



## Dorset County Council makes charges fairer for adult social care



Civica's OnDemand Adult Social Care team supports the introduction of a fairer ASC charging policy by Dorset County Council.

### How to meet a challenging spike in workload.

In line with the Care Act, Dorset County Council has revised its charging policy for adult social care (ASC) services. Called **'Making Charges Fairer'**, the policy involves a more personalised assessment of each service user's disability-related expenditure, as well as an income maximisation check.

While new service users are assessed under the new policy, the financial support team in the council's adult and community services department needed to review all 2,900 existing users' assessments. The timing was challenging, as organisational changes had expanded the team's workload. Recruitment was well in hand, but time and effort were needed to get new joiners up to speed. In addition, deployment of a new financial system was underway.

**"It was too much to deal with alongside our everyday workload,"** says Julie Caswell, Financial Support Manager. **"So we decided to look for outside help with the financial assessment reviews."**

"Doing ASC financial assessments is skilled work; you also need people you can trust to handle sensitive personal and financial information. The Civica OnDemand service was a perfect fit."

**Julie Caswell**, Financial Support Manager — Adult and Community Services, Dorset County Council

### Outcomes

- ▶ **ASC financial reassessments carried out accurately by skilled, experienced personnel**
- ▶ **Assessment reviews completed on time, ready for the new financial year**
- ▶ **Council's own financial support team freed up to focus on business as usual and training new staff**
- ▶ **Ongoing support with new ASC financial assessments allows in-house staff to finalise migration to new financial system.**

## 1000

assessment reviews completed in 12 weeks



## end-to-end

case-handling by Civica OnDemand



## 100%

reassessment accuracy rate



With the help of Civica OnDemand, Dorset County Council are on the way to completing 2,900 ASC financial assessment reviews in line with its fairer charging policy, ready for the new financial year.

### Skills and experience you can count on

**“Doing ASC financial assessments is skilled work: we knew we couldn’t simply bring in generalist agency staff,”** says Julie Caswell. Training up non-specialists would have added to her team’s workload, when the whole point was to reduce it. **“You also need people you can trust to handle sensitive personal and financial information,”** she adds.



The council went out to tender and selected Civica’s OnDemand Adult Social Care service. **“The Civica OnDemand ASC service was a perfect fit,”** says Julie Caswell. **“Their DBS-checked financial assessors are trained and experienced, and can quickly step in and help.”**

Following a short period of familiarisation with Dorset’s policy, procedures and financial system, the Civica OnDemand team was ready to start work on 500 assessment reviews.

### Optimising the efficiency of project work

In agreement with the council, Civica’s ASC financial assessors took a full case-management approach to the reviews. As well as gathering information from service users by phone, they handled the reassessment calculations, communicated the outcomes to users, and updated the council’s financial system.

The Civica team completed the 500 reviews within the promised seven weeks. **“There was no constant stream of queries: they were efficient and effective, and really took the strain off my team,”** says Julie Caswell. **“Quality-checking a sample of the cases confirmed that the Civica team’s assessments were accurate.”**

With the first 500 cases completed smoothly, Julie Caswell assigned a further 500 to Civica. This was shortly followed by a request to complete financial assessments from the council’s own reviewing calendar.

**“The Civica ASC financial assessors are focussed solely on the task in hand – unlike the team here in house, they don’t get distracted by other tasks,”** she says. **“As an added bonus, they have direct access to the DWP’s Customer Information System, which helps accelerate this type of project work.”**

### External support that pays off

With Civica’s help, the council’s ASC assessment reviews look to be completed in plenty of time for the start of the new financial year. Any changes to contributions took immediate effect, helping the council to maximise its ASC budget; while service users could be confident they were receiving their full benefit entitlements.

As a next step, the council took advantage of the easy scalability of the Civica OnDemand service, retaining it to help deal with new ASC financial assessments while the in-house team completed the migration to its new financial system.

**“At first, I was sceptical about going out to tender for support with such specialist work, but our experience with Civica has been excellent,”** says Julie Caswell. **“The OnDemand team is very professional, and the ASC financial assessors understand all the rules and regulations. We’re delighted by the way everything is working out.”**

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Julie Caswell, Financial Support Manager – Adult and Community Services, Dorset County Council