

Tameside Council and Pension Service Joint Team



Annual Report 2008/2009

In partnership with



Part of the Department
for Work and Pensions

**Tameside**
Metropolitan Borough
Great lives, excellent services

Introduction

Tameside Council has been working in partnership with the government's Pension Service (part of the Department for Work and Pensions) since its formation in 2003. We formalised this arrangement in 2004 with the creation of the Joint Team. The Council has signed up to Local Area Agreement targets to increase the take-up of benefits by older people, in support of the government's PSA Delivery Agreement 17 - Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and wellbeing in later life.

I am please to report that we are meeting those targets and in doing so have ensured that older people in Tameside have shared in excess of £5million in unclaimed benefits over the last year. However we are not complacent, and I would encourage any older person in Tameside who has not had a benefit check, to contact the council or the Pension Service to request one.

On behalf of the Council I would like to thank the staff involved for working so hard to make the service a success.



Councillor Brenda Warrington
Lead Executive Member

Customer Charter

What does the Joint Team do?

- We offer face to face benefit information and support to older people at Information Points based in various locations around Tameside or by home visit where needed.
- Complete financial assessment forms for people of any age who need home care or residential care and give them benefit information at the same time. This cuts down on the number of times a person has to provide the same financial information to different organisations.
- Listen to the needs of the customer to provide a holistic service. The Joint Team can arrange for customers to be connected to other services at their request. We work closely with the POPPS/CORA team, Adult Services, home care and residential care section and Council Tax and Housing Benefit. We also work with other partner organisations such as Age Concern Tameside, and Citizens Advice Bureau who have an interest in the well being of older people.

We aim:

- To arrange an appointment within ten working days of receipt of a referral to the Joint Team.
- To always show you an identity card when we visit customers.
- Arrange for an interpreter if customers have hearing or speech difficulties or English is not their first language.
- Return all personal documents for example birth or marriage certificates or savings books within five working days. If there is a need to keep them longer the customer will be advised of the reason.
- Respond to any correspondence within ten working days.
- Respond to any complaints within seven working days.
- Invite feedback on the service we provide.

Annual Report

Tameside Joint Team was set up in June 2004 and is now based at Ryecroft Hall in Audenshaw and at Heron House in Stockport.

The team cover benefits for anyone over the age of 60 and also complete home care assessments and residential assessments within Tameside for residents of any age.

The joint team receives its work from a variety of sources, including Warrington Pension Centre, Social Workers, Housing and Council Tax Department of Tameside Council, Financial Assessments from the Adult Services section finance, Welfare Rights and members of the public.

The team attend information points at Age Concern (twice a week), Hyde Town Hall and Ashton Customer Services to help people claim their full entitlements.

In addition the whole team work on scans from DWP and the Local Authority as these may provide us with the means to help residents maximise their entitlements. Regular meetings are held with Social Care staff and also the Council Tax/Housing Benefit section of the Local Authority to discuss working procedures and any issues arising. We also attend meetings at Age Concern and at Tameside Community Legal Service Partnership to ensure that the Joint team is known in the locality.

There are many Joint Working Partnerships in existence now but many of them do not share the work as we do in Tameside, where all visiting officers complete the work between them. The existing staff provide an excellent service to the residents of Tameside due to their knowledge and skills with dealing with the older population and also younger people who need home care or residential care due to ill health.

When out on a visit the visiting officers

ensure that they help the individual/carer claim their entitlement and will signpost them to other area if they are unable to help with their needs. For instance Greater Manchester Fire Service are providing fire risk checks on the homes of elderly or disabled residents and they also fit a smoke detector free of charge so with the customers permission we make a referral to the Fire Service in order that they do not miss out on this opportunity.

The Joint Team can be contacted by telephoning The Pension Service on 0845 60 60 265 Monday to Friday 8.00am to 8.00pm. If possible your enquiry will be dealt with over the telephone or a referral will be made to the Joint Team if a visit is needed. Arrangements can be made for an appointment at one of our Information Points if preferred.

Appendix 2 gives details of the number of successful claims for benefit that were achieved with the assistance of the team. These resulted in Tameside pensioners being more than £111,151 a week better off, equivalent to £5.7 million a year. The team has made a major contribution to the achievement of this year's Local Area Agreement targets for benefit take-up.

