

# Country to county: Regional data collaboration that drives better outcomes for residents

Wednesday 29 April 2026

# Housekeeping

- Audio check
- You can ask your questions throughout in Question panel on the right
- Short survey
- Aim to finish by 11.30
- Slides and recording will follow
- Connect with us on LinkedIn or register for our newsletter to keep up to date of future webinars



Policy in Practice

We empower organisations to reduce financial vulnerability and safeguarding risk



Create efficiencies for your internal team



Avoid poverty and homelessness



Reduce debt



Maximise residents' income



Our research shows **£24 billion of support** is unclaimed every year



policyinpractice.co.uk

- **Introduction on regional approaches with LIFT**

Abbie Everett, Client Services Manager, Policy in Practice

- **Using data and partnership to improve financial outcomes in Fife**

Les Robertson, Head of Revenue and Commercial Services, Fife Council

- **LIFT: Delivering in partnership**

Paul Wilding, Cost of Living Manager, Oxfordshire County Council

- **Using data to work together**

Abbie Everett, Head of Client Services, Policy in Practice

- **Q&A**

# Today's speakers



**Abbie Everett**  
Head of Client Services,  
Policy in Practice



**Paul Wilding,**  
Cost of Living Programme Manager,  
Oxfordshire County Council



**Les Robertson**  
Head of Revenue and  
Commercial Services,  
Fife Council

# Abbie Everett

Head of Client Services

## Introduction on regional approaches with LIFT



## Counties, countries and regions

- County/country view of need and opportunities to support residents
- Sharing best practice and working groups
- Sharing resources and creating efficiencies
- Coordinated campaigns and communications
- Memorandum of Understanding between partners

## Local partnerships

- Partnership working with local advice providers and services
- Frontline support and understanding of the issues impacting residents
- Sharing information and data with key partners
- Optimising use of resources

Using data and technology to work together to deliver better outcomes for residents

# Les Robertson

Head of Revenue and Commercial  
Services at Fife Council

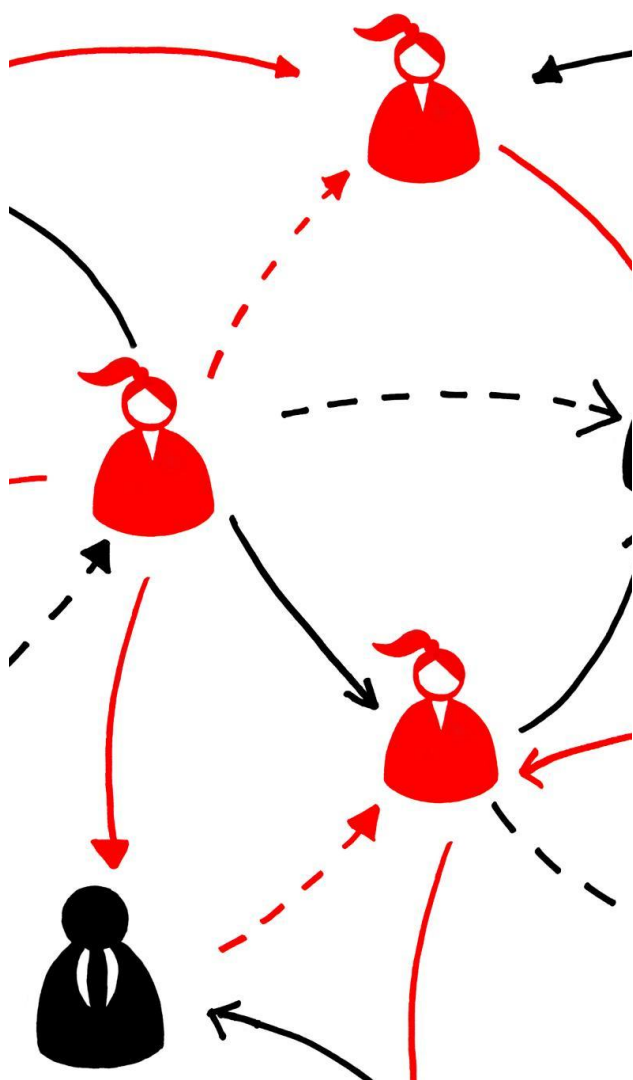
**Using data and  
partnership to improve  
financial outcomes in  
Fife**

[policyinpractice.co.uk](http://policyinpractice.co.uk)



Collaborative  
strategies leveraging  
data to enhance  
financial success

# USING DATA AND PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL OUTCOMES IN FIFE



# Introduction and Context

## Responsible Data Sharing

Fife Council uses lawful data sharing to promote fair outcomes and prevent hardship among residents.

