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Employment support: blueprint for a data-led, holistic strategy

Tuesday 23 June 2026

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Housekeeping

- Audio check
- Short survey
- Aim to finish by 11.30
- Ask your questions throughout in the panel on the right
- Slides and recording will follow
- Connect with us on LinkedIn or sign up to our newsletter

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We empower organisations to **reduce financial vulnerability** and **safeguarding risk**

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Our research shows
£24 billion of support
is unclaimed every year

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Agenda

- **Introduction**
  Paul Garlick, Head of MAST Operations, Policy in Practice
- **Greenwich Supports - Pilot Overview**
  Rebecca Lough, Advice & Policy Manager at Royal Borough of Greenwich
- **Delivering Local Employment Support: Case Study - West London Employment Partnership**
  Richard Clifton, Chief Commercial Officer, Shaw Trust
- **Data-led employment campaigns**
  Paul Garlick, Head of MAST Operations, Policy in Practice
- **Q&A**

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Today's speakers and panelists

Paul Garlick
Director of Operations,
Policy in Practice

ROYAL borough of GREENWICH

Rebecca Lough
Interim Advice & Policy
Manager at Royal
Borough of Greenwich

Richard Clifton,
Chief Commercial Officer
Shaw Trust

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Paul Garlick

Head of MAST Operations,
Policy in Practice

Setting the scene

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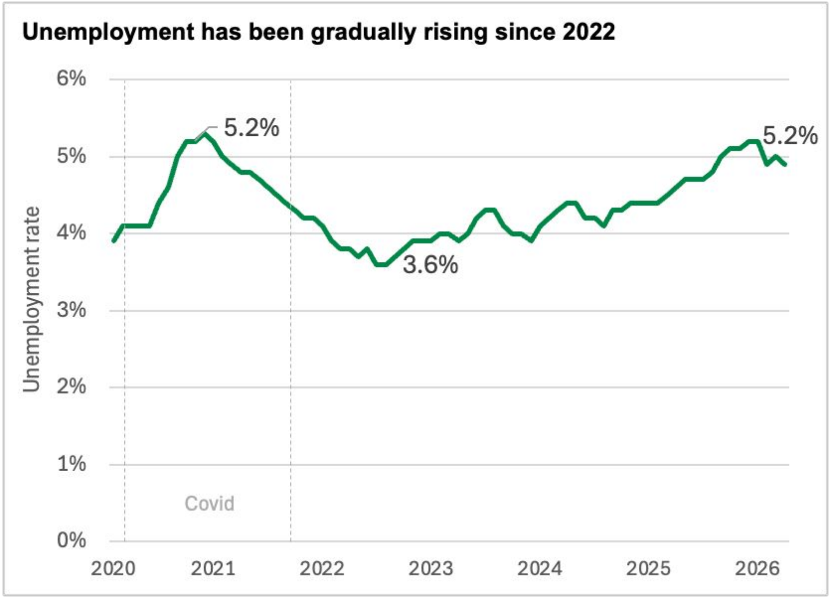
National context



- We are working within a weak UK labour market
- The unemployment rate has been rising, and is now at around 5%, similar to the peak during the pandemic.
- Young people are particularly affected
- Share of 16-24 year olds in employment has fallen 4.3 percentage points between 2022 and 2025

Sources: Labour Force Survey (ONS), and IFS analysis of administrative data

Milburn report

- New statistics confirm that more than a million young people are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) in the UK.
- This group of NEETs has been growing since the pandemic and 1 in 8 people aged 18 to 24 are now in this position.
- Ill health is also resulting in young people becoming NEET, with 1 in 5 children and young people in England citing a mental health condition.
- Changes to the labour market over recent years have impacted young people's employment, in particular a sharp decline of entry-level jobs.
- Drops in spending on, and capacity in further education have limited the sector's ability to counter this weaker labour market by providing education to those struggling to find work.