Case Studies

Case study one

A customer and his wife were in Denton Town Centre to book a table at the local Italian restaurant. They spotted the benefit bus and spoke to a Joint team member. She recognised that both customer and wife may be entitled to Attendance Allowance. A Visiting Officer received the request and visited them shortly afterwards. The Visiting Officer completed Attendance Allowance forms for both of them.

High rate Attendance Allowance was then awarded for Mr and Mrs A. The Visiting Officer then visited them again to complete Carer's Allowance forms and a Pension Credit application. The Visiting Officer also completed a Council Tax Benefit application, as they will be passported on to full Council Tax Benefit. They were so pleased with the service that they gave the Visiting Officer a Hyacinth!

Case study two

A Visiting Officer visited Mr B in Dukinfield on 18/07/08 as part of a "Carers Allowance scan". This is a process by which the DWP scan their databases to identify couples over pension age, where one may be a carer. The Visiting Officer identified that Mr B could claim "underlying Carers Allowance entitlement" for looking after Mrs B, which would then increase his entitlement to Pension Credit. Whilst there the Visiting Officer identified that Mr B himself had health problems and care needs, so the Visiting Officer completed an Attendance Allowance application for him. In anticipation of an award the Visiting Officer also completed a PC10 form as if Attendance Allowance was awarded to Mr B they would then qualify for the double rate Severe Disability Premium to be added into their Pension Credit claim. Following the Visiting Officer visit Mr and Mrs B's Pension Credit increased from £12.57 savings credit only to Savings Credit and Guaranteed Credit of £120.66 per week, plus an award of £67.00 per week Attendance Allowance. Also as a result of the Visiting Officer visit Housing Benefit increased by £13.74 and Council Tax Benefit increased by £3.98 per week. Meaning, following the Visiting Officer visit, Mr and Mrs B's income increased by £192.81 per week and they were paid over £1500.00 in arrears.

Case Studies

Case study three

A Visiting Officer visited a customer for a benefit entitlement check. While there the Visiting Officer noticed that although he was entitled to Disability Living Allowance, the customer had not been paid since 27/12/06. The DLA unit records showed his payment was combined with Incapacity Benefit, but Incapacity Benefit stopped in December 2006. The Visiting Officer telephoned the Disability Living Allowance unit who have now reinstated payments. Arrears of £6791.75 paid 18/11/08.

Case study four

A Financial Advisor, who was trying to help a lady who had contacted him about releasing equity in her home, contacted the team.

The team arranged a home visit in October 2008 for a benefit check. The Joint Team Visiting Officer established she was entitled to a small amount of Pension Credit (savings credit), which she was extremely grateful for. At that visit the Visiting Officer also identified a need for a possible claim to Attendance Allowance. This was completed and subsequently awarded at the low rate. This then entitled her to guarantee Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit), including the Severe Disability Premium.

She received £987.01 arrears and her weekly income increased by a total of £97.45. She is also entitled to full council tax rebate. Following this increase to her weekly income she decided she did not need to release any equity in her home.

Case study five

An Visiting Officer went to visit a customer, as they were to have his Disability Living Allowance care payments reduced to middle rate care, a reduction in income of £22.15 per week, as the customer agreed that he no longer had night care needs. His wife had been awarded high rate Attendance Allowance in August, so the Visiting Officer asked if they had checked to see if they were entitled to any other benefits. At first they were reluctant to discuss other income or capital, but eventually they agreed to disclose the information, at which point the Visiting Officer established they were entitled to full Council Tax Benefit, worth £26.30 a week, and Pension Credit of £70.14 a week, making them £83.29 a week better off in total, backdated for 3 months

Case Study six

A Visiting Officer went to see a client to complete a financial assessment for home care charges. She found that the resident was not receiving all the benefits to which she was entitled. She spoke to the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit section and found that they had not worked out the benefit correctly due to an increase in disability for the client. She was able to put in for a refund and the client received £3178.42 Housing Benefit backdate, £1015.71 Council Tax backdate and also an extra £1251.84 backdate for Pension Credit.

