SAVVI
Scalable Approach to Vulnerability via Interoperability

Aberdeen City Council Learning Example: **Maximising Household Benefit and Entitlement Uptake**



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improvement service

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1. About this Learning Example

This learning example describes work undertaken at Aberdeen City Council to use data to identify and support households who are likely to lack financial resilience, and to provide targeted benefits maximization support to them. The aim of this learning example is to document key aspects of this work to inform other local areas who may wish to carry out similar household level targeting.



This work was not undertaken through the SAVVI process, but this learning example has been structured around the six key SAVVI stages, for ease of reference, and to support application of key elements by organisations carrying out similar work seeking to conform to the SAVVI approach. You can learn more about the SAVVI process at the official SAVVI UK website.

2. Purpose

In 2024, Aberdeen City Council implemented Policy in Practice's Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT), supported by a successful award from Scottish Government's Child Poverty Accelerator Fund (CPAF). The initial work to implement the LIFT established the broad capability within Aberdeen City Council to identify low-income households and to allow benefit maximisation activity to be targeted at household level. The overall purpose of this work was to ensure that financial inclusion and welfare support capacity was being informed, and could be prioritised by, need across the population – reducing the need for sole reliance on self-referrals. LIFT brings together local authority and Department of Work and Pension (DWP) data to identify households who are likely to be entitled to financial support but are not currently receiving it. LIFT has been used to identify and contact households in relation to:

- Pension Credit
- Free School Meals
- Education Maintenance Allowance
- School Clothing Grants
- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Aberdeen City Council's Rent Assistance Fund

The adoption of LIFT complemented much earlier work to drive increased uptake of educational entitlements. In 2018 the Council began work to bring educational entitlements into its application process for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. This enabled a streamlined process whereby eligibility for education benefits, including free school meals and school clothing grants, could be assessed and awarded at the same time without the need for separate applications. Council Tax Reduction data was then matched on an ongoing basis with education records to identify eligible children, enabling benefits to be awarded automatically where possible.

The Council also made a change to its internal processes around Local Council Tax Reductions (LCTR) in September 2019, whereby notifications received from the DWP about new Universal Credit Claims were treated as applications for Council Tax Reduction, easing the process for eligible claimants. Prior to this, the Council sent out a Council Tax Reduction Claim form to the citizen on receipt of the Universal Credit Claim notification, with forms not always being returned. This process change led to an increase in LCTR awards in the area. Citizens could (and still can) apply for Council Tax Reduction through a Council application process.

This initial work was built on to incorporate LIFT intelligence into the Council's existing processes for streamlining the award of educational entitlements, developed prior to LIFT's adoption, and to add an additional use case to enable NHS Health Visitors and Midwifery Teams to act upon LIFT intelligence in order to support families to claim their entitlement to Best Start Grants. Each of these is described below.

2.1 Remit

Aberdeen City Council's remit to tackle financial hardship sits within established public duties and powers. Scottish local authorities are empowered to give advice (Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, S.88) and to take action to advance wellbeing in their areas (Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, S. 20) as well as having duties to address socio-economic inequality in their area, as part of community planning partnership arrangements (Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015), and to take action taken on child poverty (Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017).

The Council also has duties in relation to homelessness prevention which are primarily set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, which will be amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2025, as these provisions are brought into force. This amendment will (amongst other things) require Scottish local authorities to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness, offering assistance to households at risk up to six months before homelessness becomes imminent, compared with the current two-month period.

The local authority also has duties for administering Council Tax Reduction Schemes, Local Welfare, and Discretionary Housing Payments. As an Education Authority, under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, Aberdeen City Council also has duties in relation to Free Schools Meals (Section 50), School Clothing Grants (Section 54) and Educational Maintenance Allowance (Section 73).

Having a sufficiently granular understanding of where poverty and socio-economic disadvantage exist (i.e., which households are in or at risk of poverty) is vital to carrying out these tasks, by prioritising activity across the population through proactive targeted interventions, rather than just on receipt of individual applications.

Local partners also have a part to play, and Aberdeen City Council is working with NHS Grampian to support the wider reach of this work, meaning the health board's remit to act is also relevant. Under the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978, NHS Grampian duties include the provision of, or the arrangement for the provision of, a very wide range of healthcare, health improvement and health protection services across the Grampian region, which comprises the Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray local authority areas. NHS Grampian also has duties to address socio-economic inequality in their area, as part of community planning partnership arrangements (Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015), and to take action on child poverty (Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017).

