Using Nottingham Insight to…

tackle poverty

"£77,000 of benefits to those who most need it most"

Background

Using data and intelligence about our customers will allow us to deliver more Targeted services and using less resource. It is with this goal in mind that the Nottingham Insight Network is developing a 'Customer Insight Shared Service' approach across Nottinghamshire.



This means the Network will evaluate the use of Customer Insight tools and techniques across a variety of service improvement projects across Nottinghamshire's Local Authorities, for instance using Experian data, Mosaic tools to analyse our customer's behaviours and the communication methods they are more receptive to.

The first of these was the Council Tax and Housing Benefit project for each Local Authority in Nottinghamshire, with the aim of increasing the 'Uptake of Housing and Council Tax Benefit', ensuring our residents are made aware of, and take up, any benefits that are available to them. This work is supporting a local response to the economic downturn, as well as getting benefits to those who need it most.

What we did

- **Understanding our citizens** - using local data about Council Tax Payers with Mosaic lifestyle data supplied by Experian, we identified the exact locations of potential benefits claimants, as well as the best way to communicate with them.

- **Targeted communication** - direct mail was indicated as a communication preference of the selected citizens. A personalised letter and leaflet was sent to 3000 properties, designed for and aimed at citizens who were in working families or receiving a pension.

- **Cost savings** - a non-targeted direct mailing about benefits, (including design, print and postage) sent to around 15,000 Council Tax payers could have cost up to £6,000. **This project cost only 90p per household, a total of around £2,700.**
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- **Monitoring progress** - each leaflet had a specific reference. When each citizen contacted the Benefits team, their actions were flagged as part of this project. A Benefits Officer was also assigned to assist assessments.

- **Face to face follow up** - working in partnership with the Pension Advice Service, face to face and telephone advice and support was also offered.

GIS team

For further information please contact the GIS Team at Nottingham City Council
gi@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or by phone (0115) 8764387

What the impact was

- **The total weekly award of benefits (across all types) that have since been claimed is £1,485, which is equal to £77,220 per year. There have been:**
    - 23 claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit - total award of £621.00 per week
    - 10 claims for Pension Credit - total award of £82.00 per week
    - 15 claims for Attendance Allowance/Disability Living Allowance - total award of £729.00 per week
    - a number of claims are also still outstanding and could potentially increase the projects results.

Phase 1

- **£19,000 of benefits were claimed**
- the family that benefited most received £89.89 per week
- the highest Housing Benefit awarded to family was £78.25 per week and
- the highest Council Tax benefit awarded was £19.50 per week
- there were 208 requests for benefits claims forms from 138 pensioners and 70 citizens of working age, including 29 forms completed and returned
- face to face support was offered to increase response rate and given partnership with Pension Advice Service.

"The project has been a great success and we will be running it again in the future. We identified and secured claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit from people that had never claimed before, thereby increasing their weekly income.

For those people of pensionable age we were greatly assisted by the Local Pension Service who conducted full welfare benefit checks, in addition to taking claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit. The data for the project was easy to gather but it is essential that the mail shots are sent out as soon as possible."

David Wright, Principal Benefits Officer, Newark & Sherwood District Council