## Balancing Responsibilities

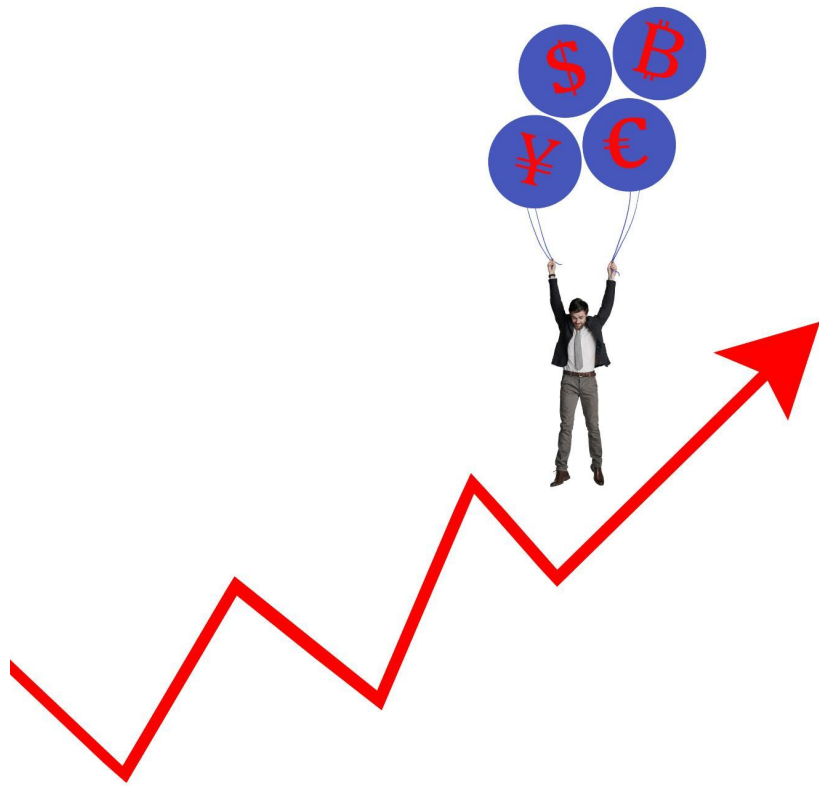
Councils balance income collection with supporting vulnerable households facing economic challenges – Fair Collections Policy

## Partnership Working Benefits

Collaboration with advice agencies builds trust and turns data insights into practical resident support – CARF and FORT system.

## Future Data Opportunities

Expanding data access at government level can enhance income maximisation and reduce poverty.



