

**COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT TAKE
UP FROM A WELSH
PERSPECTIVE**

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BACKGROUND

- WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT ALLOCATION
- BARRIERS TO COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT TAKE UP IN WALES

TAKE UP STATISTICS

2006/7	HOUSING BENEFIT	COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT
PENSIONERS	82% - 89%	55% - 61%
COUPLES WITH CHILDREN	60% - 74%	50% - 59%
LONE PARENTS	86% - 94%	82% - 90%
OTHERS	78% - 87%	74% - 85%

BARRIERS TO TAKE UP

- SAVINGS THRESHOLD
- STIGMA OF CLAIMING
- LACK OF INFORMATION
- FEAR OF LOSING CURRENT BENEFITS
- PREVIOUS NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE
- UNFAMILIARITY WITH JARGON
- INABILITY TO SHARE INFORMATION
- ACCESS

BARRIERS TO TAKE UP

- APPLICATION FORM AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION
- TIMESCALE FOR DISPATCH
- LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION BARRIERS
- CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- AMEND SAVINGS THRESHOLD
- SHORTER APPLICATION
- MORE USE OF PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS
- PROCESS CLAIM USING MINI STATEMENTS
- PROVIDE ON LINE BENEFITS CALCULATOR

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- QUESTION AND GUIDANCE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY
- CUSTOMER PROMISE
- TELEPHONE CONTACT
- REVIEW WEB SITES
- DOWNLOADABLE APPLICATION
- E BENEFITS FORM
- PUBLISH CLEAR GUIDANCE

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- PROVIDE INFORMATION ON PREMIUMS
- SPECIALIST TELEPHONE STAFF
- PROMOTE FACE TO FACE SURGERIES
- IDENTIFY GROUPS WITH POOR LITERACY SKILLS
- ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF COMPLETING FORMS

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- ACCESS TO INTERPRETERS
- WORK WITH MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS
- REVIEW FORMS – CLARIFY TERMS
- REVIEW CONTENT OF LETTERS
- PROMOTE CTB AS ENTITLEMENT
- ENLIST HELP
- TRAIN CUSTOMER SERVICES STAFF

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

- CLOSER WORKING
- GOOD NEWS STORIES
- BETTER PUBLICITY MATERIAL
- TARGET PUBLIC AREAS
- OWN /RETIRED EMPLOYEES
- OUTREACH WORK
- ACCESS FOR THE HOUSEBOUND/
WORKERS

OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS

- STAFF ATTITUDE AND COMMITMENT
- BUY IN AND SUPPORT OF MEMBERS

TAKE UP INITIATIVES

- COMMUNITIES FIRST
- FLYING START
- BEST SKILLS TEAM
- PENSIONS SERVICE
- VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS
- SHARING TAKE UP STAFF
- TRAINING CTAX STAFF
- SPECIFIC TAKE UP TEAM

TAKE UP INITIATIVES

- READY RECKONERS INCLUDED WITH DEMANDS, REMINDERS ETC
- ADVERTISING, RADIO, TRANSPORT, NEWSPAPERS, COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS
- FREEPHONE NUMBERS
- COLLABORATION – E BENEFITS
- MASCOTS

TAKE UP INITIATIVES

- EVENTS TARGETTING
- ROADSHOWS
- LANDLORD FORUMS
- ELDERLY EVENTS
- CHILDREN'S EVENTS
- CHRISTMAS EVENTS
- BEER MATS AND COASTERS

TAKE UP INITIATIVES

- FREE SCHOL MEALS/STUDENT UNIFORM GRANTS
- FAIRER CHARGING CUSTOMERS
- REVIEW OLD CASES
- TELEPHONE CAMPAIGN

CONCLUSIONS

- MOST AUTHORITIES EXPERIENCED INCREASES IN CASELOAD
- SUCCESS VARIES
- COMBINATION OF INITIATIVES