

## UNIVERSAL CREDIT LOCAL AUTHORITY LED PILOT KEY OUTCOMES

### **SYNOPSIS**

The Universal Credit Local Authority Led Pilot in Caerphilly was delivered as part of a wider welfare reform programme in the Borough. Activities within the pilot delivered in partnership with Get Caerphilly On-line, CAB and Jobcentre Plus.

The project, introducing and testing new support services to help residents prepare for the introduction of Universal Credit expected in 2016, was underpinned by signposting and referral (triage) to a range of support services including the partners Jobcentre Plus and CAB. Through the use of a newly developed contact and assessment questionnaire, the Tenancy Support Officers played a key role in referring and signposting tenants to the new, and existing, support. The contact questionnaire enabled a consistent approach to each visit and ensured that relevant information (e.g. informed consent) was recorded

The main objectives of the Pilot were focussed on three areas:

- Digital Support
- Financial Advice Support
- Employment Access Support

### **KEY FEATURES**

#### *Digital Support*

- Partnership with Get Caerphilly On-line
- 18 libraries with 220 free public access PCs
- Get Caerphilly On-line informal drop-in sessions (Digital Fridays) delivered in six libraries
- Recruitment, training and development of volunteers (digital champions) to deliver sessions
- On-line Housing Benefit and Change of Circumstance Forms available on website
- New CRM telephone script to promote and encourage use of on-line forms

#### *Financial Advice/Support*

- Partnership with CAB

- Tenancy Support Officer visits to tenants affected by under-occupation
- Assessment of tenants immediate situation (social/financial)
- referral to debt/budgeting advice
- referral to in depth debt support (casework)
- awareness raising of financial implications of the welfare changes amongst frontline staff

### *Employment Access Support*

- Partnership with JCP
- Fast-track Employment Support
- JCP signposting and referral to other services (e.g. digital)

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

### *Digital Inclusion*

- 624 individuals supported
- 2,688 support contacts
- 20 volunteers delivering sessions in 3 libraries
- 3,253 housing benefit and Change of Circumstances (CoC) transactions being completed online
- 60% housing benefits/CoC claims made on-line (equal reduction in paper copies of housing benefit forms being issued)

### *Financial Advice Support*

- 1,754 tenants visited by TSOs and provided with budgeting advice
- 846 DHP assessments have been completed with 700 being successful
- £286,555 saved by tenants through reduction of expenditure on utilities (Welsh Water Assist, Warm Home Discounts, Water Meter installation)
- 229 tenants referred to CAB for debt/budgeting advice
- 65 tenants referred to CAB for Debt support (casework) with £595,995.50 debt being identified
  - average £7,500 debt per client

- 238 frontline staff attended training to enable them to provide advice/signposting to residents

*Employment Access Support*

- 240 tenants referred to JCP fast track support
  - 30 entered employment
  - 45 undertaken training
- Improved partnership working with JCP at senior and frontline staff level