

Warm Zone – Benefits Advice

Some facts

The delivery of Benefits Advice for Kirklees Warm Zone is co-ordinated by Kirklees Citizens Advice (CAB) in partnership with
DWP - Pensions Service (local office)
Kirklees Benefits Advice Service
Kirklees Revenues and Benefits Service

- So far just under 14% of assessed households have been referred for benefit checks with 6% of these clients identified as being able to make a claim.
- Almost 8,000 referrals have been dealt with
- To April 2009 the total annual potential gain is £728,288
- This is an average of £1,566 per client
- The confirmed actual annual gain is £319,323
- This is an average of £2,729 per client
- The highest actual gain to date has been £184.15 per week or £9,450 per annum.

The most regularly identified gains are Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance and Pension Credit which often lead to benefit increases or eligibility for other benefits such as Council Tax Benefit.

Some Strengths

- Potentially every household in Kirklees is offered a benefits check.
- Clients are helped to make claims by visiting officers or by the CAB.
- A wider service is offered and clients can be referred into the CAB or to appropriate agencies for other issues including debt management.
- Clients who have not previously been eligible for certain energy efficiency measures can be referred back into Warm Zone.
- Four key agencies for benefit advice in Kirklees working together, and information on processes and benefit changes being regularly shared.
- Extra funding from Scottish Power has increased advice service personnel at CAB
- Partnership working has provided Kirklees Council secondees to augment the advice team

Some Weaknesses

- The hard to reach still remain so – the box has to be ticked for a check to happen.
- Householder circumstances are always changing, and there is always a lag time between doorstep assessment and benefits advice.

- It can be difficult contacting people by phone so letters must be sent.
- It is not always easy to track results of actual gains as the CAB are independent of the local authority, data protection issues etc.
- Some systems are not as efficient as they could be as they have been developed en route – this can slow down progress.

An Observation

Our gains may seem small in comparison with other Warm Zones but we are covering ALL households rather than targeting specific, deprived, or priority areas. There are a number of other localised and targeted benefit campaigns delivered by partner agencies across Kirklees.

Energy
efficiency advice
for your home from
Kirklees Warm Zone
– working in
partnership with



Kirklees nationalgrid

ScottishPower
gas and electricity



The ScottishPower
Energy People Trust
Supporting Communities



Working with
energy saving trust

