AI IMPACT REPORT NO. 154 · REVISED 5 OCTOBER 2026 · 250 ROLES COVERED

Call Centre Agents

AI heavily automating first-line query resolution and agent assistance.

EXPOSURE	WINDOW	ADOPTION TODAY	READING
86 Very high exposure	1–3 yrs until change lands	Very High	Core tasks are being automated now. Exposure is the share of today's work AI can plausibly take on within the window.

§ 01 WHAT IS HAPPENING

What is happening to call centre agents

Impact

AI-powered chatbots, Interactive Voice Response (IVR) systems, and virtual assistants are handling a large and growing volume of routine customer inquiries, providing instant answers to FAQs, and guiding users through self-service options. AI also assists human agents by providing real-time information and suggesting solutions.

Risk

Major workflow transformation; focus on complex, empathetic, and escalated issues.

The Call Centre Agent role is undergoing a profound transformation. With AI managing most first-tier, repetitive, and informational queries, human agents will increasingly focus on handling complex, emotionally charged, or novel issues that require empathy, advanced problem-solving, and nuanced communication. Proficiency with AI agent-assist tools will be crucial.

Sector readiness

Mainstream & Rapidly Evolving

AI is a standard and rapidly advancing component in modern contact centres for call routing, automated responses, sentiment analysis, and providing agents with real-time support.

§ 02 POSITION

Where you stand

i The Call Centre Agent role is one of the most heavily impacted by AI, with extensive automation of first-tier and routine interactions.

ii AI is transforming workflows by handling common queries, providing agents with instant information, and automating post-call work, leading to increased efficiency.

iii The human agent's role is evolving to become more specialized, focusing on complex problem-solving, empathetic communication for escalated issues, and providing a high-value human touch where AI falls short. Continuous upskilling in these areas is critical.

§ 03 ACTIONS 15 POINTS

What this means for you

Concrete changes to how the work gets done, in the order you are likely to meet them.

01 **AI Chatbots & IVRs Handling Initial Interactions.** Most customers will first interact with an AI system that attempts to resolve their issue or gather initial information before potentially escalating to you.

02 **Focus on Complex, Escalated & Emotional Calls.** Your caseload will increasingly consist of issues that AI cannot resolve, requiring deep product knowledge, sophisticated problem-solving, and strong de-escalation skills.

03 **AI-Powered Agent Assist Tools.** During calls, AI will provide real-time suggestions for responses, relevant knowledge base articles, customer history, and next best actions.

04 **Emphasis on Empathy & Human Connection.** Your ability to connect with customers on a human level, show understanding, and provide compassionate support will be a key differentiator.

05 **Reduced Repetitive Task Load.** AI will handle many of the repetitive Q&A and simple transactional tasks, freeing you from monotonous work.

06 **Need for Deeper Product/Service Knowledge.** To handle escalated issues, you'll need a more profound understanding of the company's offerings than what a basic AI might possess.

07 **Real-Time Sentiment Analysis Feedback.** Some AI tools will analyze the customer's tone of voice or language to provide you with real-time cues about their emotional state.

08 **Post-Call Work Automation.** AI can assist with summarizing calls, updating CRM records, and tagging call reasons, reducing your after-call work (ACW).

09 **Training & Fine-Tuning AI Systems.** Your interactions and feedback may be used to train and improve the AI chatbots and agent-assist tools.

10 **Handling Multiple Communication Channels (Omni-Channel).** AI can help manage context across chat, email, and phone, but you'll need to be adept at multi-channel communication.

11 **Focus on First Call Resolution for Complex Issues.** Aiming to resolve difficult problems effectively the first time, leveraging AI tools for support.

12 **Identifying Systemic Issues from Escalations.** Recognizing patterns in escalated calls that might indicate underlying product, service, or process problems.

13 **Maintaining Brand Voice & Quality in Complex Interactions.** Ensuring that even in difficult situations, your communication reflects the company's brand and service standards.

14 **Upskilling to Handle More Technical or Specialized Queries.** Opportunities to specialize in areas that require deeper expertise beyond general support.

15 **Adapting to AI-Driven Performance Metrics.** Performance may be measured not just on call volume but on resolution of complex issues, customer satisfaction in difficult situations, and effective use of AI tools.

§ 04 CAUSES 10 DRIVERS

What is pushing this change

01 **Customer Demand for 24/7 Instant Support.** AI chatbots and IVRs can provide immediate responses to common questions at any time, meeting customer expectations for instant service.

02 **High Volume of Simple, Repetitive Inquiries.** A large percentage of contact centre inquiries are routine and can be effectively handled by AI, freeing up human agents.

