



Case Study



Monkland Towpath

"Civica's EDM & Workflow is helping North Lanarkshire to improve every area of its benefit claims processing including combating fraudulent applications. The Civica system also includes a mobile working module for our investigation officers."

*Jim Jardine, Private Sector Manager,
North Lanarkshire Council*



North Lanarkshire Council benefits with paperless claims

North Lanarkshire Council saves over £200,000 per year assisted by the introduction of Civica's EDM & Workflow benefits system

With five million paper documents and growing, North Lanarkshire Council's Benefits department turned to Civica to modernise its benefit claims' application process to reduce its onsite document storage and ensure uniformity in its processes.

Civica, the leading software and services supplier to the public sector, helped the council scan every document relating to benefit claims into Civica's Electronic Document Management (EDM & Workflow) system, which has had the knock on effect of simultaneously increasing the Council's already excellent speed of claim turn around times and helping achieve cost savings of more than £200,000 per year.

The Process pre-EDM - a document mountain

With more than 42,000 people claiming private or council tax benefits, North Lanarkshire Council is already rated in the top ten councils in UK for claim turnaround times by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). However the Council had gone as far as it could with efficiency improvement in its paper-based benefit claims process.

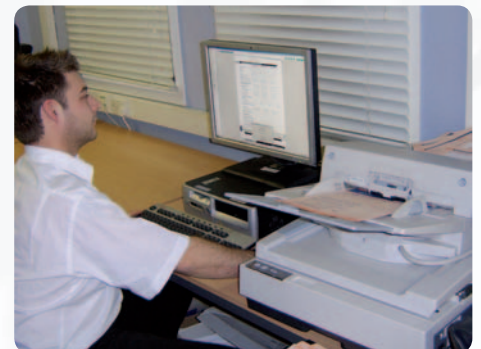
Before 'going electronic', the councils set-up for benefit claims included decentralised Rent Rebate and Council Tax Benefit-only teams and a centralised Rent Allowance section. Rebate employees were based in 10 "First Stop" shops and housing offices with the entire benefits section employing 138 staff in 122 posts in total. The teams ensured good processing statistics meaning that North Lanarkshire was rated in the top quartile for most quarters in the government's Performance Targets index.

Jim Jardine, Private Sector Manager, Finance and Customer Services Department, North Lanarkshire Council, said:

"Prior to the introduction of EDM we already had well motivated teams who were instrumental in winning the IRRV 'Benefits Team of the Year' award for Scotland, gained a strong benefit fraud inspectorate report and hit performance targets year-on-year.

"In terms of efficiencies, it was difficult to see that we would better our already strong benefits claims processing average of 17.5 days. The main reason for going electronic was to combat our storage problem with the sheer amount of paper that we had to keep on file which was taking over our offices, although we always recognised the benefits of moving to electronic claims.

"The volume of paper meant that some time was lost moving it around and caseload management could be difficult and time consuming with many staff focused on administration. Securing a Department of Work and Pensions Performance Standards grant of £239,000 helped us fund the technology and the fact that other councils in our region used the Civica EDM & Workflow application convinced us that we should make the move to electronic."



North Lanarkshire Council currently benefits from using the following Civica solutions



Process & Document Management



Contact Management



Revenues & Benefits



Housing



Environment



Traffic & Streets



Planning



Finance



Legal



Pensions



Health & Social Care



Education & Skills



Managed Services



Consulting



Software Licensing

Making the change

North Lanarkshire tendered its bid for an EDM & Workflow supplier via the European Journal and whittled a list of nine suppliers down to a shortlist of four. The criteria used to pick Civica included, value for money, functionality, capability and commitment to deliver and the commercial standing of the business. Following three reference site visits, Civica was chosen as a £150 million company that supplies 89% of local authorities in the UK with software and services.

To ensure that the change to an electronic process went as smoothly and as quickly as possible, team resources were allocated to maximise the time spent on the project with four employees from the different benefits sections focused entirely on the implementation. After a meeting with Civica's project manager, a staged roll-out across North Lanarkshire offices was planned to be completed within a five month project.

Training for employees was scheduled to coincide with the roll-out of the technology. After the Authority had held initial awareness sessions Civica provided 2 full days end-user training with all benefits employees. These were scheduled one month prior to the system going live in each office.

Two members of the Council's project team joined each specific office two to three days before the Civica technology went live and then one member of the project team was seconded for two weeks following the go live date to answer queries and provide assistance. While all outstanding documents, including cases awaiting information, were scanned and indexed prior to the go live date, scanning and index training was completed the first week the system went live.

Benefits for benefits

Jim Jardine said:

"We did have a few staff resistant to change but once they had completed the training and started using the new system, all the staff were very positive as they realised that the new system would make processing claims easier."

"Civica helped us alleviate the storage problems and paper documents are now shredded three months after scanning and indexing. Large scale and time consuming administration duties were removed immediately following go live; such as mail matching and counts as well as filing and the whole authority is now able to access cases wherever they are instantly."

"We have saved money in terms of storage and postage costs as we no longer send documents to different offices across the council and also in printing and copying documents. However, the real savings came in terms of the temporary administration staff we would have needed to continue to administer five million paper documents."

Additionally, Civica's EDM & Workflow application has helped North Lanarkshire Council improve its customer service and workload management by benefiting from:

- increased citizen confidence in claims process across the council
- consistent processing due to workflow



Auchinsarry Marina

- improved management information using Civica's reporting solution
- staff performance and feedback improvements
- clearer identification of work patterns for resource allocation
- increased flexibility in the allocation of workloads

Jardine continued:

"The already high level of confidence that our employees and citizens have in our benefits claims process has been enhanced by Civica's EDM & Workflow technology. We have a motivated staff and improved our customer service which has added benefits to removing our paper mountain."

"Civica's EDM & Workflow is helping North Lanarkshire to improve every area of its benefit claims processing including combating fraudulent applications. The Civica system also includes a mobile working module for our investigation officers."

North Lanarkshire has supplied its fraud officers with 17 laptops equipped with secure software so that the fraud officers have all the necessary documentation they need at their fingertips when making home visits. The software on the laptops is password-protected and will only work with specific laptops providing several layers of security.

"We have overhauled every aspect of our benefit claims processing by implementing Civica's EDM & Workflow application quickly and simply. We have also cut our benefits processing average from 17.5 days to 16.2 days, which I didn't think it was possible to improve on, so I'm very happy to be proved wrong and for the council to move further up the DWP performance rankings."

"Now we've demonstrated the real benefits of the Civica system, other areas of the council are now considering using EDM & workflow."

"Future developments for the benefits team include centralising our scanning and indexing so that one team, in one location receives all incoming documentation and we also want to look into home working options for our staff to improve our processes and use the flexibility of the system to its full potential," said Jardine.

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