



Address Lookup

Address Lookup helps local authorities to maximise collection and minimise unnecessary administration costs by ensuring that all addresses entered into Capita Council Tax are accurate.

There are many instances within Council Tax administration where there is a need to enter an address. Examples include processing a move, adding a forwarding address and entering owner or third party payer details. If the address entered is within the Authority area Capita Council Tax checks that it is correct. However, if the address is not within the Authority area no validation occurs, possibly resulting in an inaccurate address being entered leading to significant problems later on.

Due to an increasing mobile population, in a third of cases the address entered is not within the authority area and the accuracy of the address cannot be validated. If the address entered is inaccurate much time will inevitably be spent at a later date dealing with returned mail and, most importantly, attempting to track down the correct address in order to collect any (outstanding) monies due. In some cases an incorrect address could mean that outstanding monies are never collected but written off, resulting in significant, accumulative losses for the Authority.

Address Lookup ensures that addresses entered into Council Tax are correct by validating each address at the time of entry against a full national address dataset containing the recognised postal address. The functionality can be most easily compared to that used on many internet shopping sites. When address data must be entered, users are asked to enter only the house number/name and postcode, or if the postcode is not known the street and town. Address Lookup will then return a list of accurate addresses for the user to select from.

There are a range of benefits with real monetary savings to be realised from implementing Address Lookup:

- Improved collection of monies – Unless a deliberate attempt to mislead has been made, an accurate forwarding address is known for those that have moved out of the area. Local authorities write off many thousands of pounds each year as the location of those moving out of the area has not been recorded accurately
- Reduced postage costs – Money is not wasted posting correspondence to incorrect addresses. Capita research indicates that an average Council Tax department spends over £2300 per annum sending correspondence to addresses that do not exist
- Reduced staff administration – Capita's research has indicated that an average authority is spending the equivalent of 271 days each year dealing with returned post and attempting to discover the correct address
- Reduced data entry – Typically 80 per cent less data has to be keyed in when utilising Address Lookup, therefore improving staff efficiency
- Improved customer perception – Addressing your customers correctly helps to give a professional impression of your organisation, important when you may be trying to collect revenue.

Address Lookup continued

Address Lookup is fully integrated into Capita's Council Tax system in all of the places throughout the program where an out of area address could be entered; this ensures that all addresses are validated as part of normal processing.

The solution is also built into to the Integration Portal. Validation of change of address takes place through the Authority's CRM at point of capture.

Customers notifying the authority of a change of address using the Self Service Change of Address form will also use Address Lookup to enter a forwarding address if it is outside the area. This completes the set and ensures that all addresses entered into Capita Council Tax are consistently validated.

Capita Address Verification and Enquiry System

Address Lookup utilises the Capita Address Verification and Enquiry System (CAVES) which, in turn, exploits the Post Office Address File (PAF®). This incorporates over 28 million UK addresses.

CAVES is a proven scalable solution and is successfully used by organisations including the address critical TV licensing operation.

Utilising the CAVES solution offers the following major benefits:

1. Minimal overhead – The actual address database will be remotely hosted within one of Capita's data centres. This avoids the need for any extra software to be installed on site. Capita will be responsible for applying updates, something that would otherwise be a significant overhead to local authorities
2. Up-to-date addresses – CAVES database is updated every day from the PAF database file ensuring it is optimally accurate. This is particularly useful with the rapid number of new homes being built, and is not provided by competitors' software solutions
3. 'Sounds like' search – When a user is unsure of the correct spelling a 'sound like' search can be used to return properties with similarly spelt addresses. For example, a search on "Beech Close" would then also return matches for "Beach Close".