03 **Advancements in Conversational AI, NLP & Voice AI.** Modern AI can understand natural language, maintain conversational context, and even process voice, making automated interactions more effective.

04 **Need for Cost Efficiency & Scalability in Contact Centres.** Automating first-tier support and augmenting human agents with AI can significantly reduce operational costs and allow for easier scaling.

05 **Availability of AI-Powered Contact Centre Platforms.** Many vendors now offer sophisticated contact centre solutions with embedded AI for chatbots, agent assist, analytics, and workforce optimization.

06 **Desire to Improve Agent Productivity & Reduce Burnout.** By handling repetitive tasks, AI allows human agents to focus on more engaging and complex work, potentially reducing stress and improving job satisfaction.

07 **Data Analytics for Understanding Customer Interactions.** AI can analyze call recordings, chat logs, and support tickets to identify common issues, customer sentiment, and areas for service improvement.

08 **Integration of AI with CRM & Knowledge Management Systems.** AI leverages data from these systems to provide agents with customer history, context, and relevant knowledge in real-time.

09 **Customer Expectations for Consistent Information Across Channels.** AI helps ensure that customers receive consistent answers and experiences, regardless of the channel they use.

10 **Focus on Improving Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) & First Contact Resolution (FCR).** AI aims to resolve issues faster and more accurately (for simple queries) and equip human agents to better handle complex ones, improving key metrics.

§ 05 VARIATION 5 SECTORS

Impact by sector

The headline figure is an average. Where you work changes the picture.

Tier 1 / General Inquiry Agents	Highest level of automation by AI chatbots and IVRs for FAQs and simple requests. Human roles shift to exceptions and warm transfers.
Technical Support Agents (Call Centre Based)	AI for diagnosing common tech problems and guiding users through basic troubleshooting. Humans handle complex issues, remote diagnostics, and advanced product support.
Sales-Focused Call Centre Agents (Inbound/Outbound)	AI for qualifying leads, scheduling sales calls, and providing product information. Humans focus on building rapport, understanding needs, and closing sales.
Complaint Resolution / Escalation Specialists	Less direct automation of the core resolution task, but AI provides context, customer history, and potential solutions. Empathy and de-escalation skills are paramount.
Multilingual Call Centre Agents	AI real-time translation tools can augment capabilities, allowing agents to handle calls in multiple languages, though fluency for complex issues is still valuable.

§ 06 PREPARATION 8 SKILLS

Skills to build

The skills that keep the human part of this work valuable as the routine part is automated.

01 **Empathy & Active Listening.** Genuinely understanding and responding to customer emotions and concerns, especially in frustrating situations.

02 **Complex Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking.** Diagnosing and resolving novel or multifaceted issues that are beyond the scope of AI or scripted responses.

03 **Effective Communication & De-escalation Skills.** Clearly explaining complex solutions, calming irate customers, and guiding conversations towards a positive outcome.

04 **Patience & Resilience.** Ability to handle difficult or repetitive customer interactions calmly and maintain a positive attitude under pressure.

05 **Adaptability & AI Tool Proficiency.** Quickly learning to use new AI-powered agent-assist tools, chatbots, and CRM integrations effectively.

06 **In-Depth Product/Service Knowledge.** Possessing a deep understanding of the company's products or services to handle inquiries that AI cannot.

07 **Stress Management.** Coping with the demands of handling potentially more complex and emotionally charged interactions as routine queries are automated.

08 **Teamwork & Information Sharing (with AI insights).** Collaborating with colleagues on difficult cases and sharing insights gleaned from AI tools or customer interactions to improve overall team performance.

§ 07 INSTRUMENTS 11 ENTRIES

Tools in use

KINDS OF TOOL WORTH KNOWING

01 **AI-Powered Chatbots & Virtual Customer Assistants.** Conversational AI to handle frontline customer inquiries, answer FAQs, and perform simple transactions.

02 **Agent-Assist AI Platforms.** Real-time software that provides human agents with suggested responses, relevant articles, and customer data during interactions.

03 **AI-Driven Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Systems.** IVR systems that use Natural Language Understanding (NLU) to understand customer intent and route calls more intelligently or provide self-service.

04 **CRM Systems with Integrated AI.** Customer Relationship Management platforms that use AI to provide a unified view of the customer, suggest next best actions, and automate workflows.

05 **Sentiment Analysis & Call Analytics Tools.** AI tools that analyze call recordings or chat transcripts for customer sentiment, keywords, and compliance, providing insights and quality assurance.