# Debt Segmentation: Data in Action

## **Data Integration for Debt Assessment**

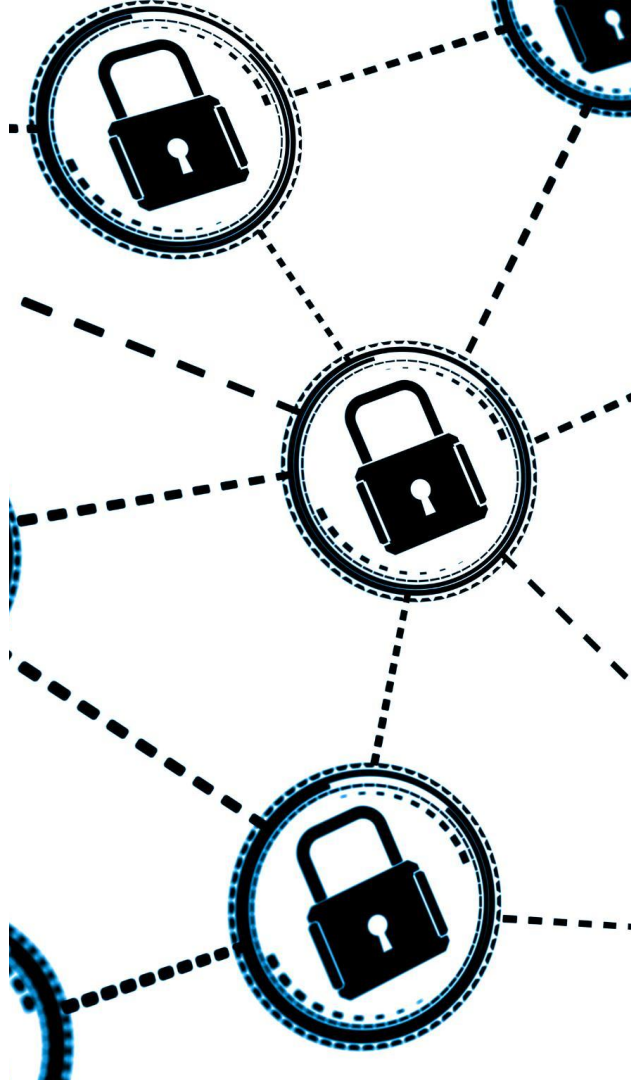
Linking Council Tax arrears with CTR and Universal Credit data through LIFT provides clearer insights into households' financial situations.

## **Improved Recovery Decisions**

Assessment of ability to pay for 254 cases to start engagement with view to write off.

## **Future Data-Driven Enhancements**

Incorporating Council Tax Liability data offers potential for proactive case reviews and improved support.



# Why Improved Data Sharing Matters

## **Early Risk Identification**

Data sharing enables councils to identify risks early, preventing crises through timely intervention and reducing enforcement actions.

## **Evidence-Based Decisions**

Improved data sharing supports consistent, transparent, and evidence-based decisions, essential for public trust and governance.

## **Resource Targeting Efficiency**

Enhanced data insights help organisations focus resources effectively, maximising officer time where it matters most.

## **Resident-Centered Support**

Data sharing promotes fair treatment, clear communication, and tailored support for residents based on genuine circumstances.



# Partnership Working with Advice Services

## **Collaborative Partnership Model**

Fife Council collaborates with third-sector organisations (especially CARF) to leverage expertise and community trust for income maximisation and debt support.

## **Data-Driven Support Initiatives**

Using data insights, partners deliver targeted campaigns like Pension Credit, carer benefits and CTR take-up to support vulnerable residents effectively.

## **Consistent Messaging and Trust**

Aligned council and third-sector efforts ensure clear, trustworthy communication, reducing confusion and encouraging engagement.

# Delivering better outcomes for residents

Overall, from October 2022 to November 2025, Fife Council have helped:

- **251 pensioners** claim Pension Credit
- **£1,053,440** of annual amount of Pension Credit received
- **£199,823** in backdated amount of Pension Credit
- **£1,253,263** in total of Pension Credit awarded

If the 251 pensioners continued to claim Pension Credit over their lifetimes, **the campaign would be worth over £4.8 million.**





# Scottish Government Data Sharing: Future Opportunity

## **Enhancing Income Maximisation**

Improved access to government datasets will strengthen efforts to maximise incomes for vulnerable families especially take up of Scottish Child Payment data linked to other education benefits such as free school meals, clothing grants and EMA.

