



BetterOff Welfare & Employment
Service Definition

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lookinglocal

Contents

Executive Summary 3

Service Overview 4

Benefits Calculator (entitledto) 6

Features and benefits 7

Customer responsibilities 9

Onboarding process headlines 9

Training.....10

Ordering and invoicing process 10

Termination terms 10

Contact details 10

Executive Summary

BetterOff with the money you're entitled to, BetterOff in work

Looking Local, co-owned by Kirklees Council (West Yorkshire), is a Public Sector technology provider that builds digital, self-service platforms to reduce pressures on local authorities and create financial and efficiency savings.

With inflation at a 30-year high and spiralling costs for rent, energy and food bills, the pressures on household finances have never been so tough. BetterOff Welfare & Employment is a digital, self-service solution that makes it easy for claimants to submit their benefits applications and redefines complex paper-based processes, removing high levels of contact.

Service Overview

BetterOff Welfare & Employment is a fully managed, turn-key solution designed by Looking Local in partnership with Kirklees Council Revenues & Benefits team to reduce the impact of cuts to their welfare advice budget by:

- improving multi-channel service provision;
- facilitating self-service;
- nurturing digital skills;
- combining/embedding benefits and employment advice in one digital space.

Primarily focused on Local Authorities' Revenues & Benefits departments, BetterOff Welfare & Employment was designed by Kirklees Council in collaboration with local Job Centres, claimants, training and voluntary groups, and has been developed by technology experts LookingLocal (co-owned by Kirklees Council).

BetterOff Welfare & Employment is a public-facing digital solution enabling claimants to apply for benefits online, allowing frontline staff time to focus on the more complex and vulnerable cases.

Key components of the service include a benefit eligibility checker (provided by entitledto – see below), which gives the claimant a figure of how much benefit they would be entitled to based on their individual circumstances. The technology then provides the claimant with direct access to the relevant forms and processes based on their personal needs. To ensure the highest possible online completion rate, expert guidance is provided within each form to support the claimant to answer the questions as fully and appropriately as possible. This guidance is in a variety of multimedia formats (from text to audio and video), and reflects the 'real-life' advice that frontline benefit staff give claimants.

To further ensure the highest possible online completion rate BetterOff Welfare & Employment is supported by webchat technology (procured separately) as well as the capability for 'co-production' on benefit forms between the claimant and online benefits advisors; think Google Docs meets Benefits Forms. In addition, forms can be saved and then returned to later, should the claimant wish to take a break.

BetterOff Welfare & Employment also offers translation capabilities to assist people whose first language is not English. Integrated with Google Translate, the solution enables claimants

Service Overview

to complete forms in their native/preferred language, then automatically translate the form back into English for submission. Not only does this make the service more accessible to our multicultural population and save people time, but the council also saves in terms of expensive and time-consuming interpretation services.

Integration with a range of job feeds from public, private and local job sites/sources means that users can search for jobs based on different criteria. BetterOff provides service users with job journal tools to easily capture any job-seeking activity that counts towards their Claimant Commitment. This journal can be shared with advisors via a 'Share your PIN' feature, and follow-up activities can be logged, all in line with the Universal Credit Claimant Commitment.

In addition to application forms, BetterOff Welfare & Employment enables users to apply and manage the benefit appeals process, and uses all means possible to ensure the highest monetary gain for each claimant, as well as a broad measure of 'monetary gain' across the local economy.

BetterOff Welfare & Employment works with national partners, including, but not limited to, the Money Advice Service, Citizens Advice, leading voluntary opportunity providers and multiple job sites.

BetterOff Welfare & Employment is fully compliant with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Benefits calculator (entitledto)

BetterOff Welfare & Employment uses the entitledto Benefits Calculator, which has a separate licence agreement and software cost. The calculator forms an integral part of the solution, and is itself listed within the Digital Marketplace and covered by the framework agreements. Similar to BetterOff Welfare & Employment, entitledto has a tiered pricing model dependent on organisational size.

Whilst we believe the benefits calculator is key to making the solution comprehensive and delivering the maximum benefit to both claimant and organisation, BetterOff Welfare & Employment can be deployed without it or with an alternative supplier's calculator embedded. If this were to be the case, an additional bespoke development cost would be agreed between both parties to cover the development and integration costs of an alternative calculator.

Features and benefits



Self-service solution
for all applicants



Fully managed
cloud solution



Accessible user
experience



High volume benefit forms with embedded multi-media guidance

Redefines complex paper-based process; removing high levels of contact



Embedded benefit entitlement calculator

Speeds up benefit application and appeals processes



Benefit form co-production capability (think Google Docs meets benefits forms)



Embedded translation engine enabling completion in any language



Entitlement-driven digital forms



Integration with national & local job feeds

Enables claimants to clearly compare potential benefits entitlement versus employment and promotes sustainable employment

Features and benefits



Job journalling via structured e-form templates

Pre-populates job journal in line with Claimant Commitment



Designed in partnership with experienced benefit advisors

Reduces welfare advice budget



Supporting content around budgeting and money management

Improves realised income and decreases financial sanctions on claimants



Care Act compliant



Supports integration with backend systems

Customer responsibilities

Customer responsibilities primarily focus on the issue of ‘culture change’ within their organisation; training staff to take the digital-first approach with all claimants, bar those who are vulnerable or have complex cases. There is also the consideration of liaison with benefit and employment partners across the community (i.e. CAB, Housing Associations, etc.) to ensure the widest possible adoption of BetterOff Welfare & Employment as the first port of call for benefit and employment enquiries and appeals.

Marketing of the service is also the sole responsibility of the customer; promotion, marketing, press work and wider communications all need to be factored into the delivery programme to ensure the widest possible exposure, take-up and ultimate success. Examples of previous campaigns in other locations are available.

Onboarding process headlines

- Product demonstration
- Business analysis of – but not limited to – local priorities, customer requirements, backend systems etc to ensure best local deployment and successful results
- Customisation of BetterOff Welfare & Employment in terms of localised content, design and branding
- Integration of local benefit/employment content (where appropriate)
- Quality Assurance (QA) testing
- Go Live

Training

Training materials have been developed by Looking Local and are available for re-use and repurposing within the annual licence agreement. BetterOff Welfare & Employment is a customer and agent-focused solution, which has been through significant user testing and is straightforward in its operation and usability. Primarily, we anticipate the need for training to be more focused on internal culture change in terms of staff and the move to digital-first service delivery, rather than how to use the solution itself.

Ordering and invoicing process

All ordering and invoicing will be handled by Looking Local Ltd, all invoices must be paid within 30 days of the date of issue.

Termination terms

60 days prior to contract end date.

Contact details

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