Policy in Practice

We believe in the power of data and technology to change lives

Who we are

We're a team of professionals who are passionate about making the welfare system work for everyone. We believe that, with the right knowledge, you can transform your life, or that of your customers.

Why we exist

Government policy is complex, confusing and changing all the time. It's hard to make the best decisions.

How we help

We combine smart technology with data and expert policy analysis to help councils, housing providers and others understand how our lives are changing. So they can prevent hardship before it happens.

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Our products

Low Income Family Tracker Platform
Use your datasets to identify vulnerability, target support and track change

LIFT

Benefit and Budgeting Calculator
Use the best tool available to grow the financial resilience of the people you help

BBC

Policy engine

Council Tax Support modelling
Design your best possible scheme and distribute support as effectively as possible

CTRS

Bespoke analysis

Bespoke policy analysis
Commission our policy experts to answer your social policy questions

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Low Income Family Tracker Platform

Use your data to tackle the drivers of poverty and build resilience

Administrative datasets can yield powerful insights that give a fuller picture, and help drive change. LIFT allows local authorities to combine their datasets with our policy engine to make better decisions.

You can see how individual households are impacted by policy changes, now and in the future. Use the information to identify the most vulnerable families, target support to them, and track the change.

Our local authority clients use LIFT to:

- Tackle problem debt and arrears
- Maximise the income of households
- Evidence return on investment in support
- Identify and support families at risk of eviction
- Avoid unnecessary cost by preventing hardship
- Limit and mitigate the local impact of COVID-19
- Understand current and future demand for services

"Data is central to building the case for change. We need to understand how well we're doing. Policy in Practice helps us track the outcomes of people we've been working with to evidence the impact of our new approach."
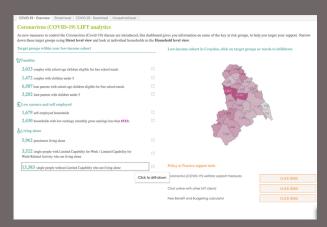Mark Fowler, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

"With LIFT we can see our caseload changing and the types of households being impacted by the economic downturns. This lets us understand how we can reflect our support to match as people are made redundant. We can be specific with our targeting of help resources."
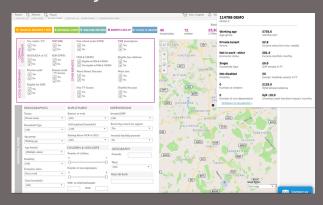Clive Jones, Luton Borough Council

"The LIFT Dashboard allows Cornwall Council to take a more focused approach and improves on our previous, slightly scattergun, approach. This extra focus allows us to have a greater impact on vulnerable residents in Cornwall without increasing resources."
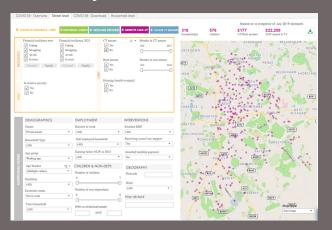Ian Stephens, Cornwall Council

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1. Focus on one cohort

2. Identify to street level

3. Identify to household level

4. Track outcomes over time

"LIFT also works really well for business cases. We were able to show that our direct intervention with DHPs helped households so much that the cost-benefit to the authority made it worth putting more resources into a new role."
Ellie Kershaw, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

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Benefit and Budgeting Calculator

Use the best tool available to grow the financial resilience of the people you help

Giving the best welfare advice to help people make decisions can be a huge challenge.

It's hard to stay on top of the latest updates, have difficult conversations and treat all clients equally well. It can be more time consuming and hit and miss than you'd like.

