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Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of this Joint Stakeholders Briefing of Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Direct Limited. This edition sets out the achievements made during 2010/2011 by the partnership and the positive relationships that have been developed. The focus continues to be on improving services to the people, businesses and organisations of Liverpool.

The past financial year has witnessed achievements not just around performance, business growth and sustainability but also the performance on behalf of our customers, our people, our stakeholders and the level of services delivered to our diverse range of customers, organisations and businesses that make up Liverpool Direct Limited.

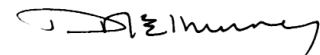
This first edition brings you news of the outstanding performance by both our Benefits and Revenues Services during the past financial year.

It also brings you up to speed with our latest developments, namely our recently launched Online Benefits Calculator which has improved the way residents access information about their benefit entitlement. Lastly we bring into the spotlight the positive improvements that Liverpool Direct Limited have implemented into the Careline Service and highlights the remarkable cost savings to Liverpool City Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ged Fitzgerald'.

Ged Fitzgerald

Chief Executive Officer, Liverpool City Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David McElhinney'.

David McElhinney

Chief Executive Officer, Liverpool Direct Limited

1 Joint Stakeholder's Briefing

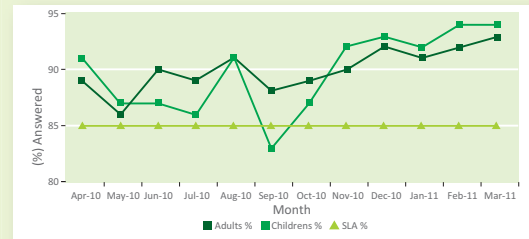
Careline Service Overview

The Careline Service is the social care contact centre function for Liverpool City Council's Vulnerable Adult and Children's Services. The service provides a central contact point for referrals and enquiries about children and adult social care issues and provides the Out of Hours contact and social work service on a 24 x 7 x 365 basis.



The Careline service continues to represent a unique model in Local Government and is acknowledged nationally as a leader in its field. The national profile of Careline is strengthened by the ongoing improvement in performance.

Performance improvement of the Careline Service since commencement of the contract is a testament to Liverpool Direct Limited's improvement strategy and the hard work of the managers and staff. Improvement include; working practices, technology investment, refreshed processes, hardware investment, recruitment and training of staff which have all helped to transform the Careline Service. These together with improvements in hygiene factors such as; improved security recognition and communications have again helped to raise telephony performance on average by a staggering 23%.



The service was subject to a full ten day unannounced OFSTED Inspection during February 2011, the report from which outlined the success of the model concluded that the service represents good quality through the implementation of clear eligibility criteria, increased management oversight which strengthens the strategies in place and provides the highest level of child protection control measures.

Liverpool Direct Limited has continued to make significant investment in Careline over the last 12 months, including meeting the "overspend" presented by the service which ultimately represents a continued investment into the Partnership. It should be noted for 2010/2011 the Careline Service cost £4.192M to operate against a budget provided by the city council of £3.633M. The "overspend" of £559,422 is met by BT/Liverpool Direct Limited. Since its transfer Careline has cost £1.7M more than the budget provided. These costs are not recovered from Liverpool City Council. They represent a continued investment into the Partnership. Since the start of the Careline contract, overall savings to Liverpool City Council have amounted to over £10 million.

Did you know? Liverpool Direct Limited has been short listed for 13 awards so far this year!

Benefits Performance Review 2010/2011

The Benefits Service provides the following services:

- Housing and council tax benefits, free school meals, school bus passes, clothing grants.
- Fraud detection, investigation and prosecution.
- Benefits Maximisation - specialist benefits advice and representation.
- Fairer Charging financial assessment and income collection.

Our key aims include making claiming benefits as easy and quick as possible, helping customers to claims all the benefits that they are entitled to and preventing benefit fraud.

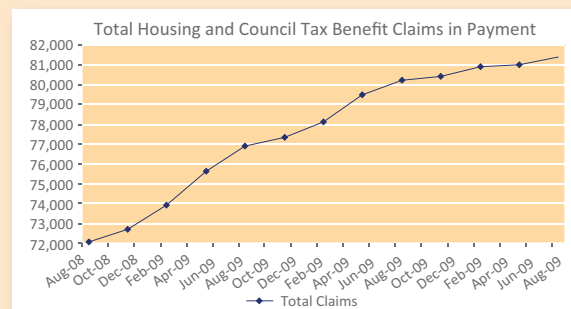
The Benefits Service has seen big increases in demand as a result of the economic downturn. The number of households claiming Housing and Council Tax Benefits has increased from around 72,000 before the recession to the current total of about 82,000. This is at no additional cost to the City Council. Despite these big increases in demand the service has continued to process claims ahead of its target times. In the first half of this year the average time to process a new claim was just under 26 days compared to a target of 28 days. In 2001 it was over 120 days.