06 **AI Knowledge Management Systems for Support.** Systems that use AI to organize, search, and surface relevant information from knowledge bases to both customers (self-service) and agents.

NAMED TOOLS ALREADY IN USE

Intercom / Zendesk Answer Bot / Salesforce Einstein Bots
Platforms offering AI-powered chatbots for customer service automation, lead qualification, and routing inquiries.

Cresta / Balto / Observe.AI / ASAPP
AI tools that provide real-time guidance, coaching, and information retrieval to live agents during customer conversations.

Amazon Connect (with Lex) / Google Cloud Contact Center AI
Cloud-based contact center solutions that leverage AI for intelligent call routing, natural language understanding in IVR, and agent assistance.

Salesforce Service Cloud / HubSpot Service Hub
CRM platforms that embed AI to provide agents with customer history, context, and intelligent recommendations.

CallMiner / NICE Nexidia / Verint (for interaction analytics)
Platforms that use AI to analyze voice and text interactions for sentiment, compliance, agent performance, and customer experience insights.

§ 08 EXAMPLES 5 EXAMPLES

In practice

Ways people in this role are already using AI, and what they get from it.

Let AI Handle FAQs & Basic Troubleshooting

EXAMPLE 1

HOW Allow AI chatbots or intelligent IVRs to answer common customer questions (e.g., "What are your store hours?", "How do I reset my password?"), freeing you for complex issues.

GAIN Reduces your workload of repetitive questions, provides 24/7 support for customers, and allows you to focus on more challenging and engaging interactions.

Use AI Agent-Assist for Quicker, More Accurate Responses

EXAMPLE 2

HOW During a call or chat, use an AI co-pilot that automatically surfaces relevant knowledge base articles, customer history, or suggested solutions to your screen.

GAIN Speeds up your ability to find correct information, improves first-call resolution rates, and ensures consistency in the answers provided.

Leverage AI for Call Summarization & CRM Updates

EXAMPLE 3

HOW After a call, AI tools can automatically generate a summary of the conversation and update the customer record in the CRM with key details and outcomes.

GAIN Significantly reduces after-call work (ACW), improves data accuracy in the CRM, and allows you to move to the next customer interaction more quickly.

Benefit from AI-Driven Call Routing to Specialists

EXAMPLE 4

HOW AI can analyze a customer's initial query (spoken or typed) and automatically route them to the agent or department best equipped to handle that specific issue type.

GAIN Ensures customers are connected to the right specialist faster, improving customer satisfaction and agent efficiency.

Utilize AI Sentiment Analysis for De-escalation Cues

EXAMPLE 5

HOW If your system has real-time sentiment analysis, use cues about rising customer frustration to proactively adjust your tone and de-escalation strategies.

GAIN Helps you better understand the customer's emotional state, tailor your approach for more effective de-escalation, and improve customer experience.

§ 09 CONTEXT

How this role compares

Three neighbouring roles chosen to show the direction of travel.

Order Takers / Basic Information Providers (Scripted)

MORE EXPOSED

AI IMPACT Very High (These are prime tasks for AI chatbots and intelligent IVRs, capable of handling structured queries and transactions)

WORK MOVES TO Significant reduction in human roles for these specific tasks; agents need to upskill to handle more complex interactions or manage the AI systems.

Conversation Designers / AI Trainer for Chatbots

DIFFERENT SKILLS, GROWING

AI IMPACT Foundational (They design the dialogue flows, train the AI models, and continuously improve the performance of chatbots and virtual assistants)

WORK MOVES TO Skills in UX design for conversational interfaces, linguistics, data analysis, and understanding AI/NLP capabilities.

Crisis Hotline Counselors / Specialized Patient Support (High Empathy)

COMPLEMENTARY, LESS EXPOSED

AI IMPACT Low direct automation of core empathetic interaction (AI might provide resources or triage), but human emotional intelligence and nuanced understanding are irreplaceable.

WORK MOVES TO Deep interpersonal skills, active listening, empathy, crisis intervention techniques, and specialized human support.

§ 10 VERDICT

Closing judgement

> For Call Centre Agents, AI is a powerful force reshaping daily tasks. It automates routine work, empowering agents to become expert problem-solvers for complex issues and champions of customer empathy where the human touch is indispensable. Adaptability and a focus on uniquely human skills are key to thriving.

§ 11 BASIS REVISED 5 OCTOBER 2026

Evidence and revisions

What the exposure figure rests on, what changed when it was last revised, and the published work cited for this role.

SCORE

80 to 86

WINDOW

1-3 years (unchanged)

The 5 October 2026 review moved the score up by 6 points.

