

Our journey

Merging the two former agencies successfully

Becoming a single agency has created the opportunity to improve performance and increase productivity.

Specifically, we have been able to:

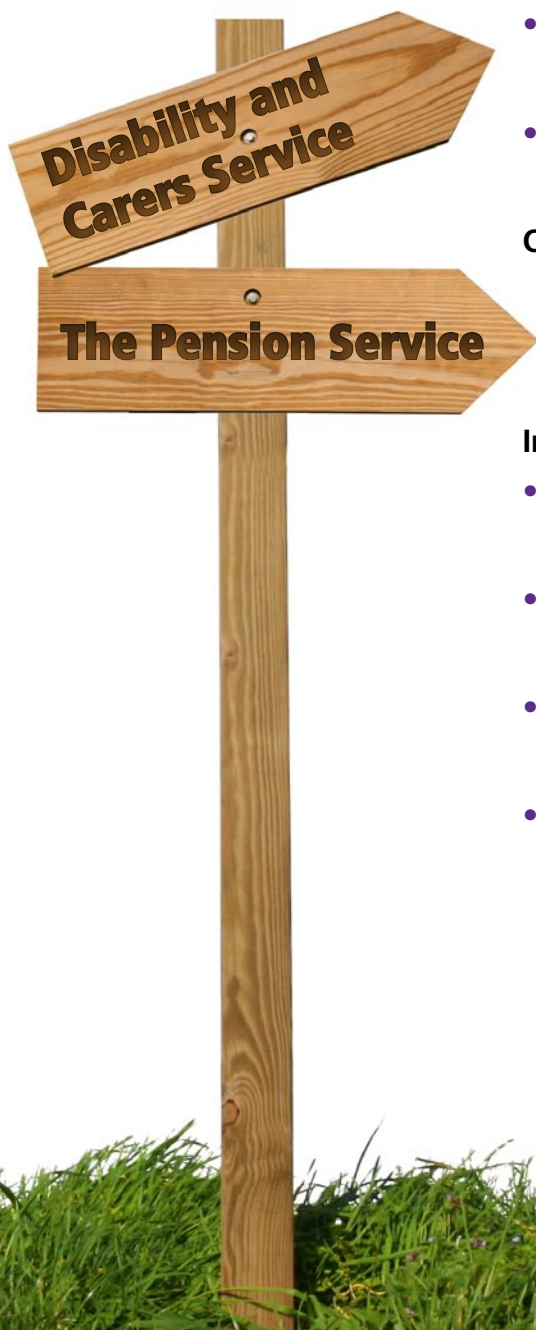
- pilot changes that will simplify our processes and services;
- identify investment opportunities to improve performance and customer experience; and
- generate a combined workforce plan that delivered efficiency savings of 200 posts.

Our business priorities for 2008/09 were:

Transforming the way we deliver services to our customers

In 2008/09 we:

- began the implementation of a new, simplified pensions operating model;
- completed changes to State Pension forecasting systems ahead of the original timescale;
- fully implemented the new 'Rapid Review' process for Pension Credit Assessed Income Period;
- introduced the latest phase of the Pensions Transformation Programme which, among other things, provides further improvements to the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit application process to allow automatic transfer of claims to local authorities; and



- continued with a successful electronic document management system pilot, meaning staff can respond to customers correspondence more quickly.

Ensuring our people are skilled, motivated and well led

In 2008/09 we:

- established a new leadership team and implemented new governance arrangements;
- improved our performance on employee engagement, leadership and line management;
- ran a successful pilot to make Human Resources (HR) processes less time consuming and simpler;
- supported over 150 staff to obtain a Professionalism in Decision Making and Appeals qualification;
- conducted further work to ensure we retain Investors in People status; and
- celebrated our Carers Allowance Unit being the first site to be recognised by the new Customer Service Excellence which replaces Charter Mark as the new government standard.

Building reputation and credibility with our partners and stakeholders

In 2008/09 we:

- aligned our planning priorities and worked with Jobcentre Plus to manage effectively the impact of the recession;
- introduced a new procedure for Disability Living Allowance to reduce the number of 'nugatory' claims by making the process clearer for customers, partner organisations and stakeholders; and
- achieved over 12 external awards and accreditations, including Contact Centre Association accreditation and Louder than Words accreditation with RNID.

Protecting and improving performance

In 2008/09 we:

- successfully handled an increase in inbound telephone calls as a result of additional payments and media campaigns. Between January 2009 and March 2009, we received over 700,000 more inbound telephone calls than during the same period in 2008;
- reduced levels of work in progress by 13 per cent overall from March 2008 to March 2009; and
- achieved four out of the five of our accuracy targets (subject to validation July 2009).



Pension, Disability and Carers Service

Delivering our efficiency commitments

In 2008/09 we:

- reduced the cost of delivering our services from £1,083 million in 2007/08 to £974 million in 2008/09;
- exceeded our target in the DWP's plan to better control benefit expenditure by reducing fraud and error. We contributed £155 million to the £1 billion plan, £19 million over our target;
- exceeded our headcount reduction target, with staffing levels in the agency falling from 16,297 at March 2007/08 to 15,017 at March 2008/09;
- rationalised our estates to further reduce our cost base. We have reduced our estate from 210,787 square metres to 183,382 square metres; and
- reduced reliance on external consultants and professional fees from a planned spend of £25 million to an actual spend of £9.5 million.