A range of legislation governs the use and re-use of social security data; principally, the Social Security Administration Act 1992 and the and the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (and supporting regulations), for UK Government administered beneifts, and the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 (and supporting regulations), for devolved benefits.

2.2 Stakeholders

Organisation	Role
Aberdeen City Council	Lead Organisation
NHS Grampian	Referral Partner
Policy in Practice	Data Processor
Department for Work and Pensions	Data Originator

3. Find

3.1 Data Types

The work described in this learning example uses the following data types:

Data Type	Data Controller (of origin)
Universal Credit Digital Service (UCDS) Local Council Tax Reduction (LCTR) data share	DWP
UCDS Stop notice (UCDS STOP)	DWP
Single Housing Benefit Extract (SHBE)	DWP / Local Authority
Discretionary Housing Payments	Local Authority (will include DWP derived data)
Council Tax Reduction Records	Local Authority (will include DWP derived data)
Housing Benefit Records	Local Authority (will include DWP derived data)
Rent Arrears	Local Authority
Council Tax arrears	Local Authority
Free School Meal Applications	Local Authority
School Clothing Grant Applications	Local Authority
Educational Maintenance Allowance Applications	Local Authority
Free School Meal current receipt records	Local Authority
School Clothing Grant current receipt records	Local Authority
Educational Maintenance current receipt records	Local Authority

3.2 Legal bases and lawfulness of processing

All processing of personal data must comply with data protection principles, the first of which requires processing to be lawful, fair and transparent. For processing to be lawful, a Controller (the organisation who is deciding the purpose and means of processing personal data) must identify an appropriate legal basis in data protection law, as well as being more broadly lawful.

The Council relied on the legal basis of 'public task' for the processing in this learning example. Where an organisation relies on public task, it has to make sure the relevant task has a clear basis in law, keeping a record of the underlying legislation that gives it the power or duty to carry out the public function (or 'task'). The underpinning law doesn't have to explicitly permit the processing of data, but it must be necessary to process personal data to carry out the task. This is why the SAVVI process includes the identification of relevant powers or duties of the Lead Organisation, at the outset, in the PURPOSE phase. These have been identified above at Section 2.1.

These use cases include the use of both data that was generated by the Council for its own tasks, and personal data that was shared with it by the DWP under the DWP Memorandum of Understanding, for specific and defined purposes, aligned to legal gateways. A 'legal gateway' is a term used to describe a piece of legislation which specifically obliges or allows an organisation to share personal data for a particular purpose. The section below describes legal gateways relied upon by the Council for each use case.

Benefits Maximisation

In addition to the powers outlined above to tackle financial hardship, Aberdeen City Council also has duties for administering Council Tax Reduction Schemes, Local Welfare, Discretionary Housing Payments and for preventing homelessness. Having a sufficiently granular understanding of where poverty and socio-economic disadvantage exists is vital to carrying out these tasks in a way which prioritises activity across the population as a whole, through targeted interventions, rather than just on receipt of individual applications.

The legal gateways for sharing and using data are mainly derived from the provisions of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012, as amended. In particular, sharing, holding and using relevant DWP information for **Council Tax Reduction** take-up purposes is covered by Regulation 14(3)(a) and (b) of the Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012, as amended.

Sharing, holding and using relevant DWP information for the purpose of deciding whether to award a **Discretionary Housing Payment** is covered by Regulations 5(1)(b), 5(2), 6(1)(b), 7 and 14(3)(e) of the Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012, as amended.

Sharing, holding and using relevant DWP information for the purpose of identifying and offering support to those claimants affected by the **benefit cap** is covered by Regulations 5(1)(f), 6(1)(i) and 7 of the Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012, as amended.

Sharing, holding and using relevant DWP information for **local welfare** purposes is covered by Regulations 5(1)(a)(iii), 6(1)(a)(iii) and 9(B) of the Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012, as amended. The Council considers educational entitlements to come under the definition of welfare services.

Sharing, holding and using relevant DWP information more widely, for prevention purposes, particularly preventing **homelessness**, is covered by Regulations 5(1)(e), 6(1)(e), and 7(3)(a) of the Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012, as amended.

