

Subject:	Tell Us Once Service Implementation	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Policy O & S Cabinet	Date:	31 st October 2011 1 st December 2011
Report of:	Head of Customer Services	Portfolio Holder:	Customer Services
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That the Cabinet agree to implement the Department of Work & Pensions 'Tell Us Once' service be implemented by end of February 2012.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To seek authorisation for the implementation of the Department of Work & Pensions Tell Us Once service.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy.
- **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Issues with Tell Us Once computer system may cause additional delays to roll out of service.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 The report by Sir David Varney – 'Service Transformation: a better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer' published in December 2006 found that people often had to provide the same information to different Government Departments. It recommended that citizens, taxpayers and Government could benefit from the provision of a joined-up notification service provided through a single point of contact, particularly if those changes were to do with reporting a death, a birth or a change of address. As a result the Tell Us Once cross-Government programme, led by Department of Work & Pensions, was set up to look at developing such a service.

5.2 The Tell Us Once service provides an alternative method for notifying a birth or a death. Its use is voluntary. Citizens can use the service to notify a birth or death to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by attending in person at an office of any participating Local Authority, or by telephoning a dedicated Department of Work & Pensions Freephone

telephone service. The longer term aspiration is for citizens also to be able to report changes online. The service will save time and money for citizens, and enable government to provide a more efficient and accurate service.

- 5.3 The services for reporting a birth or death were developed and tested through a series of pilots. Pathfinders were then launched in November 2008. The national roll out of the Tell Us Once service began during 2011. By April this year the service was running in 42 Local Authorities and providing contact for up to 24 core services (including Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency, UK passport services and HM Revenues & Customs). However, this May there were some issues with the computer solution that was used to deliver the service. By September 2011 these issues were resolved and the rollout continued with another 160 Local Authorities signed up and agreeing to go live by the end of 2011. There is now over 90% sign up to the service and the implementation programme is due to come to an end in March 2012.
- 5.4 There will be benefits to Government and to individuals. Government (and taxpayers) will benefit from reductions in unnecessary contacts, faster and more effective identification of changes in customers' circumstances which may affect eligibility for benefits or services, and reductions in overpayments and fraud/error. Individual benefits include savings in telephone and postage costs, and reductions in the amount of time spent in providing information on new births to various government bodies.
- 5.5 There are 2 stages to the overall Tell Us Once service. The first stage is the registration stage and this will always be delivered by Lancashire County Council registrars.
- 5.6 When someone dies, the doctor who was treating the deceased will issue a medical certificate of cause of death to the relatives. The person who will be registering the death must take this certificate to the registrar's office. Occasionally, if the death was sudden or the doctor treating the deceased is unavailable, it may not be possible for a medical certificate of cause of death to be issued. If this happens, the death will have to be reported to the coroner which may lead to a delay in registering the death.
- 5.7 Ideally every death in England or Wales must be registered in the registration district in which it takes place within 5 days of the date of death. However, you can register a death that took place anywhere in the areas covered by Lancashire County Council by going to any of its registration offices. Information for the registration is given to the registrar by the person registering the death. The information, which is usually recorded on computer, is also recorded in the death register and the person registering the death signs the record.
- 5.8 Lancashire Registration Offices use an appointment system which is accessed by ringing 01772 326881. The Rossendale Office is a sub office, which is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, between 9am - 1pm and 2 - 4.30pm. Any appointments outside of this time would have to be made in a neighbouring districts registrar's office. The Rossendale office can be found at, 1 Grange Street, Rawtenstall, BB4 7RT.
- 5.9 The second stage which is more relevant to Rossendale Borough Council, is the enrichment stage and this will be delivered via a number of channels as follows:
- Telephony – Department of Work & Pensions free phone telephone service signposted by Lancashire County Council registrar at registration stage
 - Face to Face – Rossendale Borough Council officer delivers enrichment stage

following on from registration by Lancashire County Council registrar

- Self-Serve – This option will be available in 2012

- 5.10 Statistics for deaths in Rossendale are 663 per year approx. 12 per week. Based on Lancashire County Council pathfinder 54% of bereaved customers choose to use the Tell Us Once service. Of these 61% choose telephone as their preferred channel, 31% choose face to face as their preferred channel and the remainder were expected to choose self-serve. This would mean minimal resource requirements with an average of approximately 2 face to face interviews per week for Rossendale.
- 5.11 Members are asked to approve the proposed options for the delivery of the Tell Us Once service as detailed in this report.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising will be contained within existing budget resources.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

- 7.1 Legal comment is 'Participation in this voluntary scheme would require adherence to data protection legislation-all information must be treated securely and can only be used as the law allows.'

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

- 8.1 There are minimal resource implications and no associated training costs as this will be provided by the DWP through a thorough training DVD.

9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

- 9.1 Consultation was carried out as follows:-
- Management Team
 - Policy Overview & Scrutiny – a recommendation was made to clarify death and registration procedures within Rossendale. This has been implemented in Section 5.
 - Cabinet

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Detailed change in circumstance notifications available at the earliest point will improve efficiencies and in turn make cost savings to the Council. Other benefits include:
- Increased customer satisfaction
 - Providing assistance to vulnerable customers
 - Good publicity for the Council
 - Reduces duplication of information and longer term improves quality of information held in all Rossendale Borough Council systems.
 - Provides a joined up solution.