

## Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

**Report to:** Executive – 11 September 2019

**Subject:** Implementing “Tell Us Once”

**Report of:** City Solicitor  
Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer

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### Summary

Tell Us Once is a service which is offered by local authorities on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The service allows the person who is registering a death, the opportunity to inform central and local government services of the death in a single interaction rather than having to write, telephone or even attend each service individually. The Tell Us Once service is free to use and can save bereaved residents a great deal of time and effort.

Although there is additional time required for the Council at the point of registration of a death, as well as some coordination and systems issues, the benefits to residents mean that it is recommended that this service is implemented in Manchester.

### Recommendations

Executive is requested to support the recommendation for Manchester City Council to enter into an agreement with the DWP to implement the Tell Us Once initiative in the city. The effective go live date would be 4 November 2019.

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### Wards Affected – all wards

**Environmental Impact Assessment** - the impact of the decisions proposed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Avoiding duplication, paper processing and unnecessary travel is a key part of the initiative. If we go ahead this would support this agenda.

<b>Our Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Contribution to the strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Supporting our residents at difficult times is a key part of the Our Manchester Strategy. Working across service areas with the citizen at the heart of this is key.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Support will be provided to those residents that require assistance with their self-service and digital access skills development.
A progressive and equitable city: making	This initiative supports residents during

a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	difficult and challenging times and saves them money and time.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Avoiding duplication, paper processing and unnecessary travel is a key part of the initiative. If we go ahead this would support this agenda.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	See above

**Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for**

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

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### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

The additional work associated with this service level agreement with the DWP will be built into normal council business processes. This is expected to be up to an additional five minutes as part of the death registration process to register a person for the Tell Us Once service.

Government do not provide any additional financial resources to provide this work other than supporting the implementation and ongoing support and relationship management. The view is, that in addition to improving customer service, the expectation is that this project saves time and resources within agencies, reduces overpayments and fraud and error in the system and improves revenue collection by the provision of prompt and accurate data.

The additional resources required to provide the service will be managed from within existing revenue budgets.

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

None.

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Tell Us Once Legislation- Welfare Reform Act 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/5/part/6/crossheading/tell-us-once/enacted>

Tell Us Once Impact assessment

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/220191/tell-us-once-wr2011-ia.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220191/tell-us-once-wr2011-ia.pdf)

What to do when someone dies- gov.uk website link

<https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once>

## 1. Background

Tell Us Once is a service which is offered by local authorities on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The service allows the person who is registering a death, the opportunity to inform central and local government services of the death in a single interaction rather than having to write, telephone or even attend each service individually. The Tell Us Once service is free to use and can save bereaved residents a great deal of time and effort.

Although there is additional time required for the Council at the point of registration of a death, as well as some coordination and systems issues, the benefits to residents mean that it is recommended that this service is implemented in Manchester.

The main benefits are

- The Tell Us Once service is a cross-government programme that enables people to inform over 30 services just once of a death;
- People are often at their most vulnerable at times of bereavement and a recent death can directly impact on the amount and type of benefit and services people may receive;
- Over 2,000,000 customers have used the service nationally and 396 LAs offer the service;
- There is a high rate of customer and staff satisfaction with 98% of customers having said they would recommend the service to others;
- Data Protection - TUO is already GDPR /DPA2018 compliant by the very fact that the service is voluntary in nature and users choose which departments and service areas they would like to inform.

## 2. Project Aims and Benefits

The project's aims are:

- Putting the citizen at the heart of what we do;
- Delivering better services - TUO notifications provides full dataset for the deceased, bereaved, next of kin and executor of the estate;
- Reduces nugatory phone calls;
- Quicker interaction with the Next of Kin and remaining members of the deceased's family;
- Protects against failed delivery of a promised customer service;
- Reduces any potential complaints to the authority, eg correspondence addressed to the deceased;
- Reduces the time spent by Registrars on asking nugatory questions of customers, often at a very distressing time;
- Helping the most vulnerable at a difficult time;
- Saves time and money for bereaved citizens.