'Relevant information' is defined in Section 131(12) of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 as information relating to any relevant social security benefit, or welfare services.

Sharing DWP data for take-up purposes is covered by Section 7B of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, and the Social Security (Claims and Information) Regulations 2007

which contains a list of relevant benefits. The Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) 2012 regulations specify the purpose of the data sharing/use and who is involved but do not set out what data can be shared/used for a given purpose.

Educational Entitlements

As an Education Authority, under the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, Aberdeen City Council also has duties in relation to Free Schools Meals (Section 50), School Clothing Grants (Section 54) and Educational Maintenance Allowance (Section 73). The legal gateway for sharing and using social security data to identify those who may be entitled but not currently in receipt of educational entitlements was derived from section 131(3) of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. This allows data held by a local authority for a prescribed purpose to be used for another prescribed purpose relating to welfare services or council tax.

Qualifying "welfare services" include those to which a local authority contributes (or will contribute) to the expenditure incurred in their provision and includes services which provide accommodation, support, assistance, advice or counselling to individuals with particular needs. For these purposes, assistance includes by means of a grant or loan or the provision of goods or services.

The provision of Free School Meals/School Clothing Grants and Education Maintenance Allowance are considered by the Council to be welfare services.

Best Start Grants

The re-use of social security data relies on the legal basis of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Social Security (Information Sharing in relation to Welfare Services etc.) Regulations 2012, as amended, as follows:

Regulations 5(1)(a)(iii), 6(1)(a)(iii) and 9(b) allow data sharing for local welfare purposes, which includes maximising take-up of financial support for low-income families.

Regulations 5(1)(e), 6(1)(e) and 7(3)(a) support data sharing for prevention purposes, including preventing financial hardship.

Section 7B of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 allows sharing data to promote take-up of relevant benefits.

Social Security (Claims and Information) Regulations 2007 specify benefits for which take-up activity is permissible.

The 2012 Regulations also make specific reference to "*determining eligibility for assistance under the Healthy Start scheme*" under Regulations 5(1)(a)(ii), 6(1)(a)(ii) and 9(a). While the Healthy Start scheme itself no longer applies in Scotland following devolution, the Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods have replaced this provision and serve an equivalent policy purpose:

- Supporting child nutrition.
- Reducing financial hardship among low-income families.
- Promoting benefit take-up through partnerships with health professionals.

Therefore, although the reference to Healthy Start does not directly apply in Scotland, the assessment of Aberdeen City Council was that the spirit and intent of these regulations remain fully relevant to the aims of this project.

3.3 Data Governance & Ethics

Background

This section outlines the main information governance activities that were carried out to support this work. Aberdeen City Council's information governance framework is set out at a high level in its Corporate Information Policy, which sets out the Council's overarching principles for managing its information and data and assigns specific roles and responsibilities. This Policy is supported by a range of handbooks, processes and procedures. These include an Information Asset Owner Handbook (for Information Asset Owners) and a Managing Information Handbook (for all staff). Information Asset Owners have five areas of responsibility, each with specific responsibilities associated with them. The five areas are:

1. Knowing your information assets
2. Managing your information assets throughout their lifecycle
3. Understanding risk and providing assurance
4. Fostering a culture where information is valued, respected and protected
5. Using information assets for public good

Key responsibilities within these areas relevant to this work are: conducting data protection impact assessments, collecting information fairly, lawfully and transparently (including having appropriate privacy notices in place), knowing who has access and why, and securing and protecting your asset. All Information Asset Owners also have a responsibility to actively work with other areas of the council to consider secondary use of their information assets where it's ethical and lawful to do so.

The Managing Information Handbook brings together a detailed set of processes around how to carry out key information management tasks in a user-friendly way with supportive guidance.

The Council's Data Protection Impact Assessment process is three-tiered, consisting of a DPIA Screening Checklist, a Brief DPIA, and a Full DPIA. The screening checklist helps officers to decide whether a DPIA is required for their initiative, and if so, which type, brief or full. A Full DPIA is required in cases where the proposed processing meets the level of risk where a DPIA is required under the terms of the UK GDPR. Information Asset Owners (a Service Manager

level responsibility) are responsible for ensuring that the Council's DPIA process is followed, where one of their information assets is involved. Information Asset Owners may sign off Brief DPIAs (after input and advice from the Council's Data Protection Officer). Full DPIAs must be signed off by the relevant Chief Officer(s).

