

---

# How-to guide: Running a Pension Credit uptake campaign

This guide was created by consolidating learning from the campaigns of Age-friendly Communities in the [UK Network](#).

Read the [full case study](#) on Ageing Better's website

## 1. Engage with partners and understand local challenges and opportunities

Everyone can play a part in increasing Pension Credit uptake; from promoting offers of support with older residents, through to providing practical peer support through the claims process. Awareness of your campaign from the early stages will strengthen the approach, delivery and outcomes.

Start by identifying and having conversations with partners who may be impacted by an increased interest in Pension Credit in your area. Partners may include housing providers, Independent Age, Age UK, Citizens Advice, or an Advice, support and benefits team in the local authority. Work together to understand how you can support one another, share intelligence, and manage any challenges that may be experienced as a result of increased traffic.

## 2. Get buy-in by quantifying the potential economic gain

Demonstrating the potential economic gain of an uptake in Pension Credit can be a powerful way to secure buy-in and resource for an awareness campaign. You can use [our worksheet](#) to calculate how many eligible households are not claiming Pension Credit in your locality using DWP data.

### Greater Manchester example:

- There are around 36,000 eligible households not claiming Pension Credit in Greater Manchester – that's a third of those who are eligible
- The average value to households is estimated at £34 per week
- This equates to £70m per year across the city region
- This is all extra income that could be put back into older people's pockets and potentially spent within our local economy

Here is our [worksheet](#) for how to produce your own version of Greater Manchester's statistics for your own place.

Once you have this data, share your estimated figures with a range of partners that may be able to provide funding or support for the work, including senior leads, strategic leads and local councillors. Make the case that the extra income could be put back into older people's pockets, spent within the local economy and could lead to more jobs being created with some going to those unemployed locally, reducing the need for unemployment benefits. This can be used in combination with local older people's stories and successes of other campaigns.

**The first phase of Greater Manchester's Pension Top Up campaign, launched in January 2021 during the pandemic, was primarily driven by housing providers across Greater Manchester.**

### 3. Understand who you are targeting, to inform your communication approach

Alongside partners, use demographic data and local knowledge about the distribution of communities, to identify how your campaign can be tailored for the greatest impact. A good understanding of the areas of low take-up will help to inform decisions about venues for engagement, any translations, and when engagement with community leaders might be more effective than printing flyers. [This workbook](#) on mapping and working with marginalised communities could help you at this stage.

**Some communities in Greater Manchester targeted their work in leisure centers and libraries with lower Pension Credit uptake.**

## 4. Co-create your key messages

Language around Pension Credit can create a barrier. Work with older people in your community to communicate in a way that works for them. Your campaign may adopt its own campaign title and hashtag as part of this process, under which your key messages will sit:

- Focus on the benefits of having more money e.g. Reducing the stress of bills going up in the cost-of-living crisis
- Avoid mention of benefits and instead opt for "Entitlements", "extra money," "what's yours"
- Bust myths that may stop people from applying e.g. having savings, a pension, or owning a home
- Amplify voices of older people talking about the benefits e.g. Greater Manchester's [What the F\(inance\) campaign](#)
- Include positive and realistic images e.g. using the [Age-positive image library](#)
- Include most local data possible e.g. using your local authority's statistics using our Pension Credit worksheet
- Include local information e.g. phone numbers, details of drop-in events for more guidance

**Some of Greater Manchester's social media graphics include messaging around the benefit Pension Credit has had to local older people. Messages ranged from being able to sleep easier for having extra money, access to other entitlements, or having a little extra to spend on family. [See the suite of graphics here.](#)**

## 5. Share materials with your networks

Share your materials through your partners and older people's groups. Building on your understanding of those you are trying to reach, ensure that resources are:

- In both digital and non-digital formats – may include social media graphics, flyers, posters, banners for emails
- Made up of clear and accessible messaging, with easy-to-read font, high contrast text, and subtitles for videos
- Designed so partners can add their own logos to show the campaign is delivered in partnership with trusted parties
- Easy to share among partners and groups – for example text that can be easily pasted into newsletters

**In Greater Manchester, Maxmedia produced a suite of comms assets to [get the message out](#) about the campaign through various means; social media, in buildings used by older people, or through newsletters and direct mail.**

## 6. Share the load – or pay for more to bear the load

One of the challenges is the labour-intensive support required to support claimants, which then limits numbers who can be helped to claim what they are fully entitled to. While the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) can support people through the process themselves, there may be a longer wait. DWP say the best way to claim is to do so through [their website](#) but we know this is not accessible for all, and there is resource required to support those people through the process.

- Equip individuals, family, friends, or trusted professionals to support the application all the way through. Older people are most likely to respond to one-to-one conversations with someone they trust
- Train those who are in face-to-face contact with older people to support people through the application
- Building capacity in the system for those you are signposting to support

**In Greater Manchester, Independent Age ran one-hour online training sessions which gave frontline workers an overview of Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance, including a demonstration of the online benefits calculator.**