

Robots lend a hand with payment holidays at Leeds Building Society

Robots have played a vital part in sharing the workload with human colleagues at Leeds Building Society, supporting borrowers facing difficulty during the pandemic.

Fifteen robots have completed more than 100,000 tasks on more than 26,000 applications since the Government announced the introduction of mortgage payment holidays back in March. They were able to process transactions, update member accounts and send out confirmation letters and emails to provide peace of mind during this unprecedented time.

The rapid roll-out of mortgage payment holidays was a challenge for many lenders who had to scale up quickly to meet a growing number of member requests. Leeds Building Society collaborated with Blue Prism, who gifted extra robots to support the Society during this exceptionally busy time.

Colleagues from across the Society came together to develop an automated online process to make it easier for members to request a payment holiday, which went live just 10 days after the Government announcement on 17 March.

The simple process also reduced call volumes to the Society's Contact Centre, freed capacity to deal with more complex enquiries and reduced wait times for members who needed to speak with a Society colleague.

"We've developed our use of robotics and automation in recent years and the benefits to the Society, colleagues and our members and intermediary partners is clear - I'm pleased we were able to quickly implement this solution in order to support members during unprecedented and uncertain times," said Nick Young, Chief Transformation Officer at Leeds Building Society.

"Delegating repetitive, formerly manual tasks to robot workers frees up our colleagues to take on other responsibilities, develop their skills and support members with more complex inquiries which need the human touch.

"The quick roll-out of the mortgage payment holiday process also allowed us to adapt as a business to work more flexibly so we could ensure services were maintained.

"As the demand for mortgage payment holidays has fallen, we continue to look at how we can further integrate automation into our business processes in a way that improves service and efficiency for our members, and helps our colleagues work more effectively and feel greater job satisfaction."

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Notes to Editors

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The Society operates throughout the UK and had assets of £20.5bn at 30 June 2020 (£20.7bn at 30 June 2019). The UK's fifth-largest mutual has its head office in the centre of Leeds, where it has been based since 1886.

The Society won the title of Best Shared Ownership Mortgage Lender in the 2020 What Mortgage Awards, its fifth consecutive year of success in this category. It also received a Gold Ribbon from Fairer Finance for savings accounts for the third year running, based on customer happiness and trust, along with the ability to explain things clearly.

Blue Prism is a UK based multi-national software company, specialising in software which improves business enterprise and efficiency through Robotic Process Automation (RPA). The company has offices in the UK and the USA.