As set out in the Council's Scheme of Governance and associated Powers Delegated to Officers, Information Sharing Agreements must be authorised for signing by the relevant Chief Officer, who must first consult with the Council's Chief Officer for Data & Insight. Once approved, an authorised signatory (solicitor) may complete the signing on behalf of the Council.

Specific information governance activities

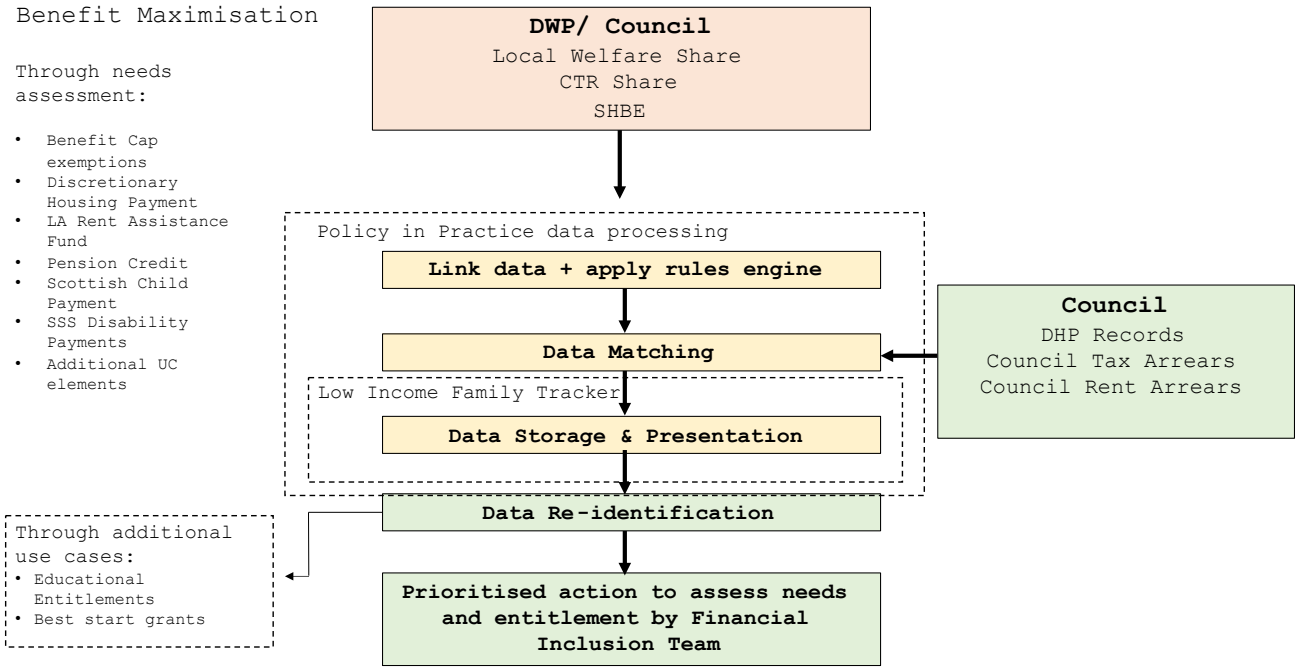
This work was supported by the following information governance assessments and arrangements:

- A DPIA was carried out for the 2018 initiative to increase uptake of educational entitlements.
- A DPIA was completed for the implementation of the LIFT and associated benefit maximisation use case.
- A specific DWP Re-Use Notification is in place under the terms of the DWP Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the LIFT and associated benefit maximization use case.
- A specific DWP Re-Use Notification is in place under the terms of the DWP Memorandum of Understanding for the Educational Entitlements use case.
- A DPIA was completed for the Best Start Grants use case.
- A specific DWP Re-Use Notification is in place for this use case, under the terms of the DWP Memorandum of Understanding for the Best Start Grants use case at 2.4.3.
- A specific Information Sharing Agreement is in place for the Best Start Grants use case which covers sharing between Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian. This was agreed under the terms of an overarching Grampian Children & Young People Information Sharing Protocol. This protocol sets out overarching agreed purposes and standards for sharing information between key local and national partners about Children & Young People and contains a supplementary short-form sharing agreement to cover specific sharing arrangements.