**Good customer service doesn't mean  
expensive or inefficient business processes**

*Passionate about delivering the best value for government  
and taxpayers whilst giving people a better service*



### 3. Process

When the service is operational, the Council would notify the person about the TUO service when they telephone to book an appointment to register a death. It is important to note that deaths are registered by the Council where the death occurred, rather than where the resident ordinarily resided. In Manchester, due to our hospitals providing services to residents across Greater Manchester and the North West of England, we register many deaths for people who do not reside in the city, but have died in the city. The TUO service is also offered to these people and there is a reciprocal agreement across councils as part of the TOU initiative.

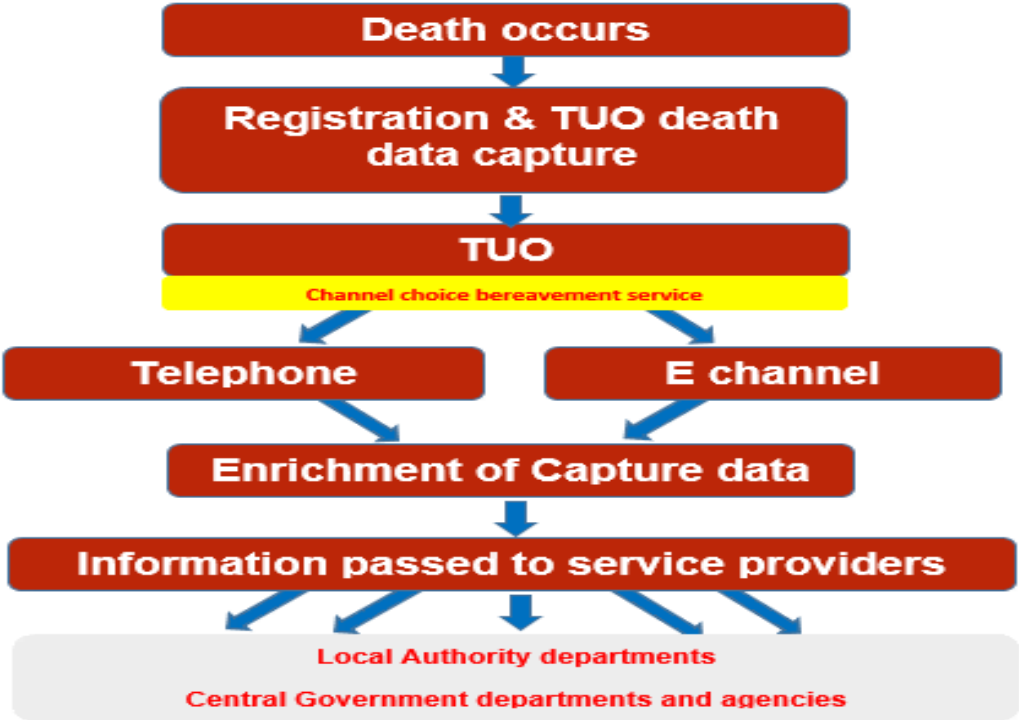
After registering a death, the person will be offered a Tell Us Once interview. The registrar asks which central and government services need to be notified. The authority and notification is then sent through immediately. The person registering the death is then given a unique TUO reference number and full details as to what needs to happen next and what they need to do.

The next stage is then completed via telephone conversation with a person from the DWP's TUO service or the person can go on line. In Manchester we are also proposing an additional service so that people who need help with the process or need to use a telephone or computer can go to our Customer Service Centre where help will be provided, tailored to the person's needs.

A person must have registered the death and been given the unique Tell Us Once reference number before they can use the telephone or online service.

The one exception is when a coroner has ordered an inquest into the death. In these cases different arrangements apply and staff from the Council are working through the arrangements for this as part of the project implementation.

Tell Us Once is completely voluntary but most people find it a very helpful service. Once the various agencies informed by Tell Us Once have received notification of the death, they will make any further contact necessary with the bereaved family. Tell Us Once does not notify any commercial organisations of the death and cannot arrange for redirection of post or suppression of direct mail.