Milburn report

- Local authorities are uniquely placed to understand their local labour markets, demographic trends, and landscape of support services. By combining this knowledge with administrative data, they can:
- Act early, providing targeted and personalised interventions informed by local data
- Improve their engagement with young people at risk of becoming long-term NEET
- Ensure resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact.

We have a full blog covering this report

Cannot tackle unemployment alone

Employment can not be tackled in silo.

Stable employment is a vital component of the support network needed to break the cycle of household dependency and ensure long term sustainability.

There can be multiple issues affecting someone's ability to get employment:

- Child care costs
- Ingrained debt
- English not first language
- Poor CV writing skills
- Housing situation
- Digital ability
- Employment gaps
- Mental health

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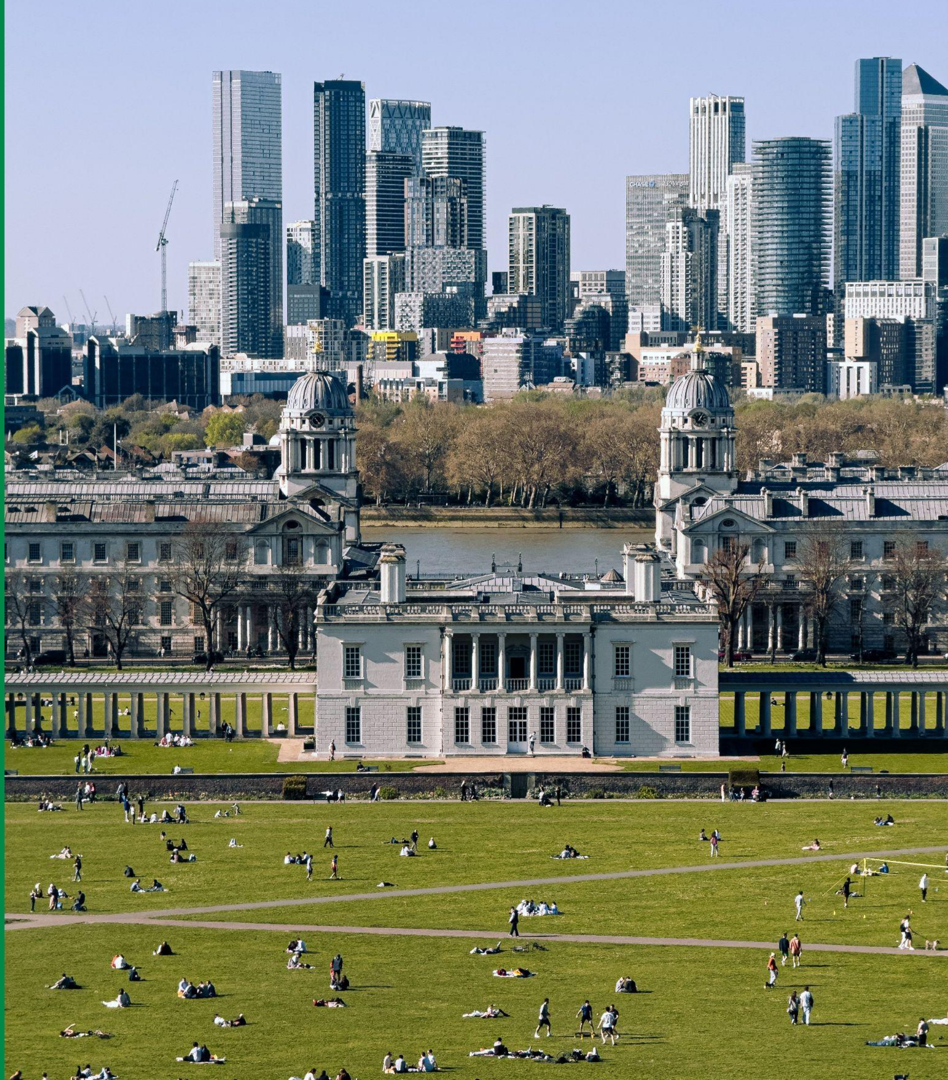
ROYAL borough of GREENWICH

