WAKEFIELD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering savings, improving outcomes

Using digital automation to reduce manual input, limit intervention and free up much need manpower.

- £130,000 cashable savings within the first year
- £750k aged debt recovered
- >40% of data entry for benefit forms eliminated
- 4,000 staff hours saved p.a.
- 0.5% shift up on in-year recovery

GOVTECH
AUTOMATION MADE SIMPLE

A Netcall Company

ABOUT WAKEFIELD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

- Services 325,000 citizens
- Council Tax base of 155,000 properties
- 29,000 Housing Benefit claimants
- District formed in 1972, and made up of 21 wards

BRIEF

Achieving a balanced budget is a challenge that councils face every year but, with continuing pressures, this has become even more challenging. Demand for services is rising, whilst expectations for how services will be delivered, particularly to vulnerable citizens, have grown. With resources stretched thinner, timely support decisions and rapid processing of changes is vital to aid sustainable collection plans.

Four years ago, Wakefield needed to reduce its operating costs and improve service delivery, whilst freeing up staff to focus on debt recovery. Wakefield chose Govtech to help deliver these objectives and the subsequent digital transformation in Revenues & Benefits is still paying dividends.

SOLUTION

Digital transformation to enable a 24/7 mobile friendly service, where customers could transact with the council in their own time and through their channel of choice would, through reducing unnecessary contact and automating processing, release team resources to focus on more pressing priorities.

> We wanted to reduce the amount of time spent on manual data input and records checking in Revenues and Benefits, so we drafted a business case to look at the impact of online self-service with automation. We looked at various suppliers and, whilst other products appeared cheaper on paper, only Govtech's webCAPTURE and eCAPTURE services could show a proven reservoir of customer automation data and outcomes that would underpin our business case.
>
> Anthony Derbyshire, Business Development Manager

RESULTS

Having created the case for change based on outcomes, Wakefield's team have diligently measured these. In Benefits, the return was immediate. eCAPTURE fully integrated the council's existing online form with the Benefits system, eliminating manual data entry and clerical checking on 12,000 forms. This saved 3,000 - 4,000 hours per annum.

With webCAPTURE, Council Tax customers were able to report changes of address, apply for a sole occupier person discount or create a Repayment Arrangement online and landlords could report tenancy changes. With transactions being automatically checked and then processed in the Revenues system, Wakefield measured first year 'cashable savings' of £130,000. Savings rose in Year 2 and thereafter, as more customers chose to serve themselves online, further reducing contact and footfall.

But the biggest gains were realised by re-assigning resources freed up by automation into Council Tax collection. Anthony reviewed: "When we went live in October with webCapture, our in-year collection rate at that point was 0.25% down on the previous year. However, by March, our in-year collection rate was 0.25% UP on the previous year. The 0.5% shift in the first 6 months of live running was worth £750,000."

Making IT implementation simple

When asked what Govtech were like to deal with during the implementation, Anthony's answer is simple: "As a project that involved a third-party provider, it was the easiest implementation I've been involved with in over 20 years of local government project management. Govtech's senior practitioners are former local government officers and communication was excellent throughout implementation. Everything went exactly as planned. There were no surprises. And it did exactly what it said on the tin."

Building on success

The automation provided by webCAPTURE was a cornerstone in the subsequent internal transformation of the Revenues & Benefits service. Former silos and lines of demarcation have been broken down and staff have been re-trained and cross-skilled to enable a more flexible and responsive service; proving invaluable during the Covid crisis.

"Our successful partnership with Govtech has enabled the Service to respond positively to our challenges whilst improving our service level."

Melissa Mallaby, Service Manager

£130,000
cashable savings within the first year

£750k
aged debt recovered; 0.5% shift-up

>40%
data entry for benefit forms eliminated

4000
staff hours saved per annum

24/7
mobile-friendly citizen service

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.

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.

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