Customer Survey

In October 2008 the Joint Team carried out a customer survey to ensure that it was meeting the needs of the people of Tameside.

The customers contacted were each visited in the month of September 2008. It was felt that a fair representation of customer feeling would be obtained by issuing 101 questionnaires ensuring that each visiting officer was included and exactly the same number of questionnaires were issued for all visitors.

In the end, 101 questionnaires were issued. A copy of the covering letter and questionnaire can be found at appendix 1.

49 were returned which were fully completed and although one extra one was returned with one customer who did not complete the markings, they did add that, "Everything was satisfactory".

Analysis of the fully completed forms shows the following results:
The following results came through on scores 1 to 5 from the 49 respondents who fully completed the questionnaire: -

Answers received	Poor 1	Average 2	Good 3	Very Good 4	Excellent 5
Question 1	0	0	0	2	47
Question 2	0	0	0	2	47
Question 3	0	0	0	3	46
Question 4	0	0	2	1	46
Question 5	0	0	2	3	44

Many questionnaires were returned with comments which included:

"The visitor rendered an excellent service in order to help my family with matters they would have found difficult to cope with".

"He made a good impression".

"Thank you as all my concerns were dealt with at the visit".

"I think I had an excellent service provided and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the lady".

"Very happy with the service provided and the visitor was very helpful"

Appendix One

Date _____

Dear _____

Reference: _____

On _____ you were visited by _____ a member of the Joint Visiting Team.

What do you think of the service you have received? _____

Could we please trouble you for a few minutes of your time to complete this form and simply pop it in the post? A reply paid envelope is enclosed. By doing this you will be helping us to give an excellent standard of service to you, our client.

We look forward to hearing from you and assure you, we'll listen to what you say. Your opinion is important

Karen Morgan-Hopwood
Stephanie Fearn
Joint Team Managers

If you wish to give us a call we can be reached on 0161 429 2071

Please can you circle on the scale 1 - 5 (1 for no/poor and 5 for yes/excellent)

Was the visit arranged at a suitable time for you?	1	2	3	4	5
Did you find the visiting officer polite and easy to talk to?	1	2	3	4	5
Were you satisfied with the service provided?	1	2	3	4	5
Was the advice given easy to understand?	1	2	3	4	5
Did you feel that all your concerns were dealt with at the time of the visit?	1	2	3	4	5

Do you have any other comments or suggestions that you feel would improve our service to you? _____

Thank you for using the Tameside and Pension Service Joint Team.
(Reference: _____)

Appendix Two

Monetary Value of Awards For Referrals Cleared The Period 01/04/2008 - 31/03/2009

This Report relates to Awards Information which may not be complete until 3 months from the date Referral Cleared

Pension Age and Working Age Referrals

For LA(s): 'Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council'

Referral Origin	Pension Credit	AA	DLA	SP
Customer Acquisition Central Team				
DCS - AA	£467	£1344		
DCS - CA				
DCS - DLA			£5123	
Debt Management Service				
Fairer Charging	£204	£332		
Fairer Charging - Tameside	£1470	£1515	£301	£172
GIS				
HB/CTB Department	£45	£45		
Health Service/PCT	£57	£67		
Information Point	£131	£157	£27	£144
Information Point - Hyde Town Hall	£1911	£45		£699
Information Point - Stockport Age Concern	£7			
Information Point - Stopford House				
Information Point - Tameside Age Concern	£1364	£67	£47	£917
Information Point - TMBC	£984	£246	£129	£1031
Other direct contact by customer	£9216	£7590	£2337	£1291
Outreach Event	£32	£494	£96	
PCAL	£985	£628	£92	
Pension Centre - Other	£931	£879	£322	£751
Pension Centre - Pension Credit	£8397	£1101	£67	£775
Pension Centre - Retirement Pension	£422	£134	£136	£1346
Scan	£4523	£383		£26
Social Services, other than Fairer Charging	£2630	£6972	£1482	£307
Supporting People	£361	£313	£193	£6
JWP - Fairer Charging Scan	£67			
JWP - Tameside Sheltered Housing	£93	£94		£130
JWP - PUBLICITY	£32	£115		
JWP - Medical				
JWP - Benefit bus	£68	£237		
JWP - Local Press	£39	£70		