Each DPIA process identified a range of additional actions in each case to ensure compliance with the data protection principles and to mitigate any risks identified in each case. In every case this included actions around ensuring that families were clear about how and why their data was being used as well as other key tasks to ensure that new uses where managed in accordance with the Council's Policies and Handbooks of procedures as described above.

3.4 Dataflows and Processes

Benefit Maximisation



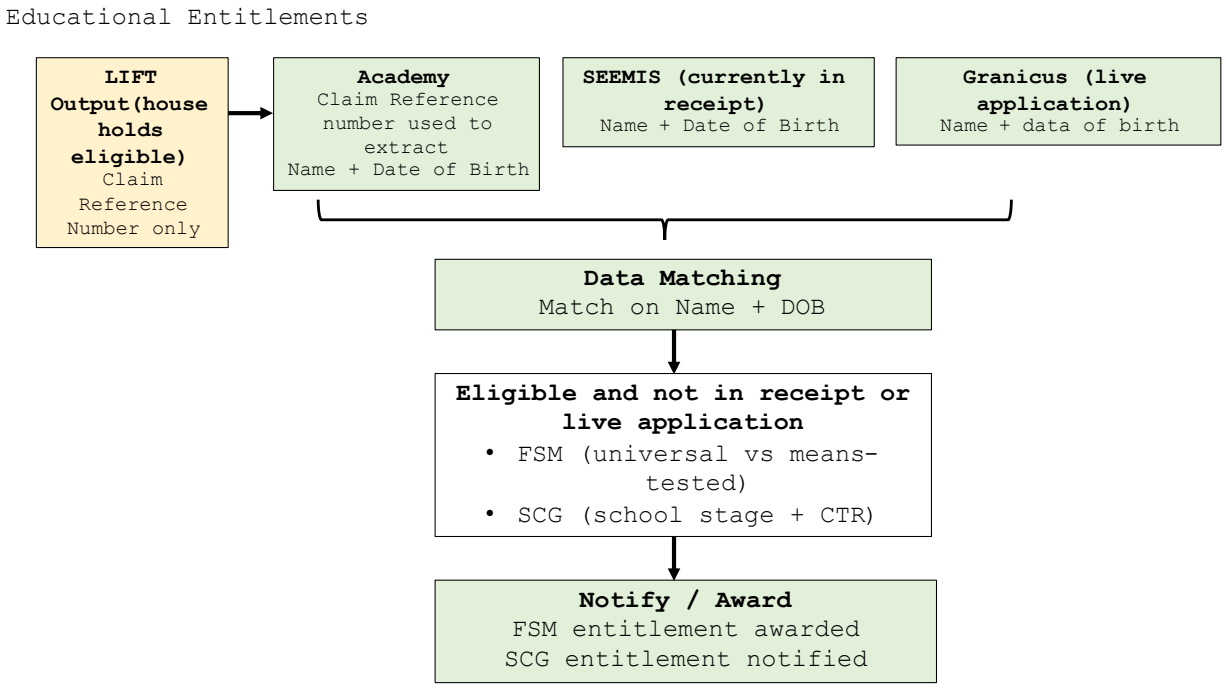
Universal Credit data from the DWP CTR data share and the DWP local welfare data share, together with the SHBE Housing Benefit and CTR datasets, are transferred securely to the data processor, Policy in Practice. Personal information is pseudonymised through the removal of names and addresses, leaving the original Claim Reference Number derived from the Council's Revenues & Benefits Case Management System as the persistent identifier for later re-linkage.

The pseudonymised data is passed through Policy & Practice's rules engine, which identifies those households affected by welfare reforms such as the benefit cap and the under-occupation charge, and those who have deductions from benefits. Policy in Practice's rules engine applies assumptions about household expenditure. From this analysis on pseudonymised data, the Policy in Practice rules engine derives indicators of financial resilience and poverty.

