



## Council Tax Benefit Uptake Campaign

An Academy Benefit Uptake campaign offers a highly targeted approach to increasing the uptake of council tax benefits.

Traditionally authorities have used mass communication techniques such as posters, flyers and regional advertising. This is an expensive communication method which often still fails to encourage those who may potentially benefit to make an application.

Capita is able to offer a more targeted and personal approach by making effective use of the data already available combined with automated telephone technology and call centres. Applicants are guided through the application process with the help of knowledgeable staff - breaking down traditional barriers to applications.

This is achieved by analysing data held within Academy Council Tax to identify those citizens who may be eligible for council tax benefit. These can then be targeted via either direct mail or the Capita recommended approach - an automated outbound telephone call. Both methods inform the citizen that they may be eligible for council tax benefit and encourage them to speak to a call centre operative who is able to assess whether the claimant may be eligible for council tax benefit.

### Benefits

Capita Software Services is able to offer a complete benefits uptake campaign or alternatively authorities can pick elements of the campaign and tailor to meet their specific needs.

This method offers the following advantages over traditional methods:

- Superior targeting – all citizens who may be eligible are targeted thus guaranteeing engagement with those people who are eligible but not currently claiming. Resources are not spent targeting citizens who are either already claiming or not eligible.
- Improved reach – communication is more personal. Telephone and direct mail ensure that targeted citizens receive the message.
- Increased engagement – automated personalised telephone calls engage directly with citizens, transferring qualified citizens to skilled call centre operatives.
- More customer contact – Capita UK call centre staff can be used to supplement authority call centre staff, ensuring there is sufficient resource to answer calls at all times and assist benefit claim applications during the duration of the campaign.

- Customer service levels maintained – the sophisticated profile scheduling of automated telephone calls ensures that citizens are not left waiting in queues or end the call before speaking to call centre staff.
- Traditional barriers removed – Help the Aged suggest that the effort involved in making a claim may put older people off applying. Call centre staff break down this barrier by guiding applicants through the application process and complete the forms on their behalf.
- No re-keying of data – data captured by call centre staff is fed directly into Academy and is available for processing. There is no need to re-key data.
- Measurable success – traditionally achievement is measured only by the number of successful claims. Often this does not give a complete picture as not all claimants will be eligible. Full statistics are provided that demonstrate the value of the campaign irrespective of the number of successful claims.

# CAPITA

## Proven success

The solution has been implemented in Wales with excellent results.

In just one month, over 12,000 customers were contacted via the telephone. 56% of the council tax bill payers then requested to be put through to the call centre to discuss claiming council tax benefit

As part of the call, an automated means test as part of the call found that 35% of these callers were likely to be eligible for Council Tax Benefit and these were transferred to operators for help with making a claim.

## Why increase Benefit Uptake?

As specified in the Lyons Inquiry, £1.8 billion in Council Tax Benefit entitlement was left unclaimed in 2004-05, as only 62% - 68% of households entitled to Council Tax Benefit are actually receiving it.

The majority of unclaimed benefit is owed to older people/pensioner households. The National Audit Office has estimated that a 10% increase in pensioner uptake of Council Tax Benefit would lift approximately 47,000 pensioners out of poverty.

As well as having a significant impact in tackling poverty, a high uptake of Council Tax Benefit directly improves the quality of life for citizens and indirectly boosts the local economy as money is typically spent there.

Council Tax can be a significant burden on low income citizens such as pensioners. Council Tax Benefit makes Council Tax more affordable and may increase collection rates.