

Why mortality screening often fails on legacy books

Many financial service providers rely on automated mortality screening to identify deaths. This is generally an efficient and affordable service which can be procured from numerous providers. The benefits of mortality screening can be significant and certainly contribute towards treating customers fairly.

However, most businesses do not know that the Disclosure of Death Registration Information (DDRI) mortality data does not include deaths prior to 1984? Given that almost all the automated mortality screening services rely on the DDRI data as a major source of information this most likely means that pre 1984 deaths are not being identified.

Could it be a problem if deaths from over 30 years ago are missed?

It most certainly could if you hold legacy books. The FCA thematic review into closed life books identified unclaimed assets running into the £10s of billions and much of that is sitting in old closed books, often referred to as Heritage books.

The only way to effectively identify deaths on old books of business is to combine automation with a degree of manual research. The information is out there but it will often not be picked up by automation alone.

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