Policy in Practice supports Aberdeen City Council to match the psuedonymsed data with data held locally (data on Discretionary Housing Payments awards, Council rent arrears and council tax arrears). The resulting analysis provides a rounded picture of households who lack financial resilience, using Policy in Practice's segmentation categories (1. In Crisis, 2. At Risk, 3. Struggling, 4. Coping) and who are potentially vulnerable in other ways, such as disability. It also helps identify those households who may be at risk of homelessness or severe debt problems.

The pseudonymised matched dataset is transferred securely to Aberdeen City Council by the processor, Policy in Practice, and is held locally on a Low-Income Family Tracker dashboard, using a unique identifier.

Educational Entitlements

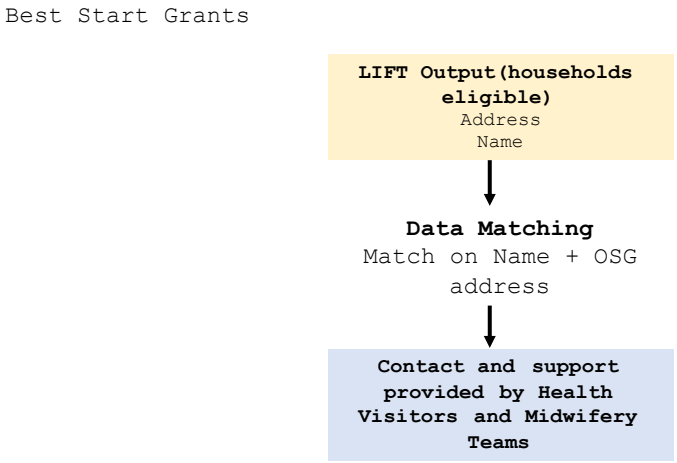


The process for identifying unclaimed educational entitlements uses existing Universal Credit and Housing Benefit data, matched with local data sources, and analysed through Policy in Practice's LIFT dashboard. The output from LIFT identifies households who are likely to have an entitlement to educational benefits. The LIFT output comprises an extract of Claim Reference numbers. A matching exercise is then done where the Claim Reference numbers are used to extract the names and dates of birth from children in each household attached to the claim reference number from the Council's revenues and benefits case management system.

This data is then matched, using name and dates of birth, with a) data from the Education Management system where records of pupils currently in receipt of educational entitlements are held, and b) against the Customer Relationship Management system, which is where records of any live applications are held. This process yields a list of pupils who have not been matched. These are pupils who are entitled, but who are not currently in receipt, and who do not have a live application for educational entitlements.

The Council maintains two other routes for the application and award of educational entitlements, to ensure that no-one is missed and that families can still make applications if they think they are eligible and are not caught by the process to proactively identify need outlined above. The first is through the Council's application process for Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit, which also assesses eligibility for educational entitlements where appropriate. Applicants have the option in the application to opt out of this if they choose to. The Council also has a separate standalone application process for Free Schools Meals and School Clothing Grants (combined). Free School Meals and School Clothing Grant applications have been merged into one application. This allows parents to quickly determine if they will be eligible based on initial questions.

Best Start Grants



This process is not yet operational, but it will use existing Universal Credit and Housing Benefit data, matched with local data sources and analysed through Policy in Practice's LIFT dashboard, to proactively identify eligible families and ensure they receive advice and support to claim Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods.

The steps in the new process will include: Data processing via LIFT whereby Universal Credit and Housing Benefit data already shared by DWP is processed securely by Policy in Practice and pseudonimised for analysis. Using household composition, UC/HB entitlement, and dependent child data, LIFT flags families who are likely to be entitled to Best Start Grants and Foods. A secure dataset containing minimal personal data (name, address, dependent info) is shared with NHS Grampian's health visiting and midwifery teams to match against their own data. Health visitors and midwives use the shared data to proactively contact families and ensure they are aware of their entitlement and supported to make claims.

4. Assess & Support process

Benefit Maximisation

Aberdeen City Council's Financial Inclusion Team does initial analysis within the LIFT to work through checks on eligibility for all potential forms of support, as follows:

- eligibility for CTR if the household does not receive it.
- potential eligibility for a Discretionary Housing Payment (where there is a gap between housing support and rent) and for any exemptions to the benefit cap which might be relevant.
- possible eligibility for other social security benefits listed in the Social Security (Claims and Information) Regulations 2007, specifically Pension Credit with a view to improving take-up.
- possible eligibility for help from local welfare schemes, for example, Best Start Grants, or the Council's Rent Assistance Fund.

