- **Physical barriers to engagement.** Some customers may struggle with information such as policy details and claims processes, due to physical impairment or lack of access to digital channels. For these customers, the telephone is vital for communication and engagement with financial services providers.

It's also essential to plan and prepare actions to be taken in response to any of these indicators of vulnerability.



## How Voyc helps you maximise your ability to treat vulnerable customers fairly.

Voyc is a cloud-based AI software solution that can monitor 100% of your contact centre calls in detail.

The starting point is to identify the **keywords and phrases** that a customer might use, that are most likely to indicate issues for attention across any range of categories that you choose to specify.

In addition to vulnerability, the categories you might wish to monitor could include areas such as:

### Complaints,

including escalation requests ("Put me through to a manager") and intention to report an issue on social media.

### Sales Completion:

highlighting cases where the customer might not have firmly agreed to the contract, for example.

### Script Adherence:

ensuring that calls are fully compliant for content, risk warnings and mandatory disclosure.

### Lapse Prevention:

spotting and taking action on calls that suggest the imminent defection of a valuable customer.

On the key issue of vulnerability, **Voyc has already compiled a comprehensive database of keywords and phrases that could indicate that the customer displays signs of vulnerability.**

These words and phrases have been identified in consultation with our existing insurance clients with a focus on vulnerability. Examples include:

- 📞 "I can't read my bill"
- 📞 "I'm having trouble paying"
- 📞 "I can't understand the letter you sent me"

And with Voyc, you can choose specific keywords for different contact centres and teams. For example, you might wish to monitor certain keywords for motor and home sales calls and others for life and health claims.

Of course, you're always free to apply any additional words and phrases you wish to include, based on your understanding of your own target groups and customers.



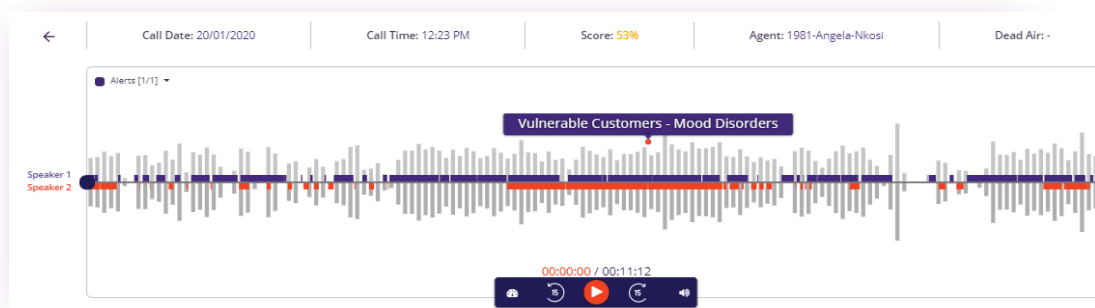
## **Voyc delivers alerts to let you respond without delay**

Once your keywords and phrases are selected, Voyc identifies and raises an alert each and every time one of them arises in any customer conversation within your contact centre.

This feature is particularly popular with Voyc users.

Voyc sends the alert to team members authorised to handle the particular kind of situation indicated by the specific word or phrase. The team member can then assess and take any action required.

Calls demanding immediate attention (such as those suggesting acute emotional distress) can be sent for priority review by specific individuals, to ensure the issue is addressed with urgency.



*Clicking on any alert instantly replays that part of the call containing the keyword or phrase*

The assigned team member can immediately click on the call to listen to a recording of it. In fact, they are taken straight to that part of the call containing the alert, without having to listen to the entire conversation.

This not only saves time-related costs, it also allows users to take any required action without delay – avoiding the customer dissatisfaction and expense of repeated callbacks.

