

Case study: North East Lincolnshire Council

Experian's Residency Checker helps North East Lincolnshire Council increase revenue by £241,000



Client

North East Lincolnshire Council is a unitary authority with a population of 158,900. The last full review of single person discount (SPD) claimants was undertaken in 2003 and up until recently, approximately 26,000 citizens were benefiting from the discount.



Challenge

In October 2007, the Council decided to undertake a review of these 26,000 SPD claimants to ensure that they were all eligible to receive the discount going forward. The review would demonstrate good council governance and minimise the risk of discounts being incorrectly awarded. Additionally, it would also ultimately maximise council tax revenue.

Solution

North East Lincolnshire Council utilised Experian's Residency Checker to assist with the management and audit of its SPD claims.

Experian processed all of the addresses currently claiming SPD, provided by the Council, through their extensive databases to return an indication of the number of adults residing at a property.

The results showed that of the 26,000 cases, approximately 6,000 were identified as having one or more additional adults living at the address. A review form and reminder letters were sent to these 6,000 occupants asking for confirmation of their circumstances. Where North East Lincolnshire Council suspected a

claim to be potentially fraudulent, a second file was processed to return the names of the individuals believed to be resident at the property.

Key to the success of Residency Checker is the breadth of data it accesses. A range of up-to-date data sources is used in combination to create a picture of the residency make-up, at any given point in time, of each address submitting a claim for discount.

Results

North East Lincolnshire Council has removed the discount from 964 claimants. This represents 16 percent of the cases received. In monetary terms, this equates to approximately £241,000 in increased revenue for the Council. Additional revenue has also been generated as some of the cases have been back dated.

By continuing to use Experian's Residency Checker, the Council is confident that there will also be substantial future savings.

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“The service provided by Experian has been far more successful than we originally envisaged. We have not only improved our SPD review procedure considerably but have also seen a significant increase in council tax income. The advantages of the exercise are clear and we are now confident that many council tax accounts are more accurate than before the exercise was conducted. The exercise has been a resounding success and will serve as an excellent platform for the future governance of not only single person discounts but other discounts and exemptions applied to council tax accounts within the Authority.”

**Richard Catlyn
Income and Collections Manager
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