



KIRKLEES MBC

Using automation to minimise fraud and maximise income

Conducting a Single Person Discount Review to check legitimacy and maximise revenue.

- £0.5m overall increase in revenue to be collected
- 55,000 residents contacted (pensioners and CTR cases excluded)
- 47,000 review forms completed online
- >1,200 SPD voluntarily cancelled
- >3,000 discounts cancelled for non-response; fewer than 2% re-instated

ABOUT KIRKLEES MBC

- Services 440,000 residents
- Over 66,000 active Single Person Discounts
- Based in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
- 11th largest Local Authority in England

BRIEF

Single Person Discount 'failure to notify of a change' and fraud costs councils around £92m a year according to The National Fraud Authority, who based their research on earlier work by the Audit Commission. Councils know they could potentially increase revenues by regularly reviewing Single Person Discount claims but, due resource constraints, often contract out this work at significant hidden cost.

With over 66,000 active Single Person Discounts, Kirklees MBC wanted a cost effective way to update its records, minimise fraud and maximise income. As the 11th largest Authority in England, with over 440,000 residents, this was a substantial project to undertake.

SOLUTION

Having worked and built a solid rapport with Govtech since 2010, the council trusted in its automation software, and knew that an online Review could be conducted quickly, efficiently, and at low cost using Govtech's webCAPTURE service. The authority contacted all households in receipt of a sole occupier discount over a phased, four-month period and directed them to an online form to either confirm or cancel their eligibility. Responses were automatically processed in the Revenues system, with no manual intervention. Reminders were sent to non-responders.

RESULTS

Of approximately 55,000 residents contacted (excluding pensioners and CTR claimants), nearly 47,000 forms were completed online, of which over 1,200 were voluntarily cancelled, with an estimated value to the council of

£300k. After reminders were issued, Govtech's automated service then cancelled discounts for non-responders, adding a further £200k to the collectable debt.

The exercise was completed over the first 4 months of the financial year, allowing the maximum time to collect the increase in net debit of £0.5m.



£0.5m

overall increase in net debt



55,000

residents contacted (excluding CT reduction cases)



47,000

review forms completed online



>1,200

SPD voluntarily cancelled, raising an additional £300k



£200k

another SPD amount raised from non-responders



Following yr

SPDR notices issued as part of Annual Billing



>16,000

responders within 4 weeks

A successful campaign

By automating the review process, Kirklees were able to reduce the amount of staff resource required to complete what used to be a highly labour-intensive process. The initial campaign was so successful that in the 2018 Annual Bills, Kirklees asked all Single Person Discount claimants to cancel or confirm their discount online, saving on postage costs. Within weeks, over 16,000 had responded, with the formal review process for others starting shortly afterwards.



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The new digital by design process made it easier for customers to notify us of changes at a time convenient to them and had the added benefit of saving the Revenues team the time and cost of processing SPDs. It also boosted the council's finances by creating a surplus on the collection fund

Steve Bird, Head of Welfare and Exchequer Service

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ABOUT GOVTECH

Govtech is a trusted partner for its many UK local authority customers. As experts in digital process automation, we help councils to maximise returns on investments in online services, Customer Experience and Customer Relationship Management systems. Our hosted solutions integrate with all mainstream Revenues and Benefits systems and automate processing of online Revenues and Benefits transactions.

We track and monitor the automation rates, review these with customers and compare them with others. This helps you achieve more by freeing up skilled resources that are lost to manual checking and processing. As budgets tighten, demand and expectations grow and resources are stretched thinner, you're being asked to do more. Whether you use NEC Revenues & Benefits (previously known as Northgate), Capita or Civica, our end-to-end eCAPTURE and webCAPTURE digital process automation services will help you to bridge the gap.

All standout digital transformation success stories begin somewhere...

No matter what your starting point is, get in touch and our team will arrange an informal conversation to understand what improvements you want to make and why, explore ways digital process automation may be able to assist and, if you need it, provide help to write a business case based on achieving those goals.

hello@govtech.co.uk | [01285 659286](tel:01285659286) | www.govtech.co.uk



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