The LIFT dashboard indicates how many children are in a household and allows filtering on the following categories:

1. In Crisis
2. At Risk
3. Struggling
4. Coping

In addition to the functionality within LIFT, Policy in Practice can also provide additional reports on request, for analysis that's not currently available with the LIFT tool, for example, every child that has a disabled child element. These can be used to target specific action to ensure families have any additional benefits that they could be entitled to.

The analysis is re-linked with personal information to allow Aberdeen City Council to invite households to apply for support for which they are eligible or be helped to apply by welfare benefits advisers. The intention is to identify early-on those households at risk of crisis and ensure they receive the right support.

Contact methods will then depend on the cohort the Council is trying to reach. For older adults, the Council will write a letter first explaining that there may be additional benefits that household is entitled to (primarily pension credit), and this will be followed up by a phone call. Where the person is also a Council Tenant, the Financial Inclusion Team will also follow up through the relevant Housing Support Officer for the area, who will visit the person's home and support them to make a claim. For families subject to the benefit cap, the Council writes a letter explaining that there may be additional benefits that household is entitled to (primarily Discretionary Housing payment, though the team will first check whether the family meets any of the criteria for an exemption to the cap) and follows this up with a phone call.

Educational Entitlements

From 1st June 2024, any family who is on the auto-award list but has not already applied proactively themselves, has been auto-awarded Free School Meal entitlement, with the entitlement automatically loaded onto the child's account within the Council's cashless catering system. A communication is sent to the family notifying them of the auto-award.

This communication also includes details of any entitlement to School Clothing Grant with an invitation to apply, where necessary. Initially, these families are not auto-awarded the School Clothing Grant, as the Council needs families to apply and provide up to date bank details so that School Clothing Grant payments can be made. The data will also be used to identify those families who qualify for school meal vouchers during holiday periods. This contact is made through the Council's school communication system which is used across schools to communicate with parents. This system can send emails or texts depending on a parent's preferred contact method. A follow-up is made after one month, if necessary. Depending on the numbers involved this is either done by a phone call or through the pupil's school.

5. Report

Benefit maximisation outcomes

Outcomes from needs assessments and client financial gain flowing from increased entitlements are recorded on Aberdeen City Council's Financial Inclusion Team's case management system.

Educational entitlements

Outcomes from data matching exercises are captured separately in the Financial Inclusion Team's case management system, for each matching exercise completed.

Outcome reporting

Aberdeen City Council reports on its welfare rights and financial inclusion activity to its Anti-Poverty Committee and on uptake of Educational Entitlements to its Education & Children's Services Committee.

Use Case	Anticipated outcomes for households	Actual outcomes for households (to date)
Benefit maximisation	Citizens will benefit because under the new process they are far more likely to receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled. Customers will also benefit because part of the new process will involve identifying households who either have, or will have in the future, a shortfall between their income and their legitimate expenditure, taking account of known welfare reforms and reasonable assumptions about household costs. This will facilitate early and targeted interventions, such as Discretionary Housing Payments, and will help avoid the costs and the trauma of crises such as homelessness or inappropriate debt recovery processes.	This has resulted in 768 households being contacted, and £497,660.37 in additional income.
Best Start Grants	Families are identified earlier and supported proactively. Increased take-up of Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods. Reduced risk of financial hardship for low-income households. Better coordination between the Council, NHS, and partners to maximise benefit entitlement.	This process has not yet been operationalised so there are no figures available at present to report on the effectiveness of this use case in terms of increasing uptake.

Use Case	Anticipated outcomes for households	Actual outcomes for households (to date)
Educational Entitlements	The purpose of the 2018 Children and Education Benefits Digital Initiative Project is to increase the registration of free school meals, school and clothing grants and educational maintenance allowance (EMA) across Aberdeen City through digitalising and automating the registration process. The project is necessary to ensure that people are receiving the benefits that they are entitled to. Currently customers complete separate paper forms to apply for these benefits from Aberdeen City Council and subsequently provide proof of qualifying income level for each benefit. From data gathered across the city we know there are families living in poverty who are not in receipt of benefits for which they are entitled. This project aims to address inequalities and poverty that have a strategic fit with Aberdeen City Council's core purpose and values. There is a need to modernise and improve the current system that is outdated and arguably not fit for purpose.	The initial work in 2018 to combine the application process for Free School Meals with the Council's application process for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction resulted in an additional 830 children registered for free school meals. The last figures available are from December 2025 which saw an additional 498 pupils identified from data matching through LIFT.