#### 4. Resources

Government do not provide any additional financial resources to provide this work other than supporting the implementation and ongoing support and relationship management.

In terms of Council resources, there are resource considerations and overheads that have all been considered and will be managed within existing resources. These mainly result to an additional few minutes at death registration and then dealing with the electronic notifications from the DWP.

#### 5. Summary of the benefits of Tell Us Once

The following model shows the main benefits and links to Council departments of the Tell Us Once.




**Adult Social Services**

Prompt notifications mean that services can be stopped in real time, which then reduces any outstanding payments that may be due; stops meals on wheels; carers; equipment; consumables etc.




**Blue Badge**

Prompt notifications allow the Blue Badge to be efficiently taken out of circulation and so reduce the cost of fraudulent use; risk of the badge being passed onto others; payment on black market etc.




**Concessionary Travel**

Prompt notifications allow the passes to be efficiently taken out of circulation and so reduce the cost of fraudulent use; risk of the pass being handed onto others etc.




**Council Tax**

Prompt notifications mean that services can be stopped in real time, which then reduces any outstanding payments that may be due; reduces any potential complaints to the council following correspondence being addressed to the deceased; helps to reduce fraud; helps with reassessment of people left in the household.



**Housing Benefit**

Prompt notifications mean that services can be stopped in real time, which then reduces any outstanding payments that may be due; reduces any potential complaints to the council following correspondence being addressed to the deceased; helps to reduce fraud; helps with reassessment of people left in the household.



**Public Sector Pension Scheme**

Prompt notifications mean that schemes can be stopped in real time; 50% of deaths reported to Veterans via TUO; 20% reduction in debt recovery action for Veterans resulting in fewer repayment letters for bereaved families.

## 6. Timescales

The project is working to the following timescales:

- Project start date 2/9/19
- TUO soft launch 14/10/19
- TUO go live 4/11/19
- Evaluation April 2020

## 7. Communication and Engagement

Leading up to the launch of Tell Us Once, a communication and engagement strategy is being produced in liaison with the DWP. This will support understanding for colleagues and citizens. The strategy will include:

- Leaflets and posters
- Locations of publicity material
- Website content
- Social media launch
- Advising people about the service when they make and attend an appointment to register a death.

## 8. Contributing to a Zero-Carbon City

Avoiding duplication, paper processing and unnecessary travel is a key part of the zero carbon city initiative. If the Council goes ahead with TUO this would support this agenda and avoid unnecessary travel and appointments.

## **9. Contributing to the Our Manchester Strategy**

### **(a) A thriving and sustainable city**

Supporting our residents at difficult times is a key part of the Our Manchester Strategy. Working across service areas with the citizen at the heart of this is key.

### **(b) A highly skilled city**

Support will be provided to those residents that require assistance with their self-service and digital access skills development.

### **(c) A progressive and equitable city**

This initiative supports residents during difficult and challenging times and saves them money and time.

### **(d) A liveable and low carbon city**

See above

### **(e) A connected city**

Support will be provided to those residents that require assistance with their self-service and digital access skills development.

## **10. Key Policies and Considerations**

### **(a) Equal Opportunities**

There are no particular equal opportunities issues identified as part of this implementation. The key issue is that for those residents that want to access TUO, where a resident has access or support requirements this will be provided.

### **(b) Risk Management**

No significant risks identified. A soft launch will allow the Council to deal with any issues prior to a wider roll-out and publicity. The project also builds in a review process that will capture any learning.

If the TUO initiative is not deemed to be working or successful from a council or resident perspective, the Council able to withdraw with immediate effect.

### **(c) Legal Considerations**

No further legal considerations identified.

## **11. Recommendations**

Executive is requested to support the recommendation for Manchester City Council to enter into a service level agreement with the DWP to implement the Tell Us Once initiative in the city. The effective go live date would be 4 November 2019.