

Maximising Council Tax Revenues through Strategic Partnership with Liberata

Customer: Devon County Council

Type of Project: Council Tax Revenue Optimisation and Fraud Mitigation

About Devon County Council

Devon County Council, the largest local authority in South West England, oversees a broad range of services, including education, social care, highways, libraries, waste disposal, and economic development. Serving 750,100 residents, the council is responsible for maintaining 12,850 km of roads, 3,500 bridges, nearly 5,000 km of public rights of way, 71,000 streetlights, and 20 recycling centres, while also supporting schools, children in care, adults living at home, and residential care services.



Business drivers

The challenge

Devon County Council (DCC) faces significant budget pressures due to reduced central government funding and rising demand for public services. Maximising Council Tax revenue became crucial, but the Single Person Discount (SPD) scheme (offering a 25% discount to single-adult households) posed a high risk of fraud and error.

Although SPD reviews were necessary, district councils lacked the resources to conduct them effectively, as the small portion of revenue they retained didn't justify the cost. This risked leaving substantial funds uncollected.

The goal

DCC wanted a cross-district solution that mitigated fraud risks, maximised Council Tax revenues, and alleviated the financial and administrative costs. The primary goals were to:

- **Reduce fraudulent SPD claims**
- **Ensure accurate and timely Council Tax billing**
- **Implement a cost-effective, risk-sharing solution that aligned with the fiscal prudence required in the current economic climate**

The Solution

To address these challenges, DCC decided to work with Liberata, as we are known for our innovative approach to revenue maximisation and risk-sharing. We provided a fully managed SPD review service, from data analytics to customer communications, ensuring that the councils only paid for proven results. This shared-risk model was ideal, as it protected public funds by guaranteeing that payments to us were only made when tangible benefits were realised.

Key aspects of Liberata's solution included:

- **Data-driven canvassing:** Advanced data analytics and risk scoring identified high-risk Single Person Discount claims for targeted and efficient review
- **End-to-end managed service:** We managed all aspects of the SPD review, including resident communications, intelligent online web forms, and contact centre support, tailored to meet each district council's needs, ensuring compliance and ease of integration
- **Support for vulnerable customers:** Our specialised support safeguarded vulnerable residents, ensuring legitimate SPD claimants were not adversely affected by the review process

A vision for the future

Building on this success, DCC and Liberata plan to expand our partnership. Plans include extending SPD reviews to cover Council Tax Support and National Fraud Initiative cases, conducting biennial reviews, and implementing Static Debt Recovery. These efforts will further strengthen the councils' financial resilience and are projected to bring an additional £1.85 million in revenue to DCC and £225,000 to the district councils.

A successful partnership

The partnership between Devon County Council, the district councils, and Liberata showcases the power of innovative, collaborative approaches in the public sector. By aligning incentives, leveraging data-driven insights, and focusing on service excellence, we have helped DCC maximise its Council Tax revenues while setting a new standard for sustainable financial management in local government.

As Angie Sinclair, Section 151 Officer at Devon County Council, stated:

“We are proud to have funded and supported the initiative shown by Devon Assurance Partnership at a time of significant budgetary pressure on finances and services across Local Government. The hard work and perseverance to make this idea a success clearly shows that innovative partnership working across multiple Councils and the Private Sector to create invest to save opportunities is a very real way to support Local Councils, front line services, and the public we serve.”

Why Liberata was selected

Devon County Council selected us for several key factors, including:

- **Shared-risk model:** We only charge for proven results. Matching DCC's "invest to save" mandate
- **Proven track record:** Our extensive experience in public sector revenue maximisation and fraud prevention
- **Collaborative approach:** Strong commitment to working closely with both County and district councils, tailoring solutions to their specific needs

