

Jacobs streamlines collections management for 185 local authorities

Britain's largest independently owned civil enforcement agency relies on CivicaCollect to underpin its operations

More than 185 local authorities throughout England and Wales trust Jacobs as their partner for enforcement and debt collection services.

Established over 60 years ago, the family firm began handling collections work in the 1980s. Today it manages, in separate instances, both local authority cases, and criminal cases on behalf of HM Courts and Tribunals Service.

A trusted collections partner

Jacobs previously managed its operations using a bespoke software solution. But as keeping the software updated became more of a struggle, the firm looked for a **more reliable solution that could more easily keep pace with change.**

In 2003, having assessed the market, Jacobs chose to migrate to CivicaCollect.

Not one-size-fits-all

"We develop client-specific workflows to accommodate each client's preferred enforcement and collection processes," says Paula Jacobs, Partner at Jacobs. **"We make sure our operations align with each client's expectations and business rules, because the way we work reflects directly on our clients' reputations."**

Working with vulnerable customers is a case in point. Jacobs has always captured, stored and reported on vulnerability data so that it can follow specific client-led processes for these cases. **"We need to make sure we get it right for each client,"** says Paula. **"For example, some clients ask us to manage vulnerable customers using a specific workflow; others ask us to return those cases without taking any further action."**

1

370,000 local authority cases managed annually

2

Single view of debt powers efficient collections and better debtor visibility

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Stable fiscal capability supports accurate client payment

"CivicaCollect is core to our business. It's a reputable and well supported debt recovery platform that's built to deal with high-volume debt streams with a considerable degree of automation."

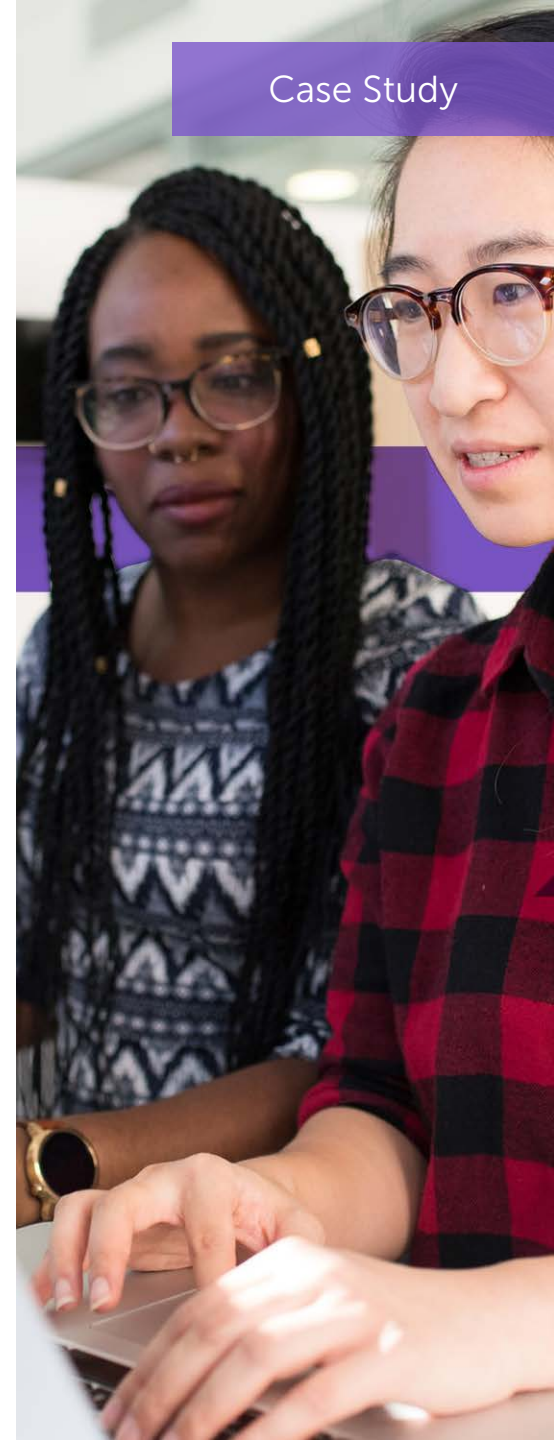
**Paula Jacobs, Partner,
Jacobs**

Learn more:

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The launch of the government's Breathing Space legislation further highlighted the need to treat vulnerable debtors with care, and led to Civica's development of the Breathing Space module for CivicaCollect. **"Using the API, we adapted this great new module so that we could capture additional vulnerability data for operational and client specific reporting purposes,"** says Ben Quinn, Technology Director.

"CivicaCollect links cases together to create a single view of debt. The solution was ahead of its time with this capability, which remains one of its key strengths."

**Paula Jacobs, Partner,
Jacobs**

The power of a single view of debt

Both Jacobs and its local authority clients want a single view of debt in the form of a unified profile per debtor. **"CivicaCollect links cases together to create a single view of debt,"** says Paula. **"The solution was ahead of its time with this capability, which remains one of its key strengths."**

This helps Jacobs collect multiple debts from the same person or business more efficiently, and gives clients a consolidated view of those debts across multiple systems, which they wouldn't otherwise have.

As local authorities become ever more data driven, Jacobs uses CivicaCollect reporting capabilities to provide clients with additional customer data captured during its enforcement and collections work. **"Our clients use the data we capture to update their own records,"** explains Ben. **"Working with Civica we've extended the excellent CivicaCollect reporting functionality to cater to this growing need."**

Clients also want performance stats — ranging from gross collections and number of cases on arrangement to breakdowns of returns and gone-aways. This is another area where Jacobs has added to existing CivicaCollect functionality to meet client demand.

Strong financials for client payment

Paula points out that accurately paying clients the money collected on their behalf is the most important aspect of Jacobs' business.

"That's why the stability of the fiscal side of the Civica solution — which we rely on as it stands — is so critical to our business," she says.

Ben also cites its flawless integration with financial systems like Northgate, Academy and Sage. **"What's great about CivicaCollect is that we haven't had to build an entire debt recovery solution from scratch,"** says Ben. **"Thanks to Civica's flexibility, we've been able to add our own capabilities to a capable, future-proof foundation."**

APIs for solution expansion

To meet its advanced requirements as an industry leader, Jacobs takes advantage of Civica-provided APIs to develop additional functionality on top of the CivicaCollect platform.

The firm's technology team has built a front-end desktop application for office staff and an iPad app for enforcement agents, and is finalising a new client-facing portal.

"The API agreement is excellent — it's really opened up how we use CivicaCollect, allowing us to add our own data capture fields and other features to what is a rock-solid foundation," says Ben. **"We combine those fields and features with CivicaCollect actions to enhance automation and help our people get more done."**

"CollectVisit has become a popular and effective day to day tool for our agents. Placing live case data at their fingertips, our agents are constantly informed and able to process and respond to case changes on the road quickly and efficiently."

**Ben Quinn, Technology
Director, Jacobs**

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