

CASE STUDY LIFT DASHBOARD

DATA ANALYSIS HELPS GREENWICH IMPROVE FINANCIAL RESILIENCE OF RESIDENTS

Based in outer London, the Royal Borough of Greenwich prides itself on the holistic support it provides to residents. As well as frontline services such as a public advice line and face-to-face support for residents, Greenwich offers training, advice and benefit take-up support. Their unique approach includes an in-house Welfare Rights service which, because of the work they do, has access to rich datasets. They use the LIFT Dashboard to analyse this data, it helps Greenwich Council to identify which residents are missing out on benefit income they are eligible for. As well as improving residents' financial resilience, the detailed analysis helps them to strategically allocate resources, offer more targeted support and increase take-up across the borough.

GREENWICH HAS SIGNIFICANT POCKETS OF POVERTY

Often mislabelled as an affluent borough, in reality Greenwich covers areas of significant poverty. Ranked as the 50th most deprived borough in the country, Greenwich has witnessed a housing and homelessness crisis. With 22,000 council tenancies there has also been a dramatic increase in temporary accommodation, up 26% in 2018 with a total of 909 households in temporary accommodation in November 2018. These challenges have pushed anti-poverty and regeneration to the top of Greenwich's agenda.

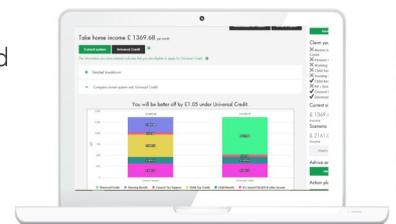
With welfare reforms, including Universal Credit cited as the catalyst for much of the deprivation in the borough at that time, Greenwich urgently needed a way increase take-up while raising awareness across all divisions of the local authority including Housing, Rent Collection, Council Tax Collection, Adult Social Services, Children's Services.

A TARGETED APPROACH HELPS IDENTIFY THOSE MISSING OUT ON BENEFITS

As poverty worsened, Greenwich needed to take action to improve their residents' financial resilience. They wanted to unlock the insights in their data and found that Policy in Practice's LIFT Dashboard was the only tool that could help them to identify vulnerable households, target support where most needed and track the impact of their support over time, increasing benefits take-up.

Their holistic support approach is embedded across a range of services including the Welfare Rights Service, Universal Support Team, Welfare Reform Team and Greenwich Local Labour and Business. This structure demands collaboration, which makes them highly effective when working with residents. It also gives them all access to rich datasets made easily accessible through the LIFT Dashboard to quickly and clearly illustrate who was eligible for additional benefits.

Greenwich was then able to segment residents according to their financial resilience so they could accurately identify households at-risk or in crisis; those facing a cash shortfall who were missing out on income. Poverty trends were established, decisions became more strategic and millions of pounds of unclaimed benefits were identified. Now, services are being designed around the LIFT Dashboard's capabilities to create a more preventative approach, help residents avoid debt, reduce the number of evictions and ultimately reduce homelessness across the borough.



"The LIFT Dashboard has given us the opportunity to be even more targeted with the take-up work we're doing and become much smarter in using our resources. Now we're targeting people who we are much more confident are likely to be missing out on benefits."

Corin Hammersley, Training, Policy and Welfare Rights Services Manager, Royal Borough of Greenwich

THE LIFT DASHBOARD IDENTIFIES £20 MILLION OF UNCLAIMED BENEFITS FOR RESIDENTS

In just over six months, the LIFT Dashboard has uncovered significant hidden pockets of poverty in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. By analysing monthly Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction data, the LIFT Dashboard has identified up to £20 million per year of unclaimed benefits across areas such as DWP, Tax Credits, Severe Disability Premiums, Pension Credit, Discretionary Housing Payments and more.

Greenwich also use Policy in Practice's Benefit and Budgeting Calculator to help residents navigate both the legacy benefit system and Universal Credit. The tool has improved conversations between advisors and customers by displaying complicated benefit data in a simple format. Going forward Greenwich plan to integrate the tools to enhance their early homelessness prevention work.

As well as increasing benefit take-up, Greenwich has witnessed the following benefits since they started using the LIFT Dashboard;

- **FOODBANK USAGE BUCKED THE TREND.** Greenwich's foodbank usage saw a less than 1% increase, compared to an average of a 20% increase among neighbours. This success is attributed to Greenwich's proactive approach, which included running Universal Credit briefings and outreach sessions, promotional print campaigns, raising awareness internally and reconfiguring support teams.
- **AWARENESS OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT INTERNALLY.** By accurately forecasting the impact of Universal Credit across the council, individual teams can take preventative steps to minimise impact on residents.
- **BETTER ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.** Staff can now allocate their time and prioritise their workload to the places they know they can make a meaningful difference.
- **EARLIER INTERVENTIONS.** The data gives Greenwich ammunition to build up business cases to start interventions and help residents more effectively.
- **TARGETED COMMUNICATION.** Greenwich can now be more targeted in which residents they contact and how they contact them. Because they are more confident that the resident is genuinely missing out, they can tailor their communication style to suit specific cases.
- **IDENTIFYING ERRORS.** By identifying inaccuracies in the Housing Benefit data earlier, Greenwich can now be more confident that residents are receiving the correct entitlements.
- **SUPPORT FOR FUNDING.** Analysis produced by the LIFT Dashboard recently supported a funding application for the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant based on the number of residents in the private rented sector. The bid was accepted and will feed into early homeless prevention work.
- **SEAMLESS ROLLOUT.** Despite having a large complement of integrated teams, Greenwich found the rollout of the LIFT Dashboard quick and straightforward.
- **WORKING TOGETHER.** A close relationship with Policy in Practice means that Greenwich can suggest changes and see them actioned to improve the platform.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Policy in Practice works to reduce poverty by making the welfare system easier to navigate. Our analytics services help councils find relationships in data to understand the drivers of poverty. We help councils design council tax support schemes that support the most vulnerable households, now and in the future. Our award winning Benefit and Budgeting Calculator is used by over 10,000 people daily. We've promoted a data-led approach to improve the design and delivery of social policy interventions since 2013.

To see the Lift Dashboard in action contact Policy in Practice on 0330 088 9242, hello@policyinpractice.co.uk or visit www.policyinpractice.co.uk