Exposure Index v2. Inputs: task applicability 82/100 (Microsoft AI applicability score 0.41 for Customer service representatives); observed usage 93/100 (Anthropic observed exposure 0.70); official exposure tier 100/100 (BLS: very high); labour-market trajectory 63/100 (BLS projects employment to fall 5.3% over 2025–35); published adoption rating 85/100 (very high adoption). Weighted base 86.3. Final score 86. The previous figure of 80 was raised by 6 points: the earlier method kept 60% of the weight on an undocumented editorial prior and capped movement at fifteen points, so the measured evidence was only partly reflected. The change window is unchanged.

HOW THE FIGURE IS BUILT (EXPOSURE INDEX V2)

Task applicability — Microsoft Research, AI applicability score	82 × 35%	28.6
Observed usage — Anthropic Economic Index, observed exposure	94 × 20%	18.7
Official exposure tier — US BLS AI-exposure category	100 × 20%	20.0
Labour-market trajectory — US BLS projected employment change 2025–35	63 × 10%	6.3
Published adoption rating — This report's adoption level	85 × 15%	12.8
Weighted base		86.3
Exposure score		86

MEASURES BEHIND THE SCORE

US Bureau of Labor Statistics · *Employment Projections 2025–35 and AI Exposure Categories* (27 August 2026)

AI-exposure tier: Very high. Projected employment change 2025–35: -5.3%. Matched to Customer service representatives.

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Microsoft Research · *Working with AI: Measuring the Applicability of Generative AI to Occupations* (10 July 2025)

AI applicability score 0.41 (percentile 99 of 785 occupations) for SOC 43-4051.

PUBLISHER PDF ARCHIVED COPY

Anthropic · *Anthropic Economic Index report: Cadences* (26 June 2026)

Observed exposure 0.70 for SOC 43-4051 (percentile 100 of 756 occupations).

PUBLISHER PDF

Stanford Digital Economy Lab · *Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the Recent Employment Effects of Artificial Intelligence* (12 August 2026)

Customer service is the other occupation where the paper finds a marked early-career hiring decline, consistent with substitutive use of AI for routine queries.

PUBLISHER PDF

UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology · *Assessment of AI capabilities and the impact on the UK labour market* (28 January 2026)

UK context: around 70% of UK workers are in occupations with tasks AI could perform or enhance, above the US average; a one-standard-deviation rise in exposure was associated with a 3.9% fall in UK job postings.

PUBLISHER ARCHIVED COPY

ALSO CITED FOR THIS ROLE

Anthropic · *Anthropic Economic Index report: Learning curves* (24 March 2026)

Customer-service tasks (payments, billing support) are prevalent in automated API traffic, pointing to higher real-world exposure than chat data alone suggests.

PUBLISHER PDF

Archived copies are served only where the licence permits; otherwise the link goes to the publisher. Full research library: https://www.careerguard.ai/sources

§ 12 APPENDIX

Method and sources

Each report was written from a large body of published research. The exposure score itself is computed, not written: it is the CareerGuard Exposure Index, a weighted average of occupation-level measures from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (AI-exposure classification and 2025–35 projections), Microsoft Research (AI applicability scores) and Anthropic (observed exposure), together with the adoption rating published on the report. The organisations and publications below are the standing literature behind the narrative sections. Every source, with dates, licences and archived copies where we are permitted to hold them, is catalogued in the research library.

Exposure Index v2 (October 2026). Each input is scaled to 0–100 and weighted: task applicability 35% (Microsoft AI applicability score ÷ 0.5), observed usage 20% (Anthropic observed exposure ÷ 0.75), official exposure tier 20% (BLS very high = 100, high = 70, moderate = 40, low = 10), labour-market trajectory 10% (50 2.5 × projected % employment change), published adoption rating 15% (very high = 85, high = 70, medium-high = 55, medium = 40, low-medium = 25, low = 10). Inputs not measured for an occupation are dropped and the remaining weights renormalised. An editorial adjustment of at most ±12 points is allowed only for automation channels the measures cannot see (robotics, self-service, machine vision, medical imaging, RPA/OCR, generative video) and is always logged with its reason. Scores are whole numbers, not rounded to five. The change window shifts one notch (a year at each end) per ten points of movement.

I GLOBAL AND MACROECONOMIC IMPACT OF AI ON WORK

World Economic Forum
The Future of Jobs Report series — Employer survey of expected job growth and decline, skill shifts and technology adoption (2020, 2023 and 2025 editions); Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Entry-Level Work (2026).
AI governance and transformation reports — Frameworks on ethical AI, talent strategy and industry transformation.