## **Overcoming Structural Barriers**

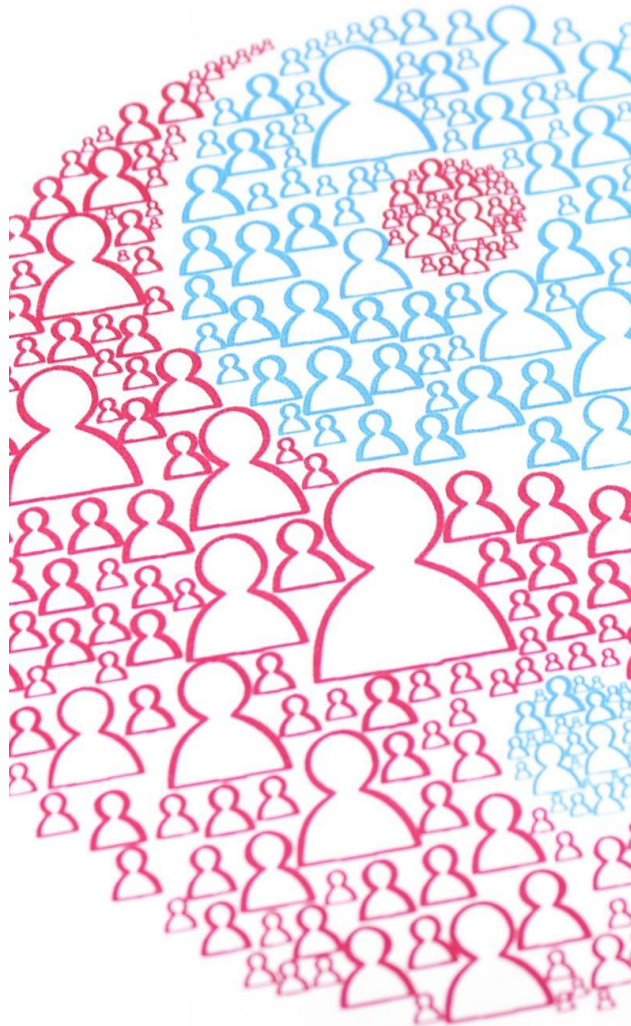
Legal gateways and data-sharing frameworks currently limit data access, requiring legal gateways to be created to ensure progress.

## **Targeted Support Through Data**

Access to child payment data enables precise identification and timely support for families in need.

## **Leveraging Local Expertise**

Fife Council's experience with data partnerships enables effective and ethical future data utilisation.



# Key Takeaway and Conclusion

## **Aligned Data Sharing**

Aligned data sharing and partnerships improve outcomes for individuals and public services effectively.

## **Responsible Data Use Benefits**

Responsible data use supports fair debt decisions, prevents hardship, and maximises income.

## **Governance and Trust**

Data initiatives operate within governance structures and are subject to independent review by trained DPA officers within our legal services.

## **Future Opportunities**

Expanding lawful data sharing frameworks enables proactive problem prevention and sustainable services.

# Paul Wilding

Cost of Living Manager,  
Oxfordshire County Council

## LIFT: Delivering in partnership



# Cost of Living programme

- LIFT funded and led out from this programme
- Clear that LIFT would be of great value in Cost of Living work
- Effective delivery appeared challenging in a two tier environment



# Implementation Challenges

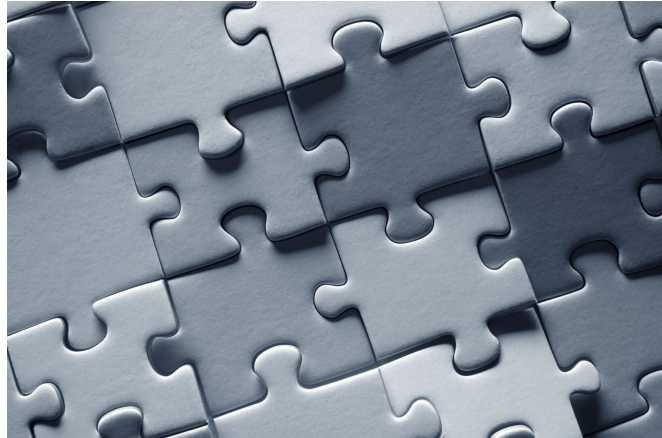


The daydreams of cat herders...

