Bottomline

The Vale of Glamorgan Council Supports Residents with Cost-of-Living Payments

Financial Support to Help with the Rising Cost-of-Living

The Vale of Glamorgan Council provides financial support to the most vulnerable people in society. With many people feeling the strain on household budgets due to the rising cost-of-living and high energy prices, additional funding is more important than ever.

The Council wanted eligible people to be able to claim vital payments as quickly as possible. But the usual payment processes proved time-consuming and inefficient when dealing with tens of thousands of payments directly into individual residents' bank accounts.

Claudia Jeynes, Revenues Officer said "The first scheme that the Council paid took up a huge amount of resources across multiple departments. People had to apply for funds and we then spent a lot of time logging, tracking, and manipulating data in Excel. Tens of thousands of individual payments had to be set up on our finance system. It put a strain on resources and personnel, who still needed to do their day job after all."

Removing an Operational Headache

Faced with the introduction of a new cost-of-living scheme, the Council set out to find a better way of making the payments – one that could be set up instantly and with minimal intervention.

Sue Jones, Operational Manager Exchequer Services said, "We looked at different systems but Bottomline impressed us with a creative solution. Despite working to a tight timescale, we were able to rapidly deploy

VALE of GLAMORGAN
BRO MORGANNWG

CUSTOMER OVERVIEW

The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council is the governing body for the Vale of Glamorgan, one of the principal areas of Wales. The Council provides a multitude of services, ranging from education to environmental protection, housing and the issuing of birth certificates, to planning and highways maintenance.

BENEFITS

- Helped residents claim vital cost-of-living payments
- Ensured vulnerable members of society did not miss out on funding
- Significantly reduced manual effort involved in making high-volume payments
- Improved ability to respond to new financial support schemes
- Reduced volume of inbound queries

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Payouts Automation. This was critical as financial support schemes are often announced at short notice. It immediately removed a large operational headache and enabled us to help residents claim financial support more efficiently. It was such a success that we rolled the same solution out to administer the second winter fuel payments scheme."

Introducing Automation and Digital Cheques

There is now a streamlined, automated service that can be deployed to support customer payments. "The first project was a lot smoother than anyone could have predicted and that is thanks to support from the Bottomline team. The whole process from creating and dispatching letters through to making payments just works seamlessly," says Sue.

If a resident pays their Council Tax by Direct Debit, cost-of-living payments can be paid directly into their bank account. Details of all other residents are uploaded to Bottomline PTX which creates a personalised letter with a unique QR code and short URL. Bottomline's Printing Service manages fulfilment and postage.

By scanning the QR code or typing in the short URL, individuals can access a secure, branded Council web form that contains a form pre-populated with their name and address.

Residents simply enter their bank account number and sort code. This is securely validated and verified by Bottomline's platform. Any failures are held for review by the Council. Once submitted, the application is locked to prevent accidental duplication or fraud.

Zero-Touch Payments

Payouts Automation makes a daily Bacs payment for batches of applications that have been approved. Sue comments, "Residents receive the funds directly into their bank account within one to two days. Bottomline's solution automates the vast majority of our payments. This frees up time to work with people that need additional support such as the vulnerable, elderly, or those without internet access, which is invaluable to us."

counter service and telephone helpline can quickly retrieve the relevant letter and work with residents to enter details on their behalf. "The first Payouts Automation project for a cost-ofliving payment was a big success with an 83% uptake from 9,167 letters. That is a lot of payments made in a zero-touch manner. It gave us the confidence to use Payouts Automationfor other similar payments," adds Sue.

Ensuring Financial Support is Received Efficiently

Claudia describes the impact at the Council, "The biggest benefit from using Payouts Automation is that we can get financial support to residents who need it the most, in the shortest time possible. Alongside this, we have made significant time and resource savings. I cannot imagine how we would meet our payment commitments without Bottomline.

We can respond to the announcement of a new rebate scheme and scale up to make hundreds if not thousands of payments. The bank verification is invaluable as it ensures higher rates of automated processing. Even our reporting capability is vastly improved. Payouts Automation makes it simple for us to see who has been paid and when.

The Council gets fewer inbound calls as we have made it easier for people to access financial support. We can also answer queries more effectively as we have all the relevant information to hand."

Happier Council Staff

Sue concludes, "By making payments directly into residents' bank accounts they receive vital funds more quickly and the whole process has been simplified. Payouts Automation has eliminated a lot of manual effort which has had a major impact on our workload. I can't overstate the positive effect it has had on working practices, and workload in our busy team. That's why I would recommend Payouts Automation to anyone looking for a robust, scalable solution that can cope with any volume of payments. Bottomline has always been on hand from day one to help and guide us, and we appreciate their expert support."

To Learn More About Payouts Automation and our Other Payment Solutions   **Contact Us**

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