SANDWELL MBC

UNIVERSAL CREDIT DIGITAL SERVICE (UCDS)

Taking back control of increasing
ATLAS workstreams

Protecting service standards
throughout the pandemic.

- Automation filters out LCTR Notifications that are irrelevant to CT liability
- CT bill changes are accurate and up-to-date
- Significant reduction in unmatched cases
- 60% less time spent on each unmatched case
- Assessors' capacity increased by improved productivity

GOVTECH
AUTOMATION MADE SIMPLE

A Netcall Company

ABOUT SANDWELL MBC

- Services 325,460 residents
- Centred upon the 6 West Midlands towns of Tipton, West Bromwich, Rowley Regis, Smethwick, Wednesbury and Oldbury
- Benefit caseload peaked at around 43,000 cases in 2010-11 and has since halved
- Following transition to 'Full Service' UC in December 2018, LCTR Change Notifications accelerated

In April 2019, Sandwell asked Govtech for assistance in reducing the workload associated with processing daily files of HB Stop and LCTR Change Notifications.

Almost two years on, Ian Dunn, Revenues and Benefits Service Manager, speaks about Govtech's eCAPTURE UCDS, the impact it had on workload and productivity, and how it has helped during the last year throughout the pandemic.

Q **What problems and challenges were you originally looking to overcome?**

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A "By April 2019, combined HB/LCTR caseload was 24,700. By October, it was 22,333.

HB and LCTR administration subsidy grants in 2019-20 were cut by £177,000 and over the last 5 years 20 experienced members of staff retired and were not replaced. We expected those trends to continue.

The council now gets 82% of its income from Council Tax and Business Rates. It's essential that we maintain our performance and service standards. These aid collection by ensuring that Council Tax bills are accurate and up to date.

Rising LCTR entitlement changes, originating from DWP via ATLAS, consumed lots of Assessor time and constantly amending Council Tax bills was making collection more difficult.

The situation was unsustainable. Our funding, resources and experience levels were declining but LCTR workload was rising."

Q **What impact did UCDS have on your operations?**

A "We looked back at all Notifications received over a 3-month period. Firstly, matching rates had immediately improved.

Assessors used to spend around 40 minutes dealing with each unmatched case; with UCDS, there were few unmatched cases and each one was taking around 16 minutes less time to deal with.

UCDS filters out Notifications that are irrelevant to LCTR. Our LCTR scheme requires us to deduct the Housing Element from UC income – UCDS was enhanced to do this automatically. All of this had an impact on productivity. After around 6 months, we enabled new UCDS parameters so that it could look at claimant history, filtering out changes that we deem to be not significant.

This further reduced Assessor workload as well as the number of amended CT bills going out."

Q **Why do you say that UCDS is important to your wider Service?**

A "The last year has been like no other the Revenues and Benefits service has ever known. There is no doubt that UCDS, together with the other automation services Govtech provides in Revenues and Benefits, are what has enabled us to keep up with all our work. We are still on top of everything."

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, Capita or Civica, our end-to-end eCAPTURE and webCAPTURE digital process automation services will help you to bridge the gap.

Have you ever asked yourself...

- How do I manage the Universal Credit workload associated with the daily Change Notifications?
- Will the problems get worse? Especially with the increase in reported changes as the economy opens-up, and incomes begin to fluctuate during an extended recovery?
- Does my current automation solution help, or is it just cluttering up CTS case histories with irrelevant change reports?

If so, then why not talk to us? Simply get in touch to explain what you need and explore how Govtech's UCDS can help your team to keep on top of this workload.

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