McKinsey Global Institute
AI, Automation and the Future of Work series — Research quantifying automation potential by task, sector and demographic, from "Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained" to "Agents, robots, and us" (2025).
Industry-specific reports — Financial services, healthcare, manufacturing and others.

PwC
Global AI Jobs Barometer — Annual analysis of job postings and productivity by AI exposure (2024–2026 editions).
Upskilling Hopes and Fears survey — Employee perceptions and readiness.

Microsoft Research and Anthropic
Working with AI (2025); Anthropic Economic Index (2025–2026) — Occupation-level usage data from Copilot and Claude conversations, the two observed-usage measures behind the 2026 revision.

Stanford Digital Economy Lab and Stanford HAI
Canaries in the Coal Mine? (2025–2026); AI Index Report (annual) — Payroll evidence on early-career employment in exposed occupations; annual measurement of AI capability, investment and adoption.

Deloitte
Human Capital Trends series — Workforce, talent and HR technology trends.
Tech Trends series — Emerging technologies and their business implications.

Accenture
Technology Vision series — Forward-looking analysis of emerging technology, with emphasis on AI.
Fjord Trends — Design, innovation and human experience in a digital world.

Boston Consulting Group
AI/ML insights and industry solutions — "The AI Revolution in the Workplace" and related research.

EY
AI and workforce reports — Adoption, talent strategy and ethics.

IBM Institute for Business Value
AI and automation studies — Business models, workforce evolution and leadership.

OECD
AI Policy Observatory — International data and policy on AI, labour markets and skills.
Employment Outlook — Labour-market trends including technological impact (2023–2026 editions).

International Labour Organization
Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure (2025) — Task-level exposure gradients for every ISCO occupation; successor to the 2023 global index.

International Monetary Fund
Staff Discussion Notes on AI and work (2024, 2026) — Complementarity framing: where AI augments and where it substitutes.

UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Assessment of AI capabilities and the impact on the UK labour market (2026) — UK occupational exposure and job-posting evidence.

Brookings Institution
AI and automation research — Economic and social implications, displacement and skills.

Yale Budget Lab and Goldman Sachs Research
Tracking the Impact of AI on the Labor Market; AI and the US labour market (2026) — Aggregate labour-market monitoring; macro displacement estimates.

Oxford University (Oxford Martin School)
The Future of Employment — Frey & Osborne and subsequent research on susceptibility to automation.

MIT Technology Review
AI & Work — Reporting on AI research and its implications for industries and jobs.

Gartner
Hype Cycle for Artificial Intelligence — Maturity and adoption of AI technologies.
Future of Work reports — Workplace models and talent strategy.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Employment Projections 2025–35; AI Exposure Categories; Occupational Outlook Handbook — Ten-year employment projections and, from the 2025 cycle, an AI-exposure tier for every detailed occupation.

Indeed Hiring Lab
AI at Work Report (2025) and posting-market updates — Skill-level transformation estimates and job-posting trends by occupation.

II CORE AI AND MACHINE-LEARNING RESEARCH

OpenAI
Research papers, blog and API documentation — Large language models, generative AI, safety and societal impact.

Google DeepMind
Research papers and blog — Reinforcement learning, AI for science, AGI and ethics.

Meta AI
Research papers and blog — Large language models, computer vision, AI for social good.

Hugging Face
Transformers library and model hub — Open-source state-of-the-art NLP models.

TensorFlow and PyTorch
Documentation and community forums — Core frameworks illustrating practical capability.

arXiv
cs.AI, cs.LG, cs.CV, cs.CL — Pre-print research.

NeurIPS and ICML
Conference proceedings — Top-tier academic research.

ACM and IEEE
Journals and proceedings — ACM Computing Surveys; IEEE Transactions on AI.

Kaggle
Datasets and competition solutions — Applied machine learning on real-world problems.

The Alan Turing Institute
Research and reports — Responsible and applied AI.

III ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE AI DEPLOYMENT

NIST
AI Risk Management Framework — Voluntary framework for managing AI risk.

European Commission
AI Act — Risk-tiered legal framework for AI.
Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI — Principles for responsible development.

Partnership on AI
Research and best practice — Responsible AI development.

AI Now Institute
Annual reports — Social implications: power, inequality, rights.

ACM FAccT
Proceedings — Fairness, accountability and transparency.

Data & Society
Publications — Social implications of data-centric technology.

WIPO
Conversation on IP and AI — Intellectual-property implications of AI.

IEEE Global Initiative on Ethics of A/IS
Ethically Aligned Design — Recommendations for ethical AI design.

Center for AI and Digital Policy
Policy briefs — Accountable AI policy.

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