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# Helping customers in vulnerable circumstances

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How collections technology can improve  
engagement and ensure consistent, fair  
outcomes

Supporting customers in vulnerable circumstances is a priority for financial service providers. With the right technology, companies can offer better support and ensure fair treatment for all customers. This guide explores how modern collections technology can help engage customers, maintain consistency, and provide reliable solutions.

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## Maximising engagement across all channels

### Does prioritising digital mean ignoring non-digital?

Some service providers worry that digital transformation might leave out customers who aren't comfortable online. But, taking services online shouldn't be a problem. Good online services increase interactions and save resources for those who still like traditional methods like phone calls and letters, allowing firms to be more adaptable.



*We expect firms to respond flexibly to the needs of customers with characteristics of vulnerability. So, firms will usually need to be able to provide support to their customers through different channels or by adapting their usual approach.*

**Consumer Duty PS22/9; Financial Conduct Authority 2023**

As digital interactions increase, it frees up more time for those who aren't online. Here's how effective, well-designed digital engagement benefits everyone:

- **Consistent, non-judgemental communication** for all customers
- **Discreet opportunities for disclosure**
- **The option to involve another adult in the process**
- **Clear links to debt advice services**
- **Convenience** – customers can engage at their own pace and at a time that suits them
- **Less pressure** – customers can control the speed of their interactions
- **Reduced stress** – minimising anxiety and performance pressure
- **Choice** – customers can switch from digital to phone calls seamlessly

# Consistency and accuracy

Regulators expect creditors to provide a consistent experience for all customers, especially those in vulnerable situations.

Technology can help by:

1

Using **smart workflows** to guide agents on the best actions based on customer circumstances. This helps eliminate bias and ensures that vulnerable customers receive appropriate treatment every time.

2

Ensuring **real-time operations** so interactions are timely and appropriate. This enables staff to respond appropriately and consistently to customer needs as they arise.

3

Keeping a **single source of information** to avoid transferring customers between teams and systems, leading to more consistent interactions.

4

Enabling seamless integration across various communication channels like phone, email, chat, and SMS. This **omnichannel communication approach** ensures that customers receive consistent information and treatment, regardless of their chosen interaction method.

5

Recording all interactions in an **unchangeable audit trail**, making it easier to review and ensure consistency in customer treatment over time.

6

Offering **personalised options** using customer data and segmentation, tailoring interactions to individual needs while keeping a consistent approach.

# Can technology help predict vulnerability?

Technology can spot patterns that may indicate vulnerability, including:

## Reasons for arrears

like bereavement, job loss, illness, addiction, or relationship breakdown.

## Help from others

such as carers, family members, or advisors during the process.

## Spelling and

**grammar analysis** to detect learning or language difficulties.

## Sentiment analysis

to identify distress or urgent needs.

## Signs of over-indebtedness

identified using data from Open Banking.

These patterns, especially when combined with self-declaration, can alert agents to customers in vulnerable circumstances. Agents can then follow the appropriate steps to meet these customers' needs.

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## Summary

Technology should support human agents in helping customers. It's not a magic solution that can make people engage or solve all their problems. However, smart technology can help financial service providers assist vulnerable customers fairly and consistently.

By using advanced collections technology, companies can improve engagement, comply with regulations, and achieve better outcomes for all customers.

Flexys can help you provide a consistent, frictionless experience to all of your customers, including those in vulnerable circumstances. To learn more, visit [www.flexys.com](http://www.flexys.com).

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