Bereavement Benefit	Carers Allowance	Other DWP Benefits	Housing Benefit	Council Tax Benefit	HMRC	Totals
				£18		£1830
		£86		£22		£5231
		£43				£580
		£61	£164	£114		£3797
						£302
			£189	£23		
				£20		£143
				£28		£487
			£548	£128		£3331
						£7
			£103	£72		£2570
				£19		£2409
£61	£262	£32	£1717	£1789		£24296
			£83	£12		£718
				£102		£1807
	£53		£522	£256		£3714
£91			£1536	£729		£12698
			£122	£51		£2211
	£624		£239	£370		£6165
			£708	£414		£12512
			£213	£80		£1166
						£67
						£317
				£33		£180
				£3		£309
				£7		£117

Appendix Two

Referral Origin	Pension Credit	AA	DLA	SP
JWP	£2601	£3958	£885	£263
Partnership - Peak Valley Housing Association				
Partnership - Hyde Town Hall				
Partnership - JOB CENTRE PLUS	£130			
Partnership - Stockport sheltered housing				
Partnership - Anchor Staying put			£114	
Partnership - stockport MBC				
Partnership - Welfare Rights-Stockport	£439	£205	£186	£162
Partnership - POPPS -Tameside	£143	£520		
Partnership - Tameside Vision First				
Partnership - TMBC	£517	£570	£244	
Partnership - Housing Association	£195	£70	£67	
Partnership - MacMillan Nurses		£70	£22	
Partnership - Tameside Carers Centre	£3	£45	£47	
Partnership - Mossley TMBC Advice	£275	£134		
Partnership - Ashton Town Hall	£354		£92	
Partnership - Age Concern - Tameside	£1529	£770	£65	£1062
Partnership - Age Concern Stockport	£23	£67		
Partnership - Tell us once				
Partnership - Welfare Rights-Tameside	£617	£2255	£636	£55
Partnership - Help the Aged				
Partnership - CAB				
Partnership - Age Concern		£45		
Partnership - RNID				
Partnership - RNIB				
Other	£397	£358	£221	£24
Grand Totals	£41589	£31963	£12930	£9159

Bereavement Benefit	Carers Allowance	Other DWP Benefits	Housing Benefit	Council Tax Benefit	HMRC	Totals
	£29	£134	£619	£342		£8831
						£130
						£114
			£87	£54		£1133
			£42	£62		£768
			£233	£133		£1697
			£315	£59		£706
			£21	£22		£136
				£9		£104
			£17	£81		£506
			£192	£45		£683
£83			£221	£130		£3859
						£90
			£455	£206		£4224
						£45
			£58	£106		£1164
£235	£969	£357	£8405	£5543		£111151

Appendix Two

Referrals - Claims - Awards The Period 01/04/2008 - 31/03/2009

This Report relates to Awards Information which may not be complete until 3 months from the date Referral Cleared

Pension Age and Working Age Referrals

For LA(s): 'Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council'

Referral Origin	Referrals Cleared	PC Claims	PC Awards	AA/DLA Claims
Customer Acquisition Central Team	0			
DCS - AA	65	12	11	25
DCS - CA	1			
DCS - DLA	115			73
Debt Management Service	5			
Fairer Charging	65	3	3	8
Fairer Charging - Tameside	661	42	39	42
GIS	0			
HB/CTB Department	38	2	2	1
Health Service/PCT	6	2	2	2
Information Point	17	5	4	4
Information Point - Hyde Town Hall	177	39	33	1
Information Point - Stockport Age Concern	3	1	1	
Information Point - Stopford House	0			
Information Point - Tameside Age Concern	114	15	14	2
Information Point - TMBC	136	25	22	8
Other direct contact by customer	692	199	185	193
Outreach Event	22	2	2	13
PCAL	53	17	15	14
Pension Centre - Other	245	32	26	25
Pension Centre - Pension Credit	543	145	129	23
Pension Centre - Retirement Pension	108	12	10	8
Scan	285	155	155	6
Social Services, other than Fairer Charging	363	57	55	171
Supporting People	34	10	10	13
JWP - Fairer Charging Scan	1			1
JWP - Tameside Sheltered Housing	26	3	3	3
JWP - PUBLICITY	10	2	1	2
JWP - Medical	0			
JWP - Benefit bus	8	2	2	4
JWP - Local Press	7	2	2	1

