The island of Guernsey streamlines social benefit programs and improves service delivery

The IBM Cúram solution helps an island provide better service and improved programs for its residents

Overview

The need
Existing systems:
- Were outdated, expensive to maintain and didn't provide flexibility to add new programs
- Were geared toward programs instead of delivering outcomes to citizens
- Required a large range of benefits to be managed separately

The solution
Selected the IBM Cúram Social Program Management solution that:
- Integrates multiple programs into a single platform
- Is capable of managing multiple benefits, and handling return-to-work programs
- Is built on the idea of transforming traditional service delivery methods into an outcomes-based, client-centric model

The challenge of integrating social benefits

Located off the coast of France in the English Channel, the island of Guernsey is known throughout Europe as a top vacation destination—especially for those who love scenic coastlines and unrivaled seafood. In addition to the wonderful scenery and delectable food it offers residents year round, Guernsey's move to integrate its social security benefit programs has made it an even better place to live.

In the past, the Guernsey government relied for too long on aging systems that were expensive to maintain and were geared toward programs instead of delivering outcomes to the residents. Furthermore, while the number of benefits available to Guernsey residents is—as it is in the UK—extensive, managing each program separately through a dated interface and making enhancements or introducing new benefits in a coordinated way was growing increasingly difficult.

Clearly it was time for a change. A few years ago, Guernsey's Social Security Department assembled a business case that called for integrating all of the department's social benefit programs. The new integrated platform would streamline and strengthen the island's benefit programs and lay a foundation for Guernsey to build on in the future. The only challenge was finding a solution provider that would be a good match.

The benefits

- Faster and more accurate eligibility decisions for citizens with a solution that adapts to the differences in rules between various benefits programs and to changes in the law that might affect requirements
- A reduction in potential errors and overpayments due to automated and integrated program rules
- A new foundation on which to build for the future

Solution Components

Software

- IBM Cúram Social Program Management Platform

The solution for managing multiple benefits effectively

After an extensive search of solution providers, the department decided that the IBM Cúram Social Program Management Platform was the strongest choice.

Few government services have a more direct and relevant impact on citizens' lives than social benefit programs. Therefore, the department considered it important that Guernsey's new solution was capable of managing multiple benefits and handling return-to-work programs. The IBM® Cúram Social Program Management Platform, which was built on the idea of transforming traditional service delivery methods into an outcomes-based model, proved to be a great fit.

The IBM Cúram solution is a comprehensive, commercial off the shelf (COTS)-based software application that integrates multiple programs into a single platform. By replacing multiple infrastructures and disparate systems, Guernsey's Social Security Department was able to move away from the program-driven business model and adopt a client-centric approach. The IBM Cúram solution integrates an array of human service programs, freeing government employees from managing disconnected systems and allowing them to focus—and deliver—on citizens' needs and outcomes.

Results of the IBM Cúram solution implementation

The IBM Cúram solution integrated 23 social programs for the island, improving caseworker efficiency and helping to deliver better outcomes for the clients they serve. "What we've got now with IBM Cúram is a more user-friendly solution that provides a holistic view of the citizen, allowing us to more easily and effectively manage outcomes," said the department's Deputy Chief Officer.

The IBM Cúram solution readily adapts to the differences in rules between various benefits programs and to changes in the law that might affect requirements. Ultimately that means citizens receive faster and more accurate eligibility decisions from government benefit programs. And because program rules are automated and integrated, the system reduces the potential for making errors and overpayments.

Besides improving the accuracy of eligibility decisions, the new technology also makes those decisions easier to explain. Prior to deploying the IBM Cúram solution, department employees commonly sifted through two separate databases to find information justifying eligibility rulings, particularly when claims were denied. Now, Social Security Department employees can easily access all the appropriate data and expertly explain the reason for determination.

"We've got means-tested benefits, we've got insurance-based benefits, we've got benefits funded from general revenue or taxation, we've got short-term benefits like the sickness benefits, unemployment benefit, and longer-term benefits, like the pensioners benefit and bereavement benefits," said the department's Deputy Chief Officer. "There are about 23 of these different types falling into these different categories. They are all administered by the IBM Cúram application. There's a fair amount of interplay between the benefits so if you've got something like supplementary benefits, it will have to take into account if the person's receiving another benefit for say, unemployment, in order to work out how much is due to the person."

The IBM Cúram rules engine also helps remove organizational boundaries, giving the department an enterprise-wide perspective on the eligibility of citizens for various social programs. With 23 different benefits being processed, having a single, standardized system makes the Guernsey Social Security Department much more effective.

"We've been able to use the IBM Cúram Rules Engine to automate a lot more of the rules than in our legacy application, so a lot more of the expertise is within the system, which means staff training requirements are a lot less," the Deputy Chief Officer explained. "People still have to understand what the system's doing, but they don't have to apply a lot of it themselves. So in terms of staff training, it's excellent."

The IBM Cúram solution gives Guernsey's Social Security Department a new foundation on which to build for the future. The system will continue to enable Guernsey to provide the optimum benefits delivery and adapt to new benefits while keeping citizens at the forefront of all of their decisions.

For more information

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