

Effective dual working in Housing Benefits

Fareham Borough Council's Housing Benefit Section has gone through significant change in the last 18 Months.

Hard work by all staff and DWP funded improvements has provided the authority with a high performing Benefits Service.

The Section had been performing at bottom quartile for many of the BVPIs. A "Get Well" plan was introduced to improve performance with additional resource being applied and several DWP performance Standard Bids were submitted.

One of these bids was to improve the use of Anite at work imaging system. A thorough review was undertaken of the administration and methodology of the system. Better use of document management system helped to improve performance and with a change of plan there was an under spend on the bid.

The balance of the funding was used to purchase an additional screen for each assessor and other team members. With two screens, staff have the core Northgate benefits system open on one screen and Anite document management on the other. When assessing claims assessors no longer have to open/close or resize windows and can work with other Microsoft office products such as Word

with all information visible to them.

Evidence and claim forms can be viewed and compared with the data held on the core system, greatly improving assessment times and reducing time when dealing with customer enquiries.

Assessors also have to complete input documents which were previously handwritten and had to be scanned and indexed onto the system. A document template has been set up on Anite that replicates the input sheet and is saved automatically onto Anite. The dual screen makes the completion of the input sheet significantly easier and has removed a substantial amount of scanning and indexing.

Staff had the choice as to whether they wanted to use dual screens. A test PC was set up and booking mechanism for officers to test drive the screens in a working environment was created. All officers in Benefits voted for dual screens and agree that they significantly help with



Zoey Finlason Team Leader (front) with Suzanne Ballard, Benefit Assessment Officer

their day to day workload.

A hardware refresh was taking place and the section had to purchase an additional screen and card for each PC. The cost per workstation was less than £250 and has proved to be one of the most effective changes in working practices and had made the use of document management into a truly paperless office as it can possibly be.