The Benefits Service has also seen increasing demand for Benefit Maximisation advice – over 40% up on pre recession levels. So far this year the Service has helped customers claim an additional £3.4M in additional benefits. As well as providing detailed benefits casework support we also offer all customers who are charged for care a detailed benefits check and run targeted take up campaigns. So far this year we have run successful

campaigns on Free School Meals, Working Tax Credits and Attendance Allowance (this is a long term campaign that has recently started). We have been increasingly successful in supporting customers in claiming additional benefits; we expect to continue to improve performance this year.

During 2010/2011 Liverpool Direct Limited made significant investment into the Benefits Service:

- Refurbishment of Document Handling Centre including building works, furniture and hardware at a cost of approximately £129,000
- Roll out of Thin Client technology to the Benefit Maximisation and Fraud teams at a cost of £22,000
- Implementation of Northgate EDT Module at a cost of £32,000



Did you know? In the last 3 years the Benefit Maximisation Service has generated over £18.3m in extra benefits

Revenues Performance 2010/2011

During economic uncertainty and against the background of the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review which has affected all local authorities, the Revenues Service has a crucial role in maximising income collection for the City Council.



Over £135M in Council Tax was collected in 2010/2011, with a target to exceed this figure in 2011/12. The service has also reduced Council Tax arrears by nearly £7M during this year so far.

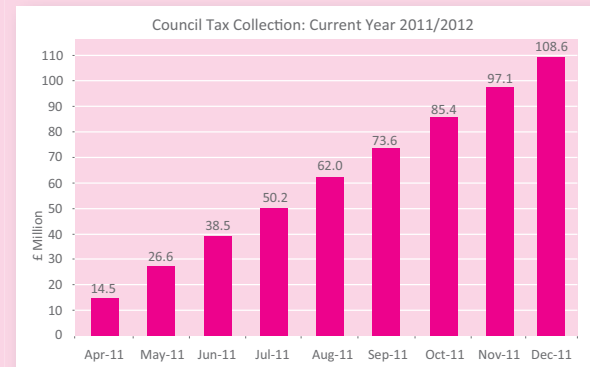
Liverpool Direct Limited encourages customers to make contact if they are experiencing difficulties making payment. We take a firm but fair approach to recovery and enforcement action

and all parties we work with for collecting Council Tax work within our Code of Conduct which is available within the member approved Recovery Policy document.

Since the beginning of the year, over 2,700 customers have made the switch to paying by direct debit and the customers receiving their Council Tax bill in electronic rather than paper format has increased, from 6,000 to 16,000.

Other Performance Highlights:

- Collection of Business Rates for 2010/2011 was 98.86% which is a small but significant improvement on 2009/2010 of 0.09%;
- The collection of Sundry Debts showed an outturn of £30.2M, exceeding the target by over £20M.
- The Overpaid Housing Benefit team saw an increase in collection from £1.79M in 2009/2010 to £1.89M in 2010/2011.



Did you know? This year so far, Liverpool Direct Limited are ahead of all contractual performance targets!

Online Benefits Calculator

Liverpool Direct Limited's Benefits Service developed and launched an Online Benefits Calculator in August 2011 to improve the way residents can access information about their benefit entitlement. It establishes a personalised level of service. The calculator allows customers to seek advice and receive an instant entitlement estimation.

The implementation of the Online Benefits Calculator takes a step towards overcoming some of the barriers which are engrained in the benefits process. Such as the stigma of being labelled 'on benefits'. Customers can enter their details into the Online Benefits Calculator to carry out a self-assessment and access a wealth of advice about their potential benefit entitlement from their own home, library or from any PC.

The calculator helps to address the barriers experienced by many households impacted upon by the economic downturn who have limited knowledge of eligibility criteria or claim processes. Whilst households who have not received financial assistance in the past may be hesitant to come forward, the functionality of the calculator allows them to learn more about benefits prior to approaching Liverpool Direct Limited.

Implemented at no additional cost to the City Council, the Online Benefits Calculator provides management statistics on those

seeking benefits support and those who are deemed to be eligible for support.

It is anticipated that this information can be used to effectively identify and plan take up campaigns to those customer groups or areas of the city where need is highest.

The Online Benefits Calculator provides a 24 x 7 x 365 service.

The calculator is an integral part of the benefits claims process, dealing with an exceptional number of enquiries since its launch in August. The tool will now be developed further based upon its use so far.



Did you know? LDL designed and implemented the www.liverpool.gov.uk website, making it easier to get access to services quicker!