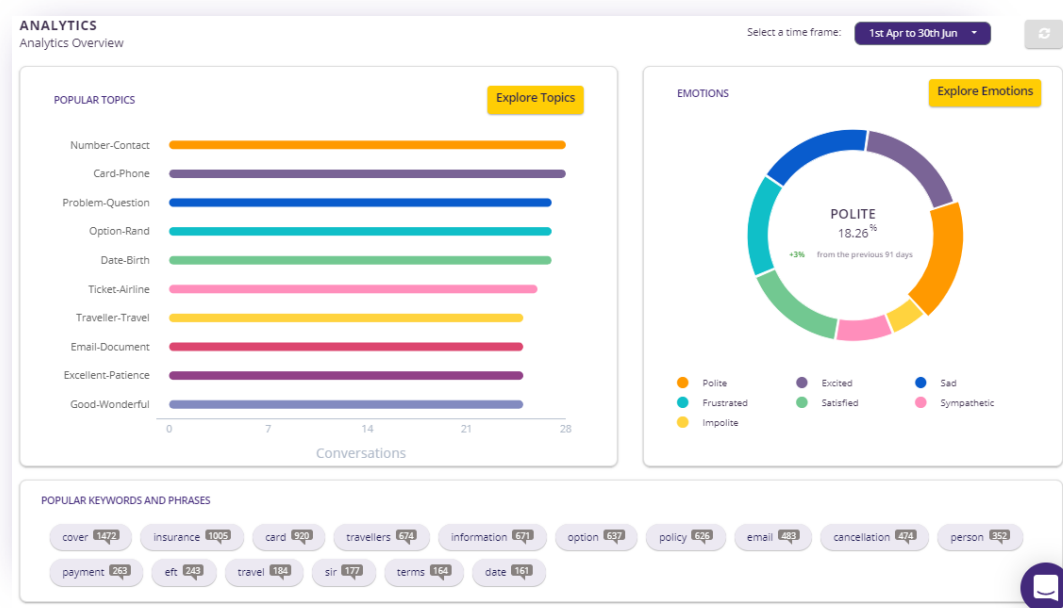
In the case of a complaint, this means that the issue can often be resolved much faster. That's clearly better for the customer and for the business too. Resolving a complaint satisfactorily in under three days saves the administrative time and expense of producing a full written response.

In fact, complaints management provides a useful illustration of the great improvement in cost-effectiveness that call monitoring with Voyc can deliver.

On average, Voyc users monitoring complaints calls can handle 5-10 times more complaints per day than they did without Voyc – with no increase in complaints handling staff.

What's more, Voyc provides detailed analytics on topics and phrases that occur frequently in calls with customers. It can report on the tone of conversations and highlight any mandatory phrases that an agent might fail to mention.

Authorised team members can then drill down through the reports to arrive at any aspect of the monitored calls they wish to review.



*Voyc Dashboard layout*



All in all, Voyc offers the regulatory safeguard of monitoring 100% of all calls through the contact centre – plus the general improvement in call outcomes and overall customer experience that this delivers.

In this way, Voyc can provide invaluable assistance to insurance companies in complying with the following important requirement in the FCA's guidelines:

"Firms should monitor the actions they are taking to ensure they treat vulnerable customers fairly and the outcomes vulnerable customers experience in comparison to other customers"[6].



## Cost-effective and quick to get started

Voyc is fast and easy to implement. It's also fully scalable and is backed by rigorous bank-grade security standards.

From the moment you choose to implement Voyc, you could be monitoring 100% of your contact centre calls in as little as one day.

And regarding costs, Voyc users typically find that the solution pays for itself in as little as 4 months – as measured by a combination of improved efficiency and reduced operating costs.

We'll be delighted to tell you more about costs and timing when we give you your free Voyc demonstration.



### How Voyc helped an insurance company spot a valuable idea from a vulnerable customer...

Momentum Life is a leading life and pensions company in South Africa. They've been enjoying the support of Voyc since 2020.

An elderly customer had a sudden need to access her pension fund with Momentum and had received various forms to complete, which she needed to take to her bank. This was a potentially stressful situation that could make her vulnerable.