Our council, housing providers, Citizens Advice and other clients use our Benefit and Budgeting Calculator to:

- Accurately maximise income
- Compare different scenarios
- Create a positive action plan
- Explain complex changes simply
- Identify ways to improve budgeting
- Give consistent and up-to-date advice
- Save, store and access cases efficiently

"The Benefit and Budgeting Calculator makes it much quicker to do calculations and the tooltips make it easy to use, meaning we only need to train people once. The simplicity of the calculator means that clients can often self serve with little support."
Sue McCarron, Citizens Advice Wirral

"You can explain benefit entitlements but people may not fully grasp the numbers. Having the Benefit and Budgeting Calculator to visually explain the breakdown of entitlements using colour coded charts really helps as it's something people can relate to."
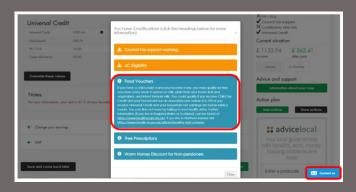Grant Bailey, Cheltenham Borough Homes

"The Benefit and Budgeting Calculator is invaluable to us. We use it to help the homeless find properties that are affordable, and to provide the correct welfare advice."
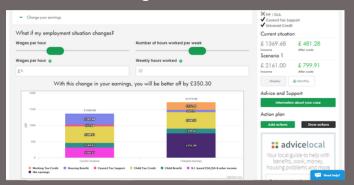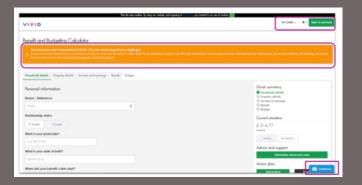Howard Humphries, Vale of Glamorgan Council

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Explain complex changes simply

Help people make decisions that
are right for them

Identify often missed support

Offer a self-serve option

"The Benefit and Budgeting Calculator has changed the way we work completely across different teams. We have over 100 staff using it and there now tends to be only one conversation with our customers so it's made it easier for them. It's speeded up processes in a way that we didn't really think would happen."
Nadine Burns, The Guinness Partnership

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Council Tax support scheme modelling

Design your best possible scheme and distribute support as effectively as possible

Ensuring you have the fairest and most effective Council Tax support scheme is difficult, especially when caseloads change dramatically.

We help councils model different schemes based on many complex and combined local factors. Using data-led analytics we clearly show how groups of residents will be affected by scheme changes, in advance.

Our local authority clients use our Council Tax support scheme modelling to:

- See how changes affect costs, arrears and collection
- Compare caseload costs with other local authorities
- Get detailed insights for Members and consultation
- Understand the impact on vulnerable groups
- Understand the impact of Universal Credit
- Model scheme costs into the future
- Give stakeholders confidence

"Policy in Practice provided much deeper analysis of our data than we can do in the local authority. Their data is useful, they gave us graphs, highlights and visualisations that brings the messages to life and helps with that decision making."
Sally Sanders, London Borough of Enfield

"We asked Policy in Practice to help us model our Council Tax Support scheme to give Members confidence that all options to reduce cost while supporting residents were covered. We also wanted to learn from other LAs and we knew an external consultant was the best way to do that."
Ian Jones, London Borough of Hackney

"We wanted to spend more of our budget on council tax support whilst ensuring we factored in the effects of welfare reforms. Policy in Practice helped us to accurately model our best scheme and establish the ideal support."
Howard Crompton, North Hertfordshire District Council

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Bespoke policy analysis

We use our data-led analysis to understand the impact of complex social policies on citizens, and to drive change.

Our work is published via Government consultations and enquiries, as well as in the media. Organisations commission us to answer social policy questions that affect their audiences.

Recent commissions include

Trust for London — Low-income Londoners: before and after COVID-19

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY — The impact of the COVID-19 Hardship Fund on low-income Londoners

Llywodraeth Cymru Welsh Government — Universal Credit, Council Tax Reduction scheme and rent arrears in Wales

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY — The interaction of COVID-19 measures and the Benefit Cap on low-income Londoners

Local Government Association — Evidencing the link between the Local Housing Allowance freeze and homelessness

JRF JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION — Universal Credit and Financial Resilience

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