Rebecca Lough

Advice & Policy Manager at
Royal Borough of Greenwich

Greenwich Supports: Pilot Overview



Greenwich Supports Pilot Overview

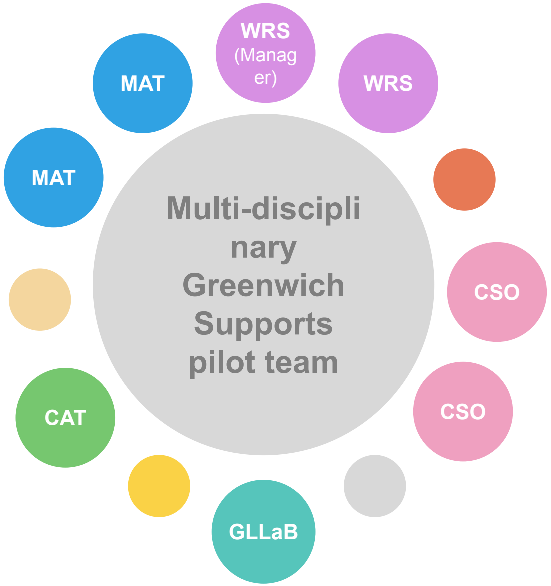
23rd June 2026

Rebecca Lough – Royal Borough of Greenwich
Rebecca.lough@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Our hypothesis

By providing more **holistic, person-centred support** to residents, we will catch issues we wouldn't have caught otherwise. It will enable us to be **preventative** rather than reactive, generating benefits for both residents and the council.

The disciplines that make up Greenwich Supports



Full-time pilot advisors (8 total)

Money Advice Team (1xFT, 1xPT)
Debt advice
- Support with financial literacy, budgeting

Welfare Rights Service (1xFT, 1 Manager)
Benefits advice
- Support with maximising income, resolving benefits issues

Customer Services (2xFT)
- First point of contact
- Lead proactive outreach

HIS Customer Access Team (1xFT)
Housing advice
- Support with stabilising and improving housing

GLLaB (1xFT)
Employment support
- Support with upskilling, job searching, connecting to training

Close collaborators

Digital Inclusion
- Provide digital devices and SIM cards, help build digital literacy

Adult Social Care
- Present at weekly Live Well 'community hub' case roundtables

Live Well
- GS Manager attends weekly Live Well Community Hub case roundtables

Families Information Service
- Attend the GS weekly case collaboration roundtable

Cohorts we've proactively reached out to

In progress

COHORT 1
Not enough money to cover expenses, <u>no</u> dependent children
From LIFT dashboard

COHORT 2
Negatively impacted by council tax scheme changes
From Advice team client data

COHORT 3
Not enough money to cover expenses, <u>with</u> dependent children
From LIFT dashboard

COHORT 4
Lone parents in private accommodation
From LIFT dashboard

COHORT 5 & 6
Those affected by the two-child limit / benefit cap
From LIFT dashboard

Customer Services connect to specialist advisor

Benefits take-up

COHORT 3
Couple receiving UC, one has disability, no carer's element on claim
From LIFT dashboard

Customer Services lead benefit take-up (this cohort is complete)

Initial outreach done by text

Initial outreach done by cold call

Key impact in numbers

Our impact might seem small compared to the number of residents we've worked with—**466**. This, however, is the reality of holistic, person-centred support. Outcomes like these don't happen overnight.

After **eleven months** of working with residents, we are proud of these results. We also know the impact is understated, as we've generated long-term cost savings by preventing them from ending up at our front door further down the line.

£720k

In financial gains for residents (an average of £5.2k per household—through benefits maximisation, discretionary payments, debt repayment arrangements, etc.)

14

Residents with jobs secured

10

Instances of homelessness prevented (This amounts to approximately **£30k** in council savings this year, **£355k+** over five years)

21

Digital devices or SIM cards given

£1.2M

Total debts advised on (both priority and non-priority)

£54k

Projected repayments to the council (through more suitable repayment arrangement for council tax, rent, rent arrears, housing benefit overpayments)

What's the 'recipe' for preventative, holistic support?

