

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

25 April 2017

Report of the Strategic Director for Adult Care

TARGETED INCOME MAXIMISATION FOR PENSIONERS

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek Cabinet approval for a programme of activity targeted at pensioners in Derbyshire to identify those eligible to claim Pension Credit and support them to do so.

2. Information and Analysis

The Derbyshire Anti-Poverty Strategy “Working together to tackle poverty in Derbyshire” (Derbyshire Partnership Forum 26 September 2014); the Derbyshire Director of Public Health Annual Report 2014 (A fairer, healthier Derbyshire) and in the ‘Financial Action and Advice Derbyshire’ Strategic Action Plan of March 2014 all identify common ground that work is needed across the county to address avoidable poverty through income maximisation of benefits.

The Council Plan 2017-18 and Adult Care plan 2017-18 identified a specific action for the Welfare Rights Service to undertake towards addressing this, in identifying 4000 pensioners in Derbyshire who should be on the means tested benefit of Pension Credit and supporting them to access this benefit.

The Government releases data that estimates the take up of means tested benefits. The most recent data (for the year 2014-15 and released on 28 June 2016) identifies that overall take up of Pension Credit (PC) nationally is:

- 6 out of 10 of those entitled to claim PC claimed the benefit. (60%); and
- the amount of Pension Credit claimed that could have been was 69%.

This national analysis also identifies that whilst the take-up rate for those under 75 is 65%, amongst those aged 75 or over it is 60%.

National reports have identified the impact that this avoidable poverty has on health, wellbeing and social isolation amongst pensioners.

Welfare Rights Service analysis of the November 2015 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Pension Credit data indicates that 24,900 Derbyshire pensioners were in receipt of Pension Credit at that date. If take-up in Derbyshire is in line with the national average, then a further 16,660 pensioners are entitled but not claiming. (See Appendix 1) Using the DWP data, the average amount of benefit received in a Pension Credit claim is £46.97 pw or £2,442 per year.

Through the Council's Customer Segmentation Model it is possible to identify those communities with above average proportions of residents aged 65 and over. This enables more precise targeting of income maximisation activity to specific postcodes.

Customer segmentation identifies 98,000 *people* across the county in sub-clusters 202; 301; and 404. (12% of Derbyshire's population) Appendix 2 gives more detail on this.

Derbyshire Fire Service is also working on a targeted approach to pensioner households for Fire Safety checks and these two work areas could complement each other. Using data held by the Fire Service we may be able to refine the targeted activity to pensioner-only households which would bring down the costs and enable us to target the message. (If not, any mailing would need to acknowledge the possible generic audience.)

The Welfare Rights Service propose to undertake a 12 month programme of work consisting of:

- Targeted mailings and information, followed up by local activity, in the postcodes identified through use of the customer segmentation data. The mail shot would highlight Pension Credit as an entitlement that some may not currently be claiming and encouraging them to take up a 'benefit check' via the Welfare Rights Service who will check whether they are eligible. The information would be clear in seeking to use the language of entitlement and setting out the positive reasons for following this offer up and the help available to do so. [Negative media messages about benefits; perceived stigma; and a reluctance to deal with "complicated forms" all being potential barriers to benefit take-up].

This activity would be phased on a district by district basis to manage demand. This would be followed up with 'door knocking' activity building on the experience of other projects using this method (this could involve local elected members if appropriate) and support with claiming – including form

filling where needed.

- Tying in with thriving communities agenda to work in those areas in a similar fashion as above if not mapped already by the sub-clusters
- Working in partnership with district and borough councils to identify people on maximum Housing/Council Tax Support who are not getting Pension Credit (but should be).
- Promoting awareness/cascade/referrals via over 50 forums; Direct Care; Your Derbyshire; etc.

For modelling purposes 98,241 people in the sub-clusters has been assumed to be in the region of 60,000 households. Work on this modelling continues and will enable the actual volume of mailing to be undertaken to be refined. Previous campaigns by the Welfare Rights Service demonstrate that a return rate of 10 – 15% is average. Allowing for the possibility that the older-person population may respond more than the average return rate, and that follow up activity would be designed to support a greater rate of response than simply mailing alone, a response rate of 20% would result in 12,000 – 13,000 households being assessed and advised.

The ambition would be to reach towards the 35 – 40% of pensioner households not claiming the Pension Credit they are entitled to – with a measurable target to reach 4,000 households which could potentially unlock £10m for Derbyshire people and the Derbyshire economy.

3. Financial Considerations

Staff costs to assess and follow up: £0.221m (Appendix 3)
Printing and mailing costs: £0.039m

Total cost £0.259m

(Cost per confirmed claim would work out at £65 if successful in reaching 4000).

The project would be jointly funded from the Improved Better Care Fund and Public Health service budgets.

4. Human Resources Considerations

Lead in would be approximately three months to recruit the additional staff identified in appendix 3.

The activity would span a further 12 month period following recruitment.