- Buy-in needed from all Oxfordshire authorities
- Needed to obtain commitment for resources
- Different approaches to risk around data meant different implementation paths
- Impact of LGR led to resource constraints

# Delivery Challenges

- Different resource commitments
- Different priorities for this work
- Work led from different areas of councils



# Mitigations and Solutions



- Strong relationships already in place
- Sell the benefits
- Sought agreement of S151 officers
- Acceptance of risk
- Regular meetings and communications
- Memorandum of Understanding between the districts and county

# Benefits of partnership approach

- Different priorities = Different use cases
- Diversity of thought
- Councils have learnt from each other's experiences



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# Use Cases

## Income

- Help from Household Support Fund
- Social Water tariff campaigns

## Support

- Use of HA data for tenancy sustainment
- Support for CT debt, with Citizens Advice
- Signposting to digital inclusion support
- Proactive homelessness prevention

## Promotion

- Free childcare hours
- Target demography for community events

# Outcomes

- £1.5m additional resident income
- Pension Credit: 212 new claimants; £827,417 gained (year 1) + £662,341 ongoing annual entitlement.
- Free School Meals: 83 new claims; £40,670 to families + £107,485 Pupil Premium to schools.
- You Move: 1,276 people enrolled in free/low-cost activities.
- Targeted cost-of-living support: 168 households offered food vouchers

# Abbie Everett

Head of Client Services

## Using data to work together



## Poll: Which area of regional data collaboration is your organisation prioritising in 2026?

- Expanding collaboration with non-local authority partners (e.g., utilities, voluntary and community sector, housing associations)
- Securing multi-organisation data-sharing agreements
- Collaborating with regional partners to share best practice
- Measuring and tracking the outcomes of joint campaigns
- Other (type in "Questions" tab in the right panel)

# Regional Data Insights



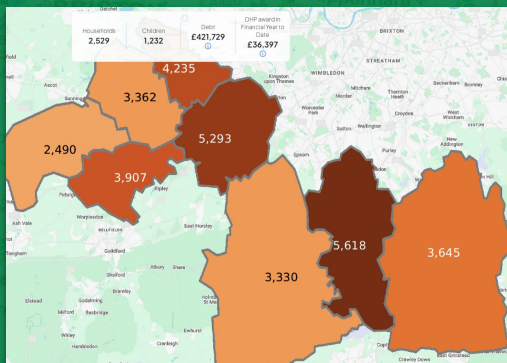
## Regional Dashboard

Sharing data to allow ward/local authority level visibility to understand granular needs across the area.



## Knowledge Sharing

Encouraging best practices to drive collaboration between diverse regions.



## Surrey Campaign Results

*£4.5m in lifetime benefit delivered to pensioners*

*£4m to children, parents and local schools through Free School Meals take up*

Improving resident financial resilience while creating efficiencies and removing the postcode lottery of support.

## Cambridgeshire County & South Cambridgeshire Campaign Results

*81 additional children receiving Free School Meals*

*£1.3m of lifetime support*

A blueprint for future campaigns across the county and for county/district partnerships

# Wales LIFT results



## Welsh Government and 14 Welsh Local Authorities

**£4.2 million**

Annual value to residents

**70+ Campaigns**

Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, PIP, Free Childcare, Free School Meals, In Crisis, SDP, Lone Parents, Employment Support, NEST Warm Homes Grant, Private Rental Sector support, Healthy Start.

**£22.3 million**

Estimated lifetime value to residents

### Partnership Work with Community Voluntary Sector

A shared understanding of local need, direct signposting, bespoke community based sessions, proactive referrals.

# Regional Campaigns regularly delivering value to residents

Regional campaigns in London started in 2022, supported by the Greater London Authority

Since then there have been 4 phases of benefit take up campaigns focusing on working age and pension age households

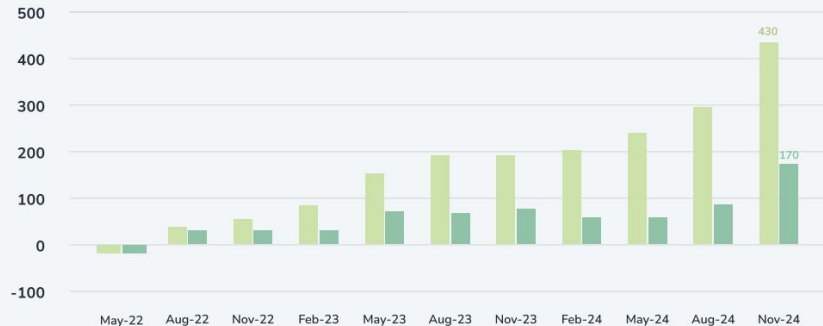
To date over £50.5m of annual benefit has been delivered to 15,403 residents across 26 boroughs

We are expanding this to more benefits, with more households identified and greater impact.

