South Ayrshire Council Delivers

82% Automation of Universal Credit Claims

Using Capacitygrid's UC Automation solution, in conjunction with tools from GovTech, means that benefits officers at South Ayrshire Council have to manually intervene in just 18% of claims.

Overview

With a population of around 110,000, across a geographic area of some 472 square miles, South Ayrshire is located on the west coast of Scotland and is bordered by North and East Ayrshire and Dumfries & Galloway to the south. The Council was formed during the 1996 administrative reorganisation, and is headquartered in the "County Buildings" in Wellington Square, Ayr – formerly Ayr Jail. The Council places an emphasis upon "Community Planning" and a belief that everyone working effectively together will lead to improved public services for the citizen.

The Challenge

The introduction of Universal Credit, and the impact of Covid-19, have placed an unprecedented, increased burden on benefit officers across the country. Announced back in 2010 and rolled out from 2013, Universal Credit is the combination of six benefits for working-age people who have a low household income and, by late 2019, over 2.5 million people were receiving it. However, it was not introduced without difficulties, especially around lengthy waiting periods before the first payment led to arrears in rent, Council Tax and other payments, in turn leading to a greater dependence on support from the Council. Given that 24% of new claimants were waiting over six weeks for full UC payment, the South Ayrshire team wanted to use automation to reduce the time taken to process claims for Council Tax Reduction that depend upon Universal Credit award and change notifications, in turn reducing the overall impact on the claimant.

The Solution

After the GovTech tools have stripped out excess and duplicate information from the DWP records that does not affect a CTR claim, the UC Automation Solution, provided by Capacitygrid, has been used at South Ayrshire Council to automate the majority of the remaining cases between the DWP and the Northgate processing system.

This has sped up processing, increased accuracy and allowed staff to focus upon more complex cases. The UC Automation service includes a suite of fifteen daily reports that aid effective workload planning; track the progress of cases that have been processed and enables data mismatches to be identified and resolved (which further improves automation rates). Cases that will require manual intervention are highlighted by the solution leading to further improvements in workload and exceptions management.

The Benefits

47% of DWP notifications are cleansed and removed before processing

The UC Automation tool successfully automates **66%** of all remaining claims

The need for benefit staff to manually intervene has been dramatically reduced (down to just **18%** of the original notifications)

Claims are processed quickly and more accurately and citizens do not face delays in receiving payment that may cause them significant financial issues.

"The combination of Capacitygrid's UC Automation solution and data cleansing tools from GovTech has massively impacted the processing of Universal Credit claims here at South Ayrshire Council. We have reduced all manual intervention down to just 18% on all claims meaning that staff can focus upon more complex or urgent cases. We are hoping to further increase automation levels to deliver further efficiencies. Capacitygrid have also enabled our teams to more easily handle the workload increase associated with the Covid-19 pandemic."

Jamie Falconer, Team Supervisor (Benefit Services), South Ayrshire Council

Contact us for more information

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