6. Barriers, Facilitators & Learning

SAVVI Process	Acitivity Area	Barrier, facilitators, and opportunities	Potential Impact of action on learning
Purpose	Remit	Implementing the foundational capability to understand household level financial vulnerability is an iterative process on which additional use cases can be built over time. This could be accelerated by knowledge sharing.	Potential for much quicker adoption of additional tried and tested effective operational use cases from other organisations, with the right documentation and support.
Find	Data availability	Cohort identification would be significantly strengthened by the addition of Social Security Scotland data on families already in receipt of Scottish Child Payment and Best Start Grants.	A cohort which could be more efficiently prioritised and followed up on by local authorities and partner service providers
Find	Data availability	Cohort identification will be strengthened by the addition of full Universal Credit data for an area. Currently the Council has and re-uses LIFT UC data for those already on CTR. Figures available from February 2026 indicate that this is less than half of the total current UC claimants in the area.	A more complete cohort of those likely to be in need at a household level can be more efficiently prioritised and followed up by local authorities and partner service providers. Whilst not every household with a current UC claim will have any extra unclaimed entitlements, it's likely that some will.

SAVVI Process	Acitivity Area	Barrier, facilitators, and opportunities	Potential Impact of action on learning
Find	Data Matching	Current data matching activity for the Educational Entitlements use case relies on matching using name and address which is time consuming and inefficient.	Opportunity to consider use of Improvement Service Data Service Tools for UPRN seeding and data matching through Data Hub to improve reliability and speed of matching process.
Support	Information Governance	Having existing overarching Information Sharing Protocols with key partners can allow information sharing arrangements to be put in place more quickly to enable partners to support.	The wider system of partner services with existing appropriate remits and relationships with households are enabled to provide targeted support with the right underpinning regional sharing arrangements.
Support	Capacity and capability to act	Having in place the right capability and capacity is essential to be able to understand and act on household level data.	Data capability should be considered, implemented, and designed alongside the operational service response to move beyond analytical understanding / more detailed problem describing. LIFT data is invaluable but needs to be considered, interpreted and acted on by people who have expertise in the benefits landscape and can understand what the data is telling them, and be able to act on it.

7. Next Steps

Overall capability

Aberdeen City Council has secured a further two years of Scottish Government Child Poverty Accelerator Funding, enabling continued operation of LIFT and the development of a locally owned, integrated intelligence system. This includes developing the internal capability to identify low-income households, which will expand the range of datasets that can be matched, strengthen alignment with the emerging Family Support Model, and provide a sustainable long-term approach to data-led prevention.

Purpose

The above funding will also support a targeted test of change for families with children who have Additional Support Needs (ASN), combining secure education data matching, co-design with families, and development of a prototype "Tell Us Once" model to reduce duplication and improve navigation for households who often face the greatest barriers to accessing support. The approach developing in Aberdeen has captured interest nationally for its potential scalability across other local authority areas in Scotland.

As outlined above, the LIFT Policy in Practice team can provide additional reports on request, for example, every child that has a disabled child element. As part of the test of change to support families with children who have an identified Additional Support Need, these reports will be used to target specific action to ensure families have any additional benefits that they could be entitled to, by looking at the level of support need for each family and supporting additional claims.

Find

Additional data from Social Security Scotland on households who are already in receipt of Scottish Child Payment and Best Start awards would enable a much more targeted approach to be applied to existing benefit maximisation activity. The addition of full-scale Universal Credit data which will become available to local authorities and will allow Councils to have a fuller picture of potential need and any unclaimed entitlements in their areas.

Assess & Support

Aberdeen City Council's Financial Inclusion Team has continued funding for four additional officers who will be taking forward data led benefit maximisation work. These officers will be integrated into existing hubs sited in key localities, and will work as part of multi-disciplinary teams taking forward a holistic approach to working with families as part of Aberdeen City Council's emerging Family Support Model.

SAVVI
Scalable Approach to Vulnerability via Interoperability

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