

How data made London's pensioners better off by over £8 million a year

LIFT case study

At a glance

£3,800 Pension Credit secured per household, a year, on average

Over 2,300 households helped so far

£8.3 million Pension Credit income generated a year

Lifetime impact of £100 million achieved

17 London boroughs participated so far

£98 returned for every £1 invested

Over £1.5 million of social care costs avoided

Featured on



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The Mayor of London commissioned Policy in Practice to run a data led campaign to help older Londoners receive unclaimed Pension Credit.

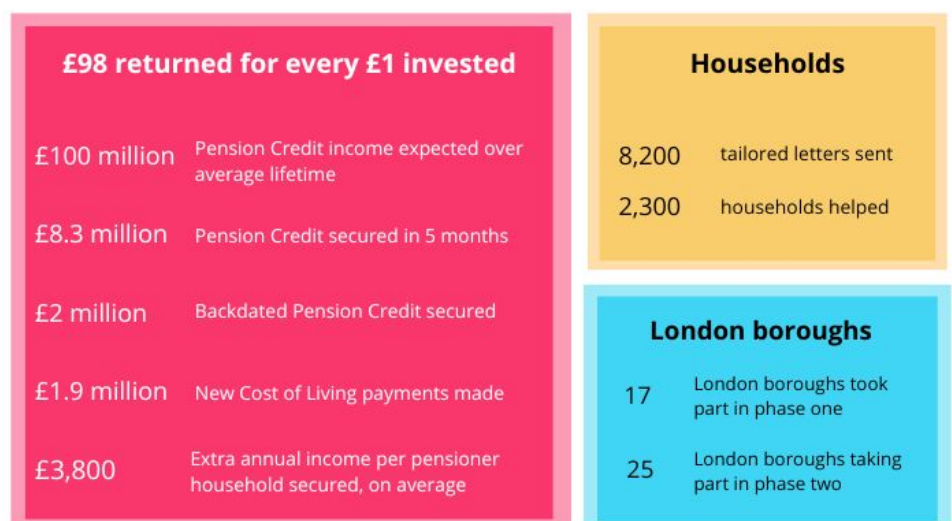
The campaign, supported by Age UK London, saw over 8,000 eligible Londoners in 17 boroughs receive letters inviting them to claim.

Over 2,300 pensioners were better off by nearly £4,000 a year, on average. Across the capital, support worth more than £8.3 million a year was unlocked which, once cost of living payments and backdated support was included, grew to £12.5 million in year one. The support that pensioners will continue to get each year from now on puts the lifetime impact of the campaign at over £100 million.

Policy in Practice's research shows that the average care package cost is £40,000. Councils are expected to save over £1.5 million in social care costs as a result of the campaign.

This project has also helped households to avoid loneliness, repay debts and link in with housing teams, where needed. By partnering with Age UK the targeted households have been introduced to a trusted partner they can contact directly if they ever need any support.

London's Pension Credit take up campaign Impact achieved using LIFT



LIFT was used to achieve a return of £98 for every £1 invested. Income of £8.3 million was generated with a lifetime impact of £100 million

"I am pleased that we will now be extending the scheme to thousands more older Londoners who may not know they are eligible to receive Pension Credit or how to claim it."

**The Mayor of London,
Sadiq Khan**

"I thought Pension Credit was automatically included in the state pension. I didn't realise it was two separate entities. I didn't know I could even apply. To have that extra on my pension was a relief."

Siobhan, a homeowner who received Pension Credit as a result of the campaign, speaking on BBC Radio 4's Money Box programme

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Challenge: One in eight London pensioners in persistent poverty

In 2021 London's population stood at 8.8 million, over 2 million of whom were pensioners. Almost one in four London pensioners were in poverty, with one in eight classed as living in persistent poverty.

Tackling this has been a key priority for the Greater London Authority (GLA). They commissioned Policy in Practice, with support from Age UK London, to launch a data led campaign to target pensioners eligible for, but not claiming, Pension Credit.

Pension Credit is one of the most underclaimed benefits and over £245 million was estimated to be unclaimed in London. About a third of eligible pensioners are missing out on a top up to their monthly income as well as help with other costs like heating, housing costs, council tax, NHS dental care and a free TV licence for over 75s.

The GLA planned to draw on the success of a pilot programme in Islington to extend the impact of a Pension Credit drive across London via a direct campaign.

Solution: Greater London Authority commissioned Policy in Practice to run a data led targeted Pension Credit take up campaign

Policy in Practice contacted all London boroughs and invited them to take part in the campaign in late 2022.

