

Northgate Public Services, our current Revenues and Benefits IT supplier, were asked to provide proposals in respect of new technology which would deliver the following:

- Reduced transcription-related errors
- Enable electronic customer self-service

They were also asked to consider:

- Excellent current PIs which need to be maintained
- Reductions in budgets
- A significant increase in change of circumstances mainly due to ATLAS
- The planned replacement of Housing Benefit by Universal Credit around October 2013
- Delivery of telephone/face to face services via a Corporate Contact Centre

The following two-phase approach was suggested:

Phase 1 - Implement eCAPTURE

What is eCAPTURE?

It is a modern, hosted electronic data capture service. In Revenues and Benefits, Northgate eCAPTURE is used to extract content from new claims, LAIDs, LACIs (DWP electronic documents) and Intervention forms.

Pros

- Eliminates transcription-related errors immediately by transforming scanned images of paper claims into electronic claims, eliminating data entry by staff
- Significantly reduces clerical workload by performing 1,000 validation checks automatically on each claim, providing assessors with a checklist for every new claim loaded into Northgate
- Frees up two assessors (based on 6,500 new claims/LAIDS/LACIs per annum)

Cons

- Does not process change of circumstances (we have already processed over 50,000 in 2011/12)
- A new electronic application form is required to maximise performance

Cost

Based on current caseload, the set-up costs would be £35k, with an added annual fee of £40k.

Phase 2 - electronic Self Service (eForm package)

With eCAPTURE in place and the acquisition of a suitable e-Form package, we are then ready to address electronic Customer Self Service.

This approach moves the service away from 'paper' applications and allows both staff and customers to input their details directly onto the system.

In some of the bigger London authorities, they are equipping their service centres with booths, chaperoned by floor-walkers who assist claimants to fill in eForm claims; a means of assisted self-service. These claims are then risk scored using the Coactiva RBV service, (a product that Northgate promotes) then routed to eCAPTURE.

Cost

Costings for Phase 2 are vague, as it depends on how the authority decides to develop the system.

An electronic package is essential and would cost in the region of £30k. If you then purchased the risk assessment tool, Coactiva RBV, you could add another £10k to the total.

If you followed the London authorities' model, you would need to acquire booths and associated equipment.

Financial implications over a 2 year period, ie April 2012 – March 2014

Phase 1 -

Outgoings

Set up costs x 1 -	£35k
Annual fees x 2 -	£80k
TOTAL	£115k

Possible savings

Assessors x 2	(£100k)
---------------	---------

Net	£15k
-----	-------------

Phase 2 -

Outgoings

eForm package	£30k
Risk Based Verification service	£10k
Associated equipment	£10k
Staff training	£2k
TOTAL	£52K

Possible savings

Administration (less verification)	(£10k)
------------------------------------	--------

Net	£42k
-----	-------------

From the above figures, the investment required outweighs the potential savings.