Voyc alerted the Momentum team to this lady's call, in which she said: "... for elderly people, I advise that you make the font on your forms bigger and simplify it, because insurance is taken out when you are younger but the benefits are only taken out when you're older".

Esther Nkosi, Momentum Life's Head of Client Care and Client Experience said: "The Momentum team were so happy to receive that feedback of something to look at potentially improving in the future, as well as an opportunity to meaningfully bond with that client over her experience".

Voyc's CEO, Matthew Westaway, sums it up: "It's been an incredibly enriching experience to add value to a sector as important as financial services".





## Your free demo

The best way for you to visualise the potential benefits of Voyc in your own organisation is to see a live demonstration on your own screen.

A demo brings to life the functionality and flexibility of Voyc – showing you how the software monitors 100% of calls and highlights every instance of your pre-chosen keywords and phrases.

You'll also see how you can instantly pinpoint and listen to critical parts of calls that are of most concern to your business. And how Voyc provides you with comprehensive management reports that fully meet the FCA's requirements for Treating Customers Fairly.

We'll also be delighted to answer all of your questions in full – without any obligation whatever on your part, of course.

To arrange your free demo, simply complete the request form [here](#). Alternatively, call Matthew Westaway at Voyc on +31 (0) 683 43 81 84.

## References:

- [1] Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), [Finalised guidance, FG/21/1 Guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, February 2021 \(paragraph 2.7\)](#)
- [2] Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), [Finalised guidance, FG/21/1 Guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, February 2021 \(paragraph 1.9\)](#)
- [3] Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), [Finalised guidance, FG/21/1 Guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, February 2021 \(paragraph 1.1\)](#)
- [4] Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), [Finalised guidance, FG/21/1 Guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, February 2021 \(paragraph 2.5\)](#)
- [5] Blunt, Carolyn, Ember Group, [Supporting Vulnerable Customers in a Digital World, callcentrehelper.com. Published 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020; Last modified 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020, <https://www.callcentrehelper.com/vulnerable-customers-digital-world-154539.htm>](#)
- [6] Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), [Finalised guidance, FG/21/1 Guidance for firms on the fair treatment of vulnerable customers, February 2021 \(paragraph 5.2\)](#)



## Voyc is proven and trusted in the insurance industry. Here's what some of our insurance clients are saying:



**1Life** | Changing Lives

“

Managing risk and being able to offer exceptional customer service is critical to any insurance business. The support of Voyc is a competitive advantage for the healthy growth of any company.

”

**Anton Keet, Head of Risk Services**



“

Before Voyc it would take me 40 minutes to verify one sales call. Now I am able to focus on the problem calls and hone in to the problem area in a matter of seconds.

”

**Nadia Britz, QA Assessor**



“

We started to see certain agents featuring more than others in alerts. And we looked at various high and low volume call takers. We coached one of the agents, who never had high VOC ratings, on how to handle calls better. She is now trending on VOC ratings and is getting written letters of compliments. We've now expanded Voyc into 3 new contact centres

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**Esther Nkosi, Head of Client Experience**



“

Voyc was fast and painless to setup, configure, assess cyber risks and ultimately resulted in happy business users.

”

**Paul Steyn, Head of Systems Architecture**

 **Bryte**



“

Before Voyc, if I wanted to do an investigation into the call center I would need to brief the quality team, and then give them over a week to listen to the calls. They would then submit a report on their findings, which would only be covering a handful of selected calls. With Voyc, I can get the answers in minutes.

”

**Anrieth Symon, Head of Travel**





“

Voyc is not just reducing QA costs and helping manage risk better, Voyc reduces rework, improves customer satisfaction and helps businesses stay compliant. On top of that, I was very impressed by the level of professionalism and support we received from the Voyc team during and after the implementation.

”

**Castro Zingisile, Head of Medical Underwriting, Claims & Platform Management**

[Contact Voyc today](#) to arrange your free demo and see how it could work for your insurance business too.