



# HMRC RAPIDLY ENABLES FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MILLIONS OF THE UK'S SELF-EMPLOYED

In response to the disruption of COVID-19 across the country, Capgemini worked with HMRC and its partners to develop and deliver a solution to enable self-employed workers to apply for government-funded grants

## SUPPORTING THE SELF-EMPLOYED IN THE UK

On 23rd March 2020 many self-employed people in the UK found themselves unable to work as the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated and lockdown restrictions came into effect across the country. Three days later, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which would provide a taxable grant to mitigate their loss of income.

Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and its partners worked with Capgemini to create a secure and customer-centric digital solution to deliver the SEISS as fast as possible.

## Overview

**Client:** HMRC

**Industry:** Public Sector

**Region:** United Kingdom

**Client Challenge:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) to quickly implement a solution to enable eligible self-employed workers in the UK to claim a grant to mitigate the impact to their income.

**Solution:** Collaborating with Capgemini and other IT partners, HMRC rapidly introduced digital service to deliver an Income Support Scheme to self-employed workers (SEISS) which handled 2.1 million applications, and made nearly £6.5 billion in payments in the first week of operation.

**Benefits:** In the 12 months since its launch SEISS has:

- Paid over £24.5 billion worth of grants
- Processed over 8.8 million claims
- Supported 2.8 million self-employed individuals



## ONE MISSION. ONE TEAM

Responding to the critical need to deliver a nationally important scheme as quickly and as safely as possible, HMRC immediately established a “One Team” ethos and invited Capgemini to take on key architecture and delivery roles in the program. Working jointly with the HMRC policy team and special advisors from Her Majesty’s Treasury, the goal was to design an end-to-end solution that met the government’s policy and was deliverable, secure, and operable.

A single SEISS program team with representation across all areas of the business, policy, and IT was charged by HMRC’s COVID-19 Response program with delivering a secure, fair, reliable, and customer-centric service. This team established three key design principles to guide the development of the program and service: apply ruthless simplicity at all times, re-use platforms and services where possible, and decouple the service to ensure minimal dependencies and constraints. The team followed an iterative lifecycle that included thorough user research, user testing, and a controlled private beta to deliver a service that would keep as many users as possible in the digital channel and avoid shifting additional load onto HMRC’s already busy contact teams.

With everyone working remotely due to restrictions enforced by COVID-19, the team utilized daily program boards, virtual meetings, and digital collaboration tools to ensure that critical decisions were made with universal support. This ensured best practice project management and Agile principles were applied throughout. In this way, key stakeholders were brought together on a regular basis, in spite of the unique circumstances, to walk through the next iteration of the solution and see the service developing during Show and Tell sessions.

## DEVELOPING A CRITICAL SERVICE AT PACE

Delivering a solution of this scale would ordinarily take many months, but this service had to be delivered within six weeks. The joint team had captured the first complete, end-to-end solution design within 24 hours and in the coming days it was rapidly iterated. The solution design provided the foundation around which all teams could coalesce, focus, and further develop their components and processes, confident in the fact there was end-to-end coherence.

The unified team built a new SEISS system of record and the

associated customer and colleague digital services, and deployed them onto a hybrid cloud to ensure the high volume of transactions could be processed on day one. New business dashboards and interfaces were also established to support the work of the department’s transaction monitoring, compliance, and risking teams. To create a truly collaborative environment, all areas of expertise were brought together on a daily basis, using DevSecOps methods and releasing features multiple times a day.

Robotic Process Automation and PowerApps were used to automate and support the activities of HMRC’s operational staff, who were all working remotely. In addition, a virtual assistant was deployed to help taxpayers understand the policy. By embedding customer-centric design into the service, HMRC was able to clearly sign-post additional sources of financial help and support available elsewhere in government and the retail banking sector.





## OPTIMIZING THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Security, anti-fraud, and compliance measures were core to SEISS, requiring integration with UK payment services and HMRC's transaction monitoring, compliance, and risking services. In addition, it was critical that the customer journey was straightforward and the service was easy to use given the volume of claimants. Additional authentication mechanisms were integrated, enabling new users to verify their identity using information on their driving license. A data centric approach ensured that claimants were informed in real-time of their grant amounts and the date it would be paid. A total of 3.4 million grant application slots were staggered across 3.5 days and the customer satisfaction score was amongst the highest achieved for HMRC's digital services.

## SUPPORTING THE COUNTRY AT A POINT OF NATIONAL CRISIS

The service launched six weeks after the announcement of the project, and instantly enabled users to check their eligibility. Data showed that 3.4 million people were eligible, and 1 million grants totaling £3 billion were processed in the first 36 hours. The service experienced extreme demand, handling peak volumes of over 1,000 transactions per second without any issues.

One year after the original announcement, HMRC has processed over 8.8 million claims that have supported 2.8 million self-employed individuals. The success of the program has secured HMRC much recognition including Best IT Team During COVID-19 at the UK Real IT Awards 2020, Best Public Sector IT Project of the year at the British Computer Society's UK Industry Awards, and winner of Team of the Year at the DevOps Industry Awards 2020.

Together, this collaboration has delivered a robust, customer-focused solution in an agile manner under exceptional and demanding circumstances in support of the UK economy.

## About Capgemini

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