Using its Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) platform Policy in Practice analysed administrative datasets from 17 London boroughs to identify eligible households who weren't yet claiming the support.

As well as working directly with each London Borough to securely transfer the data, Policy in Practice tailored letters for each borough to reflect the different response mechanisms in place.

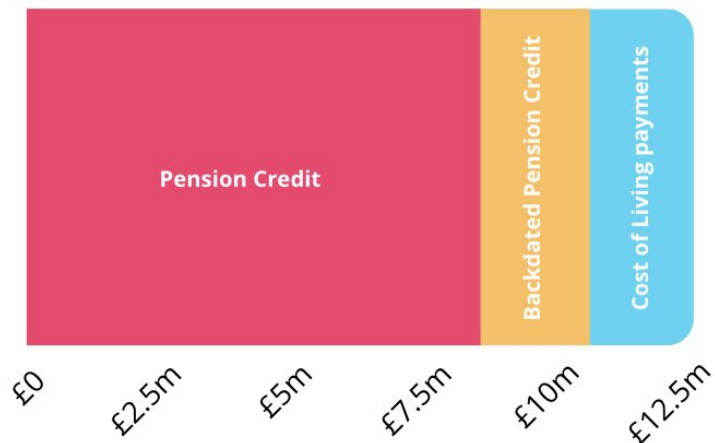
With support from Age UK London and Independent Age in place, Policy in Practice sent more than 8,200 tailored letters to older people across the boroughs who were eligible for Pension Credit but not yet claiming. With that, the first data led automated benefits take up letter campaign was launched.

“The potential for public sector data is immense and I think we are only at the cusp of using it now.

“We welcome the Mayor’s decision to expand the campaign into the autumn, continuing to grow the incomes of Londoners during this ongoing cost of living crisis.”

Deven Ghelani
Policy in Practice

London’s Pension Credit take up campaign Total income claimed in Phase one



In phase one, which ran from February to June 2023, over £8.3 million Pension Credit was secured in annual income, £2 million in one off backdated Pension Credit and £1.9 million in Cost of Living Payments

Impact: £8.3 million in Pension Credit secured for over 2,300 households

Since the launch of the campaign in February 2023, over 2,300 pensioner households in London have benefited from often life changing increases in support. So far:

- Over £3,800 has been claimed by each household, on average
- Over £8.3 million in Pension Credit has been claimed across 17 London boroughs
- Nearly £2 million in backdated Pension Credit for those eligible has been claimed
- An extra £1.9 million has been distributed via the £900 Cost of Living payments to eligible households
- Councils are expected to save over £1.5 million in social care costs

“There are three main reasons why people don’t access the support they’re eligible for. Firstly, awareness, people don’t know they’re eligible. Then administrative complexity, people don’t know how to claim or they don’t have the support around them that they need to complete an application, and then it’s stigma. Many pensioners we helped didn’t want to come on the radio and say they needed the support.”

Deven Ghelani, Policy in Practice, on BBC Radio 4’s Money Box

In total, factoring in life expectancy and passported benefits, the lifetime impact of the campaign is over £100 million.

For every £1 invested in the campaign, a return of £98 was achieved.

Following the success of the campaign GLA has committed further investment and phase two, now with 25 London boroughs, is set to take place in winter 2023-2024.

New letters will be sent to people who didn't respond in phase, one as well as newly identified households. Phase two will put even more unclaimed Pension Credit into the pockets of older Londoners.

The success of this campaign is entirely replicable in other cities and regions across the UK.

"Claiming Pension Credit enabled my husband and me to have a second honeymoon to Ramsgate, our first holiday in ten years."

London pensioner, newly receiving Pension Credit

"Amid the ongoing cost of living crisis, Pension Credit can be vital for keeping low income pensioners out of poverty.

"This campaign is a great example of what can be achieved through collaboration and intelligent use of data. Great progress has been made, but there are still struggling Londoners missing out on this crucial support.

"The expansion of the campaign will help ensure more pensioners receive the Pension Credit they are entitled to."

Councillor Claire Holland
London Councils' Executive Member for Communities

"We use the data to chase fraud or identify arrears but actually using the data to help people seems to be where we've often got stuck in the past, so it's great to be part of turning that around.

"If you can get the support to people more easily, or let them know they're eligible, you can make a huge difference to people's lives.

"A pound spent upfront on people who need support and are eligible for it can save a lot of money down the line."

Deven Ghelani
Policy in Practice