




# KIRKLEES MBC

UNIVERSAL CREDIT DIGITAL SERVICE (UCDS)

Parallel test proves the value in filtering LCTR Change Notifications

Digital process automation reduces and simplifies the workload associated with CTS administration.

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- 23% LCTR Change Notifications removed; no relevance to CT liability
  - Removed Notifications automatically archived in DMS for audit purposes
  - 62% fewer tasks created in the Benefits system
  - Assessor productivity improved
  - 75% estimated reduction in overall effort

# ABOUT KIRKLEES MBC

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- Services 440,000 residents
- Based in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
- 11<sup>th</sup> largest Local Authority in England

Since 2010, Kirklees has partnered with Govtech to digitise and transform its Revenues and Benefits service. In 2019, a collaboration enhanced the capabilities of Govtech's Universal Credit Digital Service, eCAPTURE UCDS, with remarkable outcomes.

Here the team at Kirklees talk about those outcomes, illustrated by the parallel testing of a batch of LCTR Changes received by the council over 1 week in November 2019.

## **Q What was the objective in collaborating with Govtech to enhance eCAPTURE UCDS?**

**A** "Our aim was to reduce the workload associated with CTS administration and avoid the unnecessary production of amended Council Tax bills.

Lots of claimants have regular but minor changes in income, reported to us by DWP. These minor changes meant some claimants were receiving amended Council Tax bills on an almost monthly basis. It was confusing them and complicated collection, especially via direct debit. So, we made a business decision to review CTS entitlement only 3 times a year unless claimants incurred a 'significant change'.

We specified business rules which Govtech wrote into UCDS that would identify anything we defined as a 'significant change' but otherwise would load Change Notifications only every fourth month, to keep our records up to date. Creating a 4-monthly default review would reduce our assessors' workload and aid collection by avoiding trivial amendments to Council Tax bills. UCDS parameters were enhanced and extended to fully support the concept of 'significant changes'."

## **Q How did you test the impact of changing your review procedure?**

**A** "To determine how much impact this change would have on CTS workload, we ran a parallel test on a single batch, containing files of LCTR Changes received over 1 week in November 2019.

The batch contained 1,929 LCTR Notifications. When loaded straight into the Benefits system, the batch of Notifications created 24,305 tasks."

## **Q What parallel test was performed and what were the results?**

**A** "We routed the same batch through UCDS before loading it. 446 Notifications (23%) were removed, either because they were irrelevant to CTS, or because the information within contained no 'significant changes' that affected Council Tax liability.

The filtering was an automated process which, for audit purposes, included creation of PDF renditions of the removed Notifications. These were marked accordingly and automatically archived in the Document Management System.

The remaining 1,483 Notifications in the batch were loaded but created only 9,343 tasks in the Benefits system."

## **Q How significant was this difference?**

**A** "In summary, UCDS filtered out 23% of Notifications, which were not loaded, and created 62% fewer tasks in the Benefit system. Further qualitative analysis, which we couldn't track statistically, showed that our assessors' tasks were also at the simpler end of the scale, compared to the original workload. Data quality had been greatly improved by the automated checking routines in UCDS and better data quality meant fewer tasks were being created.

We concluded it was reasonable to assume that overall effort required to process a batch containing a whole week's worth of Notifications had been reduced by close to three-quarters.

And we think there is a longer-term benefit to filtering out Notifications. We are no longer cluttering up CTS case histories in our document management system with 'LCTR Change Notifications' that didn't change anything in the Benefits system. In future, this means it will be simpler for assessors to review and make sense of case histories and explain these to claimants."

## ABOUT GOVTECH

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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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