The following aspects of the pilot team and service work particularly well. These learnings are applicable to other transformation initiatives across the council.

Proximity to other specialisms

Access to varied specialisms enables us to address multiple resident needs imminently and catch some we wouldn't have otherwise caught

Advisor autonomy

Trading constraints for flexibility and allowing advisors to support residents the way they feel is best leads to better, more refined outcomes

Triaging beyond 'presenting need'

'Presenting need' is a fallacy and triaging is an art—residents must be viewed and understood holistically

Proactive outreach and good data

Good data is critical to catching people before they fall and humanising council services

Help with money at the core

The combination of money and employment support is particularly effective in preventing further hardship

Spotlight on Employability

Some key aspects to Employability:

- Caseworker maintained a caseload of 30 so turnover/case closure is important
- Learnings through the pilot in terms of proactive contact – residents would agree they were interested in finding work when in reality they weren't yet
- Didn't have defined length of time that case was open for but things would generally be reviewed if it was still open at 6 months to assess what other support would be reasonable
- Range of cohorts meant a variety in the type and depth of barriers. We found this was helpful for the caseworker to be able to offer different interventions across their caseload.
- Included some residents who were benefit capped and highly incentivised already to find work
- Full access to employability offer: job searching, referrals to job broker, interview skills, access to courses, CV support and referrals for clothes when starting new roles, as well as other interventions

Ivana's story

Irene, our Employment Advisor, and David, one of our Debt Advisors, support Ivana practically with money and work, and emotionally with recent bereavement

Ivana starts by working with Irene

- Irene learns Ivana is very keen to work but the recent death of her father has been incredibly difficult to process
- She asks Irene to reconnect in a month when she'll be more ready for employment
- In talking to her, Irene sees she's also benefit capped and has a lot of debt—she asks if she'd be willing to connect with David, who can help her, and she agrees

> *She said to me, 'I really do want to work … but I need a minute to pull myself together.' And I said 'absolutely'."*
> *[Irene]*

Irene connects her to bereavement support

- Recognising that bereavement support was highest priority, Irene does what she can in the meantime
- She facilitates three-way calls to bereavement and mental health services because Ivana was understandably too overwhelmed to do it on her own

Ivana works with David

- David does what he can: gets her food vouchers and a SIM card to reduce costs; submits claims for discretionary payments and council tax support; does a benefit check; provides advice about bankruptcy; and more
- After this, he sees the only way forward is work—her benefits are simply not enough to live on

> *It's impossible for her to live on just Universal Credit … her only solution was to find work. If she doesn't she's never going to be able to maintain and sustain her life on benefits."*
> *[David]*

Irene reaches out again

- Four weeks after their first call, Irene reaches out to Ivana again, who feels much more ready for work
- They discuss her short term and long-term goals
- She and Irene put together a plan—they prep her CV, Ivana hands them out locally, and Irene also refers her to some roles

> *She was like, 'yeah, I'm ready'. You know, 'I really appreciate you calling me back'."*
> *[Irene]*

Ivana gets several interviews and more than one offer

- In time, Ivana gets several requests for interviews—some of which put her forward for more senior roles than she applied for due to the strength of her CV
- She ends up receiving three conditional offers

> *It's such a great outcome in terms of collaboration… the way we've been able to seamlessly work together … me and David."*
> *[Irene]*

> *Normally, everyone is negative but you have been so very helpful and have given me hope. … I can't express how grateful I am."*
> *[Ivana]*

Ivana’s story has evolved...