5. Social Value Considerations

Council activity around income maximisation and benefit take up always serves to produce greater awareness of the opportunity for residents to access advice and leads to increased requests for assistance to the Welfare Rights Service.

Pensioner populations are not necessarily connected to some of the established channels for these messages and this programme of work will seek to work beyond traditional channels to connect with pensioner households who may not have heard previous messages, or been inclined to follow up on what they have heard.

In addition to addressing benefit take up, the project will also ensure that the wider offer of Council services – via the Adult Care Universal Offer and First Contact Service – are offered to residents.

6. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: Legal and Human Rights, equality of opportunity, health, environmental, transport, property and crime and disorder considerations.

7. Background Papers

Council Plan Update 2017-18

Adult Care and Public Health Service Plan 2017-18

Income-Related Benefits: Estimate of Take-up DWP 28.6.2016

Age UK Chief Economist's report Summer 2015; and

The overlooked over-75s: Poverty amongst the 'Silent Generation' who lived through the Second World War – Independent Age.

8. Key Decision

Yes

9. Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report?

No

10. Officer's Recommendation

That Cabinet approve a programme of activity targeted at pensioners in Derbyshire to identify those eligible to claim Pension Credit and support them to do so.

**Joy Hollister
Strategic Director – Adult Care
County Hall
MATLOCK**

Appendix 1

Claimants on Pension Credit - Nov 2015 by LA area and age

Source: DWP tabulation tool 29.6.2016

	Total							
		60 - 64	65 - 69	70 - 74	75 - 79	80 - 84	85 - 89	90 and over
Amber Valley	4,030	250	810	770	600	560	550	490
Bolsover	2,870	220	610	560	440	380	330	330
Chesterfield	4,170	340	900	750	650	540	540	440
Derbyshire Dales	1,840	110	320	310	290	290	270	260
Erewash	3,670	230	750	660	630	550	450	390
High Peak	2,600	180	500	510	430	370	340	260
North East Derbyshire	3,590	230	720	680	560	500	490	410
South Derbyshire	2,220	170	450	420	330	290	330	230
TOTALS	24,990	1,730	5,060	4,660	3,930	3,480	3,300	2,810

Modelling for the additional 40%

Amber Valley	2,687	167	540	513	400	373	367	327
Bolsover	1,913	147	407	373	293	253	220	220
Chesterfield	2,780	227	600	500	433	360	360	293
Derbyshire Dales	1,227	73	213	207	193	193	180	173
Erewash	2,447	153	500	440	420	367	300	260
High Peak	1,733	120	333	340	287	247	227	173
North East Derbyshire	2,393	153	480	453	373	333	327	273
South Derbyshire	1,480	113	300	280	220	193	220	153
TOTALS	16,660	1,153	3,373	3,107	2,620	2,320	2,200	1,873

Customer Segmentation Information – Extracts from 2014 Customer Segmentation Model, DCC Policy and Research Division

Sub cluster 202

This sub cluster has more older couples aged 45 – 64 than average and fewer children than average, indicating that children have grown up and flown the nest.

There is also a high percentage aged 65+ and the sub cluster has the highest percentage of pensioner households living as a couple. Compared to other sub clusters there are fewer single people and less people aged 25 – 44. Indicative of its pensioner profile, the sub cluster also has the highest percentage of properties owned outright; economic activity is lower than average and qualifications are not as high as other sub clusters. Residents are likely to be employed in sales and customer service and there is a low level of supervisory occupations. The sub cluster has the lowest percentage of religions other than CoE and it also has low BME populations. Health is fair but the sub cluster has the highest percentage of those who provide unpaid care.