AA/DLA Awards	HB/CTB Claims	HB/CTB Awards	Other Claims	Other Awards	Total Claims	Total Awards
24	2	1	3	3	42	39
					0	
67	1	1	1	1	75	69
					0	
7					0	
37	14	12	12	12	110	100
1	10	9	1	1	14	13
1	2	2	2	2	8	7
4	2	2	3	2	14	12
1	17	17	10	10	67	61
			1	1	2	2
2	9	9	15	15	41	40
7	1	1	13	13	47	43
167	157	142	147	143	696	637
9	5	4	1	1	21	16
12	7	6	2	2	40	35
21	26	22	23	22	106	91
21	80	76	27	26	275	252
5	8	7	20	17	48	39
6	77	56	175	174	413	391
153	42	39	17	17	287	264
10	8	8	4	4	35	32
1					1	1
2			1	1	7	6
2	4	3	3	3	11	9
4	1	1			7	7
1	2	2	1	1	6	6

Appendix Two

Referral Origin	Referrals Cleared	PC Claims	PC Awards	AA/DLA Claims
JWP	1000	71	63	87
Partnership - Peak Valley Housing Association	0			
Partnership - Hyde Town Hall	0			
Partnership - JOB CENTRE PLUS	3	1	1	
Partnership - Stockport sheltered housing	1			
Partnership - Anchor Staying put	1			1
Partnership - stockport MBC	1			
Partnership - Welfare Rights-Stockport	17	7	7	7
Partnership - POPPS -Tameside	44	7	5	14
Partnership - Tameside Vision First	1			1
Partnership - TMBC	66	12	12	15
Partnership - Housing Association	9	4	4	2
Partnership - MacMillan Nurses	7			3
Partnership - Tameside Carers Centre	4	1	1	2
Partnership - Mossley TMBC Advice	9	2	2	2
Partnership - Ashton Town Hall	20	4	4	2
Partnership - Age Concern - Tameside	175	34	29	16
Partnership - Age Concern Stockport	6	1	1	1
Partnership - Tell us once	0			
Partnership - Welfare Rights-Tameside	147	17	15	57
Partnership - Help the Aged	0			
Partnership - CAB	0			
Partnership - Age Concern	3			1
Partnership - RNID	0			
Partnership - RNIB	1			
Other	59	11	9	11
Grand Totals	5374	956	879	865

AA/DLA Awards	HB/CTB Claims	HB/CTB Awards	Other Claims	Other Awards	Total Claims	Total Awards
82	45	38	19	19	222	202
					1	1
					0	
1					1	1
					0	
7	5	5	3	3	22	22
10	7	7	2	2	30	24
					1	
13	18	14	1	1	46	40
2	10	10	1	1	17	17
2	3	3	1	1	7	6
2	1	1			4	4
2	3	3	2	2	9	9
2	6	6	2	2	14	14
14	20	15	15	14	85	72
1					2	2
51	23	21	7	7	104	94
1					1	1
					0	
11	9	8	7	6	38	34
766	625	551	544	531	2990	2727

Staff Team

April 2008- March 2009 Tameside Joint Team

<p>Joint Team Manager The Pension Service Karen Morgan Hopwood</p>	<p>Joint Team Manager Local Authority Stephanie Fearn</p>
<p>Partner Liaison Manager The Pension Service Carol Renshaw and Anita Fox</p>	
<p>Joint Team Visitors The Pension Service Jackie Ball Ian Cameron Chris Curley Gill Hanlon Janine Wellock Michelle Kay</p>	<p>Joint Team Visitors Local Authority Susan Basiuk Diane Canale Pat Cope Julie Crossland Kath Lee</p>
<p>Local Service Co-ordinators The Pension Service Jane Baines Linda Power Gail Stewart Alison Jones Rachel Gregson</p>	

Service Unit Manager for Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council:
Alan Franco, Head of Welfare Rights

