CASE STUDY

How AI Increased Reach While Keeping the Human Touch

CHATBOT

EPILEPSY ACTION

bluelight CRM • WEB • DATA

This project proved that AI and human support aren't conflicting priorities. People can connect with us in the way that they are most comfortable with.

Kathryn Hughes
Services Manager
Epilepsy Action

Supporting 630,000 People Beyond Office Hours

Epilepsy Action is a UK charity dedicated to improving the lives of the 630,000 people living with epilepsy across the country. By late 2025, the charity had risen to 152nd in YouGov's most positively viewed charities and the first epilepsy organisation to break into the top 200. That growing visibility brought growing demand.

The helpline was already under pressure, but the real gap was outside office hours. Calls in the evening or overnight went unanswered, and many of those people tried again the next morning, adding to the backlog. The live chat ran on a separate platform with little or no data feeding back into the CRM.

55% SESSIONS OUTSIDE OFFICE HOURS

76% ENQUIRIES HANDLED BY CHATBOT

65% to 80% CALL ANSWER RATE

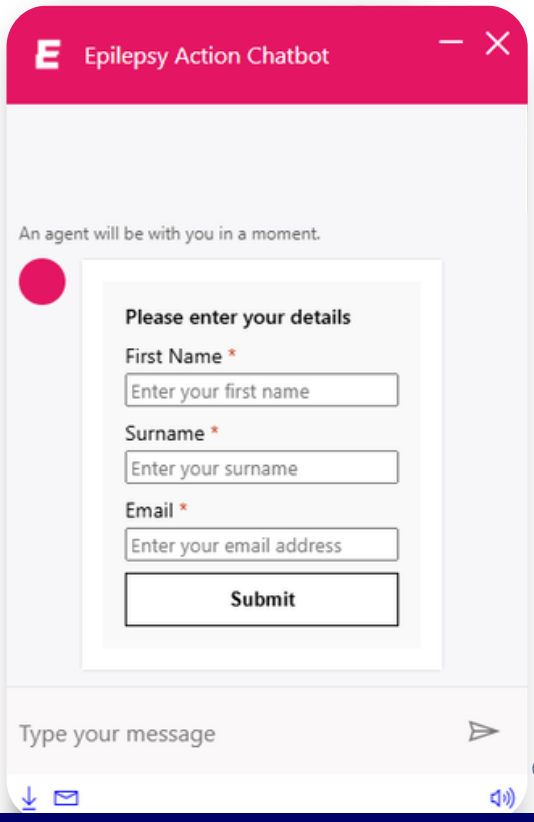
Built to Help, Designed to Know Its Limits

Epilepsy Action worked with Bluelight to introduce an AI chatbot to support the helpline, not to replace advisors, but to handle common practical questions and step aside when human judgement was needed.

The first attempt used structured topic-based journeys. When tested against real helpline conversations, the responses were formal and lacked empathy. Someone typing "I'm really struggling today" got factual information but no acknowledgement of their distress.

The team pivoted to generative AI with safeguarding escalation producing more empathetic, natural responses that handled the sensitive nature of some of the communication.

For safeguarding concerns, escalation is immediate and automatic.



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How It Works

The chatbot handles practical, everyday questions about medication, driving and accessing local support by searching information published on Epilepsy Action's own website. The responses are based entirely on content the charity has written and verified, giving people another way to find the information that's already there. It knows when to step aside. If someone wants to speak with a person, they can type "talk", "human" or "CHAT" and be connected to an advisor.

For safeguarding concerns, the chatbot doesn't offer a choice. If it picks up trigger phrases relating to self-harm or crisis, it escalates immediately to a member of staff. Outside office hours, when no one's available, the chatbot still answers the question and signposts relevant support and emergency information. If the person wants to speak to someone, it collects their details and a summary of their query. A case is then created in Dynamics 365 with the full conversation transcript attached. When advisors start their shift the next morning, those cases are waiting on the dashboard, ready to be actioned. No one falls through the gaps overnight.

Data collection was kept deliberately light. First name, surname and email. Just enough to match to an existing CRM record or create a new one. The whole system replaced the previous separate live chat platform, so everything now flows through one place.

Bluelight gave us the framework to develop the bot, and we've taken it from there and run with it. They set us up to keep going on our own, which is exactly what we've done.

Andrew Myers
Director of Finance and Operations
Epilepsy Action

What Changed

For the people Epilepsy Action supports, the difference is felt most clearly after 5pm. Someone worried about medication side effects at 10pm on a Tuesday can now get reliable guidance there and then, with the option to request a callback the next day. Before the chatbot, that person would have been waiting until morning or looking elsewhere.

For the team, the shift has been in quality of time rather than quantity of work. Advisors spend less time fielding the same practical questions and more time on the conversations that genuinely need a person. Staff have also started using the chatbot to draft email replies off their own bat, which nobody planned for but everyone appreciated.

The project went from concept to live pilot in three months with not a single piece of negative feedback on launch.

What's Next

Epilepsy Action is now looking at extending the chatbot across social media, SMS and voice channels, taking the service to wherever their users are. The next functional steps include enabling event bookings, donations and membership services directly through the chatbot.

Internally, the team is building Copilot agents to search through case studies and enquiry notes, turning what used to be hours of manual trawling into seconds. What started as a way to answer the phone after 5pm has become the foundation for how the charity thinks about technology across the organisation.

They're aiming for the top 100 in YouGov next!

Need Help
Speak to Epilepsy ...