

**Devon
County Council
Streamlines
Highly Complex
Pension Returns
with Pension
Data Service**



Introduction

Devon County Council, based in Exeter, serves a population of approximately 800,000 in the non-metropolitan areas of the county.

It has responsibility for schools, social care, highways, libraries, trading standards and employs 4,736 people plus 7,748 in the county's schools.

“MHR Analytics overcame substantial challenges in our data and complexity of requirements to provide us with an invaluable platform that gives us confidence and ensures we serve the requirements of both the pension fund and the needs of thousands of Devon County Council employees and its customers.”

Janine Bennellick
HR Manager

Summary

Organisational objectives

- Accuracy in complex pension returns for thousands of employees
- Streamlining of processes for returns submission

Solutions

- Implementation of MHR Analytics (MHRA) Pension Data Service (PDS)
- Successful integration of historical data into returns process
- Bespoke service from MHRA team

Results

- 100 per cent accuracy in segmented pensions returns
- Streamlined processes through advanced automation
- Fast access to reliable data for HR and payroll employees



Devon County Council's challenge

The county council implemented iTrent, MHR's advanced HR and payroll platform in 2019, having decided their previous solution needed an upgrade. The council wanted to move to a more self-service culture, allowing employees to access the system from any device.

Through implementation of iTrent, Devon's County Council obtained a solution that enabled self-service for approximately 22,000 users working for the council and its payroll customers.

However, there remained a challenge of how to share information effectively and efficiently with their local government pension provider on a monthly basis with minimal manual intervention. The aim was to fully integrate iTrent with their pension provider, in the same way as their previous system, to ensure accurate monthly information was shared.

The most severe challenge was ensuring the remuneration statement requirements were delivered; this is produced for each employee who leaves the local government pension scheme.

It contains a detailed breakdown of the employee's pay over the 36 months prior to their leaving date; this results in a substantial number of reporting rows. It was also necessary for the solution to include data from the previous HR and payroll system and combine this with the data from iTrent.

In addition, a suite of regular monthly reports was required detailing starters, changes and amendments together with annual report requirements.



Struggling with the complexity

The county council wanted to go live with full integration of pensions returns simultaneously with its implementation of iTrent. However, due to the size of the project it was decided that this integration would not be ready in time for go live.

In addition, there was the added complication of including historical data from their previous HR and payroll system.

The delay between going live with HR and payroll and the Pension Data Service (PDS) was a challenge and meant that information had to be compiled and returned manually during this period.



MHR expertise required

After consultation, Devon County Council became an early-adopter of MHRA's highly innovative Pension Data Service (PDS).

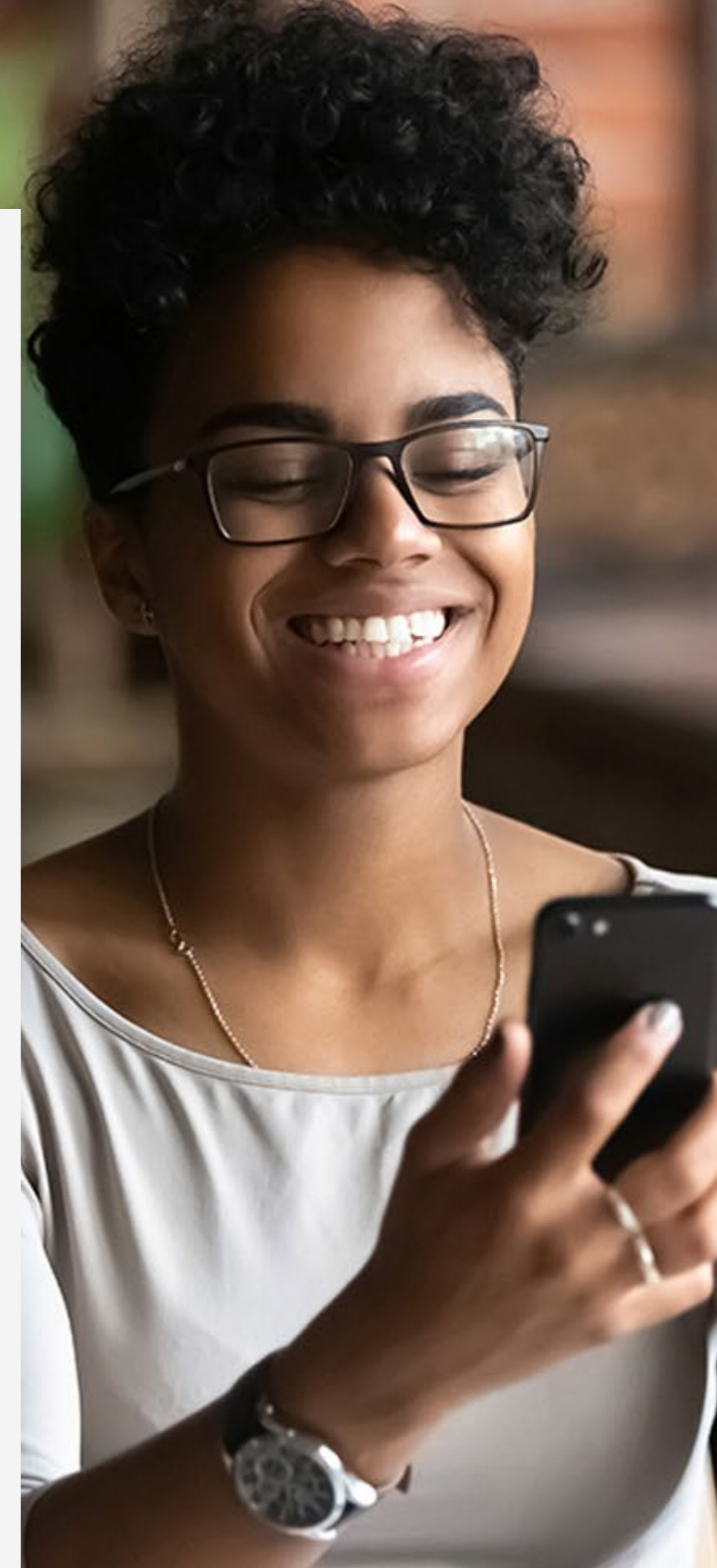
This has been purpose-designed as an all-encompassing solution, employing advanced automation to address the reporting challenges associated with 170-plus pension formats currently in use.

Adoption of Pension Data Service (PDS) allowed Devon County Council to integrate historical data in various flat-file historical documents to deliver 100 per cent accuracy. Pension Data Service (PDS) registers and reports all changes to an employee's hours or salary without difficulty.

This was a major undertaking, requiring a full-time project manager for the implementation, plus a manager from MHRA's team.

This dual management was necessitated by the size and complexity of the project. It was one of the largest projects MHRA had ever undertaken in terms of local government pension reporting.

It also involved extensive testing by Devon County Council to ensure that all the requirements were met. This solution was implemented within a year. This solution was implemented within a year, with MHRA providing extra support and a business-as-usual support desk.



Results

For Devon County Council the biggest benefit has come in reassurance about the accuracy of pension returns in detail and format and information is shared monthly in an automated manner.

There is also now minimal involvement for HR employees in the process, who have access to all the information they need in an efficient and timely manner. We continue to work with Devon County Council to improve the process further.

“The implementation of iTrent and self-service has been hugely advantageous; particularly during the pandemic. It has allowed our workforce to continue submitting claims and absence details from any location and device; it also allowed our payroll service to work from home.”



MHR

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