... and points to 1) our lives and challenges are complex; 2) this kind of support is by nature long-term, and 3) the lack of single view of resident has negative impact on our support provision

Ivana is issued eviction notice, starts new job

- With the new job though, she should be okay as she’ll have the means to pay for rent

Ivana shows up to work under the influence

- It was clear she had been drinking quite a bit

GS realises Ivana is known to Children’s

- Given that she has two children, Rebecca calls Children’s Services
- She learns that Ivana has been known to the service since June (the same time she started working with GS)
- Her children are on a child in need register

GS explores her maximising her benefits

- The support we provide to Ivana changes—we discuss with her claiming the benefits she’s entitled to due to her health challenges
- She does not engage with this – is still focused on finding work
- Requests further employability support but does not engage with this
- Finds work independently in March 2026 and the benefit cap is lifted
- She is still evicted because of the unaffordable nature of her private tenancy

What was different under the pilot

- Employment and debt advisors worked in tandem
- Irene had the flexibility to go outside of her specialism to connect Ivana to bereavement support
- Irene could support Ivana over an extended amount of time (calling back a month later) rather than simply closing the case

What we learned

While we’re more well-connected than other services, we’re still limited. Had we known Ivana had a relationship with Children’s, we’d have adjusted our initial approach to supporting her

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Richard Clifton

Chief Commercial Officer,
Shaw Trust

Delivering Local Employment Support Case Study – West London Employment Partnership

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Delivering Local Employment Support

Case Study - West London Employment Partnership

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What problem was encountered

- **Rising number of economically inactive residents** increasing demand on national and local services.
- **Multiple funding streams** all designed to help those out of work gain or stay in employment.
- **A confusing picture for the residents** to know which programmes to engage with, and for support workers knowing which service to refer to.
- **Leading to inefficiencies**:
  - Reduced engagement - for everyone but particularly those with health conditions.
  - Not maximising use of resources and funding.
  - Not supporting those most in need.

How we are solving this problem

- Building on what West London Alliance (WLA) and Shaw Trust had learnt from the devolved commissioning of Work & Health Programme (WHP) & WorkWell to **plan a new approach.**
- **WLA built an innovative commissioning solution** that allowed them not to commission Connect to Work in isolation, but to commission an employment support partnership.
- This enabled WLA to initially commission through this contract:
  - WorkWell
  - Connect to Work
- As well as being able to bring in future funding streams later without additional lengthy commissioning.
- We have already added an MSK Trailblazer, which could be launched within 6 weeks.
- It also enabled the creation of an effective Single Front Door to all provisions for all residents needing employment support.

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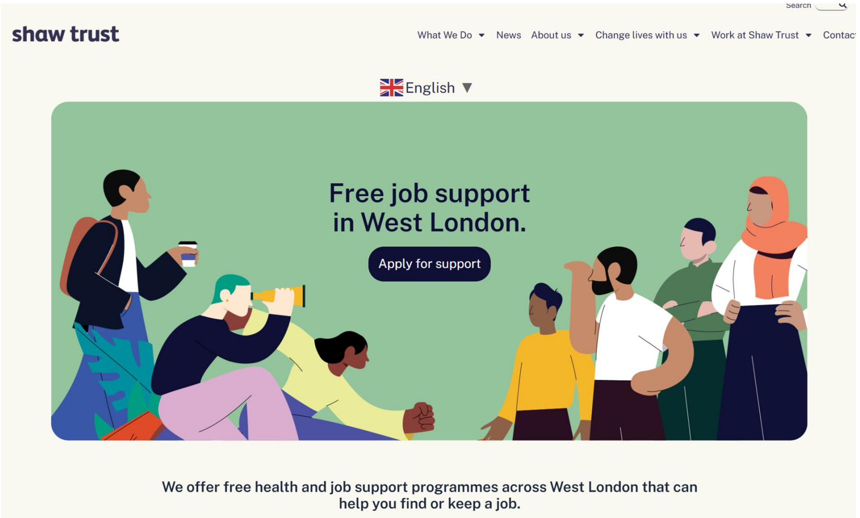
The Single Front Door and wider service offer