Sub cluster 301

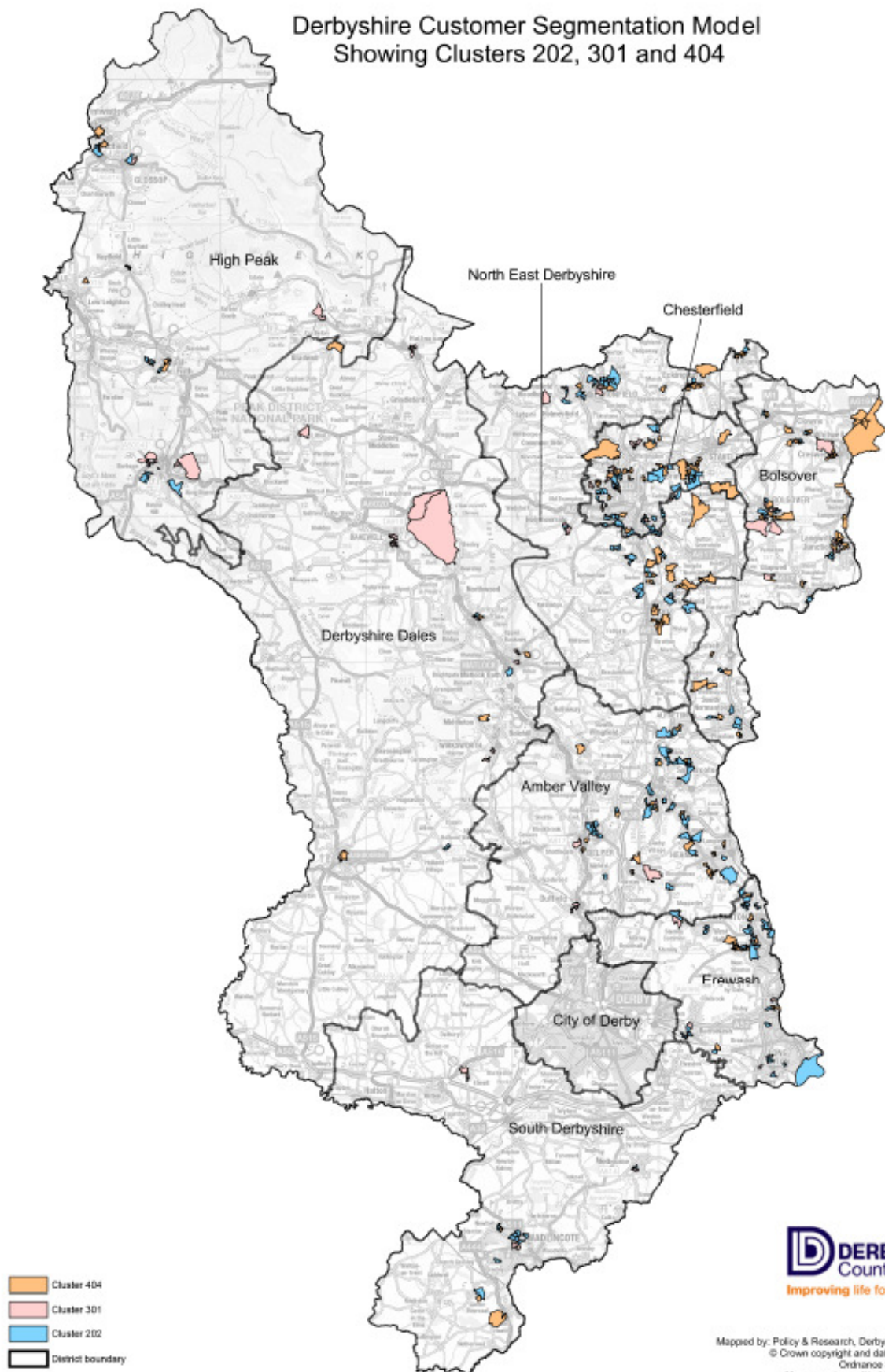
This sub cluster attributes suggest that living within it are a large number of older people who live alone. It has the highest percentage of those that are 65 and older and those who are widowed. It also has more older people living in one person households and more one person households with long term health problems than the average. Average household size is the lowest which confirms the living alone attribute. The sub cluster also has a high percentage in social rented accommodation and flats. Most people within this cluster rate their health as fair and fewest rate their health as good or very good. This sub cluster's low levels of economic activity and employment and occupation numbers also suggests a retired population. It contains fewer children and young people (0-15 year olds) than other clusters and has the lowest percentage of families with dependent children. The sub cluster also had a low level of car or van ownership. It also has slightly higher than average BME population.

Sub cluster 404

This sub cluster has an older age profile with high percentage of those aged 65+ and elderly people living alone as well as those who are single and widowed. They tend to be in poorer health with long term limiting health issues. Economic activity is low mainly down to the high percentage of retired people. Those in work are employed in routine or semi routine occupations with higher than average in mining, quarrying, and construction. Many of the areas typical of this sub cluster are on the Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire county border. The mining connection could be a contributor to poor health as well. This sub cluster also has the highest percentage whose country of birth is England and the lowest BME population.

These sub clusters occur throughout the county as can be seen from the following map:

Derbyshire Customer Segmentation Model Showing Clusters 202, 301 and 404



Staffing proposal

(including on-costs)

5 x Benefit Support Worker (Grade 6) £108,269

To undertake volume of benefit assessment and form filling support for people over pension age. Will assess and support with claims and also be 'out and about' following up and encouraging people to take up benefit checks.

1 x Benefit Support Worker Team Leader (Grade 8) £27,078

To supervise, oversee and work allocate for the BSW team - reporting to an existing Welfare Benefits Team Manager

2 x Welfare Benefits Officer (Grade 10) £66,804

To provide complex case support and file reviews to BSW team and undertake income maximisation/benefits advice work that arises from the project that is outside the scope of the BSWs – eg working age people/ family members / families.
To promote project and facilitate referrals from community partners; districts and boroughs; engage Over 50 forums etc.

1 x Business Services Assistant (Grade 4) £18,614

To handle the significant amount of work transaction of claims that will be generated by the project – letters out / scanning / contact with clients and DWP for chasing claims and confirming results and moving associated work around the team.

Would need additional office accommodation for the team ideally at Cemetery Lane site co-located with existing Welfare Rights management, admin, and therefore support infrastructure.

Staffing cost - £220,765