

Benefits and Revenues

Benefits and Revenues Review

South Lanarkshire Council

Summary of Request

South Lanarkshire Council contacted the change team in May 2017 with a request for support related to an ongoing review of its Benefits and Revenues and Customer Contact Centre. The change team supported the end-to-end process by collating information from our network of councils, providing research into benchmarking and innovative practice, providing customer journey mapping training and a critical friend role. The support aided the development of a comprehensive options appraisal, led by South Lanarkshire Council, that will inform its improvement work.

Background

When South Lanarkshire Council contacted the Improvement Service, the first phase of the service review had already been implemented with associated savings of £800,000. The savings had been realised by a reconfiguration of the face-to-face service provision and closure of cash halls.

The aim of the second phase of the review was to provide a more holistic customer approach. Phase two had targeted substantial additional savings through reducing the 40,000 contacts a month to the call centre and by enabling more effective back-office integration by channel shift.

Improvement Service Support

The change team and South Lanarkshire Council agreed on required support including information sharing, research and capacity building. The aim was to use the information gathered to inform the 'to be' situation.

Research of performance measures and staffing structures in Scottish councils

The change team reached out to the Change Managers Network and key contacts to collate information on performance measures and staffing structures across councils. The research resulted in a workbook with 172 different performance measures across nine councils and several examples of staffing structures. Analysis of the data was performed to benchmark the performance indicators used at South Lanarkshire. The work further provided insight into councils who were currently undergoing reviews which could enable collaboration between councils.

Innovation and best practice across the UK: back-office integration, myaccount and Universal Credit

In the busy day-to-day life of councils there is rarely resources to research and collate information on innovation and best practice. At the start of the support process South Lanarkshire and the change team agreed on areas for research that would help to inform the review. The research resulted in a report with examples of back office integration across the country, data and examples from colleagues at the Improvement Service in regard to myaccount and innovative practice from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework council tax network. A final area of interest was Universal Credit where the change team identified lessons learned and opportunities for successful implementation.

Customer journey mapping training

As part of the move to a more customer centred approach the business analysts in the change team provided customer journey mapping training and a critical friend role in terms of the maps that South Lanarkshire produced.

Impact/Result

The research conducted by the change team and the customer journey mapping exercises helped to inform a comprehensive options appraisal for improvement. A few examples include:

- Identified an opportunity to reduce waiting times and increase enquires answered at first point of contact and amend housing benefits to make more user friendly through customer journey mapping.
- Implement integrated forms for uplift requests removing high volume enquiries involving ineffective processes.
- Introduction of online integrated council tax forms for Direct Debit, discounts exemptions and change of address for auto uploading to introduce back office updates without manual intervention.