

Redcar & Cleveland Council

# In partnership with Liberata, Delivers Channel Shift Activity and Significantly Improves Customer Satisfaction Levels

## Overview

Redcar & Cleveland Council is a unitary authority in the North East of England to the East of Middlesborough, covering an area of 95 square miles and a population of some 137,000. The main settlements are Redcar, Guisborough and Saltburn-by-the-Sea with the adjacent Tees Estuary being highly urbanized. Away from this, much of the area is farmland, with the southern area forming part of the North Yorkshire Moors and the North Yorkshire Heritage Coast to the East. Steel production was an important employer in the region but the majority of the steelworks closed by 2015. Now, centered on the Wilton plant, the chemical industry is more important to the area's economic future with companies such as Sembcorp, SABIC, Lotte Chemical, Huntsman and Biffa Polymers providing employment. UK Wood Recycling Limited has a major facility that provides waste wood for fuel across the Wilton site.



# The Challenge

Redcar and Cleveland Council was aware of the levels of social deprivation across the area and the relatively high numbers of vulnerable citizens that were reliant on support services. Customer enquiries were dealt with in a multi service contact centre meaning that some customers experienced longer wait times.

Officers realised that a new approach needed to be taken to ensure all citizens received the support that they required from a specialised, experienced team and that that the Council became easy to deal with in a prompt, efficient and cost-effective manner.

## The Solution

Redcar and Cleveland Council The council were already in partnership with Liberata to deliver Revenue and Benefits processing services and decided to extend that work to incorporate Customer Services.

This enabled Liberata to deliver Revenues, Benefits and Recovery services through a highly trained, specialist team of advisors. Liberata has been supporting local authorities across the United Kingdom, with a range of services, for over forty years so Redcar and Cleveland were well positioned to benefit fully from that experience. The "on-boarding" process took just eight weeks, with the services delivered to target from week one.

## The Benefits

90% of calls now answered within the target of 60 seconds

Customer satisfaction levels are now in excess of 90%

Customer Contact Centre headcount has been reduced by 30% allowing staff to focus on key service delivery

Average speed to answer reduced to just 30 seconds by implementing a First Point of Contact resolution

51% of calls are resolved for the customer first time

The innovative "Link Me Up" service won a Bronze award in the UK National Contact Centre Awards in 2020 ("Most Positive Effect on the Community")

The contact centre has been accredited for the last six years with The Contact Centre Association Global Standard V7 – Liberata being the first outsourcing organisation to achieve this accolade.

*"Contracting Liberata's Revenues and Benefits Telephony Services has worked well for us at Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. Prior to handing over services, calls were dealt with by a generalist 'in house' call centre. Not all of the staff were revenues and benefits skilled meaning that revenues and benefits specific enquiries were sometimes held in unacceptably long call queues, behind general enquiries. Our digital offer was also not very advanced. The wider contract arrangements with Liberata involved launching up-to-date digital products for online account management and claim facilities. Liberata's telephony services were experienced in encouraging channel shift to these products in their daily interactions with callers. This has worked extremely well and significant channel shift has been achieved resulting in faster claim and change processing, less complaints and lower call volumes. We are very pleased with how things are progressing so far"*

**Mike Oyston, Strategic Service Lead Local Taxation and Support, Redcar & Cleveland Council**

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