## Pension Credit caseload – London boroughs

Average cumulative change in caseload over time per Local Authority (relative to February 2022)

GLA campaign participant    Non-GLA campaign participant



Source: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), StatXplore; Numbers round to the nearest 10

# Collaborating with the Voluntary and Community Sector and other local partners

- Sharing data across partners to increase visibility, spread workload and improve outcomes for residents
- Examples include working with advice sector partners, local Age UK, Citizens Advice, housing associations, schools and utility companies
- Signposting to services, referral routes, community-based sessions, breaking down barriers to accessing support and building a community network where it is needed the most

# Collaboration between local authorities and utility providers to support 30k households in debt

- Initial pilot with two local authorities and sharing best practice to expand the project
- Automatically applying support to households bills without an application
- Estimated to support 33k households with more than £10m in financial assistance
- Sharing data, improving outcomes and proving what is possible

Thames Water launches first-of-its-kind scheme to automatically cut water bills for low-income households across London

Tuesday 30 September 2025 10:00



Report

**The art of the possible: How data can improve access to social tariffs in the short and medium term**



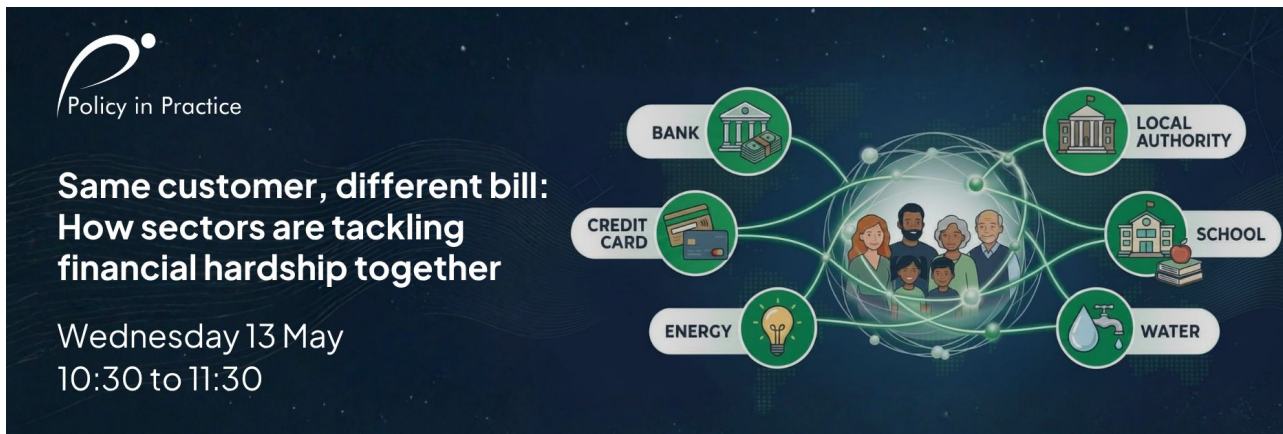
# Discussion and Q&A


# What's next

If you would like to find out about unclaimed benefits by area, collaborate with us or ask more questions, feel free to [book a chat with us](#) using this QR code or this [link](#)



[Register](#) for our next free webinar:



 Policy in Practice

**Same customer, different bill:  
How sectors are tackling  
financial hardship together**

Wednesday 13 May  
10:30 to 11:30

The banner features a central globe with a family of four (two adults and two children) inside it. Six icons are connected to the globe by lines, representing different sectors: BANK (bank building), CREDIT CARD (credit cards), ENERGY (lightbulb), LOCAL AUTHORITY (council building), SCHOOL (school building), and WATER (water tap). Each icon is in a green circle with a white label in a grey pill-shaped box.



# Thank you to our speakers

**Paul Wilding**, Cost of Living Manager, Oxfordshire County Council

**Les Robertson**, Head of Revenue and Commercial Services, Fife Council

**Abbie Everett**, Client Services Manager, Policy in Practice

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