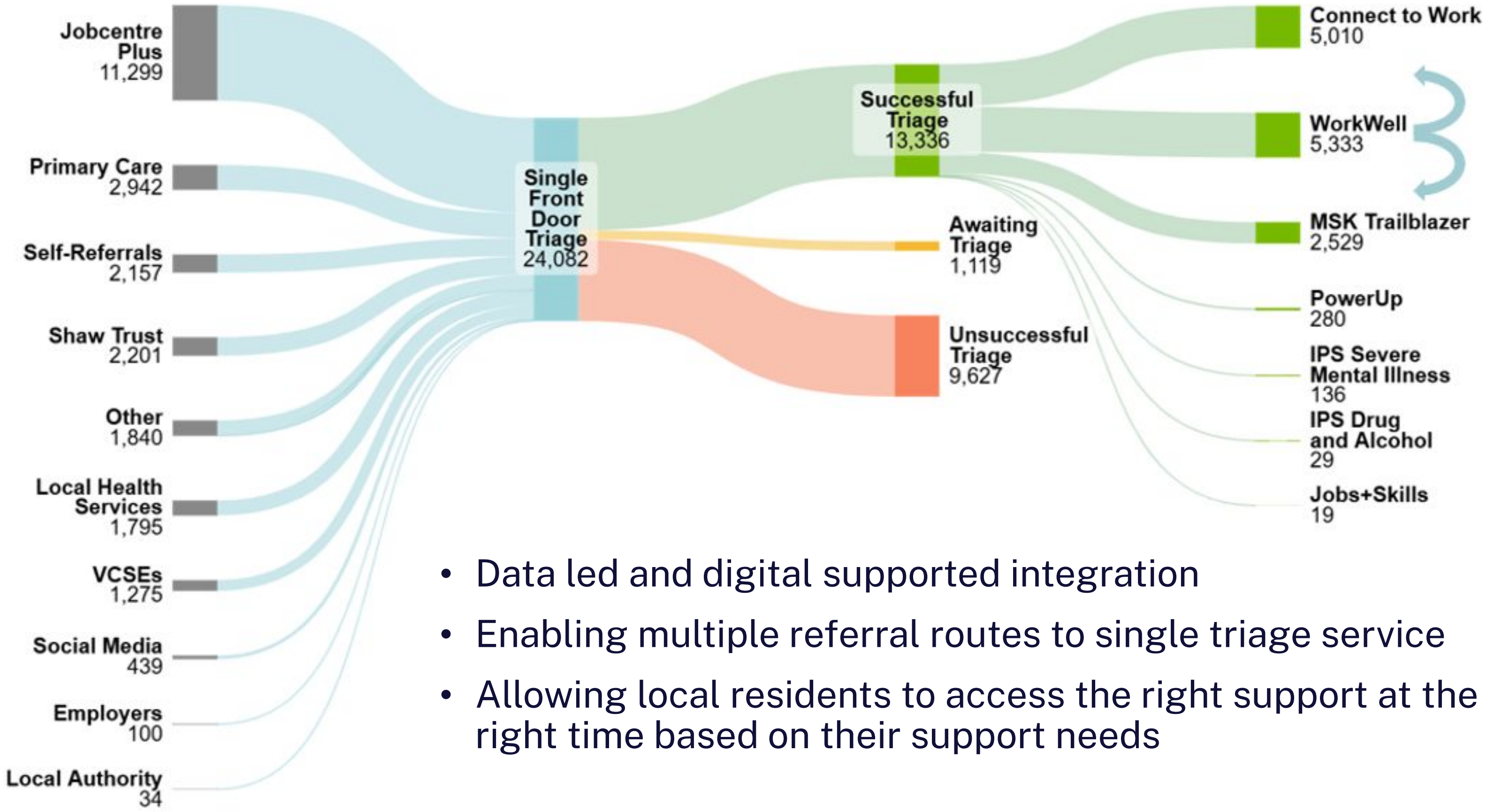
Current portfolio of provision

- Three services directly delivered:
    - WorkWell
    - Connect to Work (Our IPS Model)
    - MSK Trailblazer
- Other services funded by WLA or central government:
    - IPS Drug & Alcohol
    - IPS Severe Mental Illness
    - Skills Provisions

Wider Integration

- The Single Front Door has allowed us to engage with those that wouldn’t have come through JCP referrals or the typical routes.
- We our integrating with Health (GPs and Secondary Care, Social Care, and VCSE support).

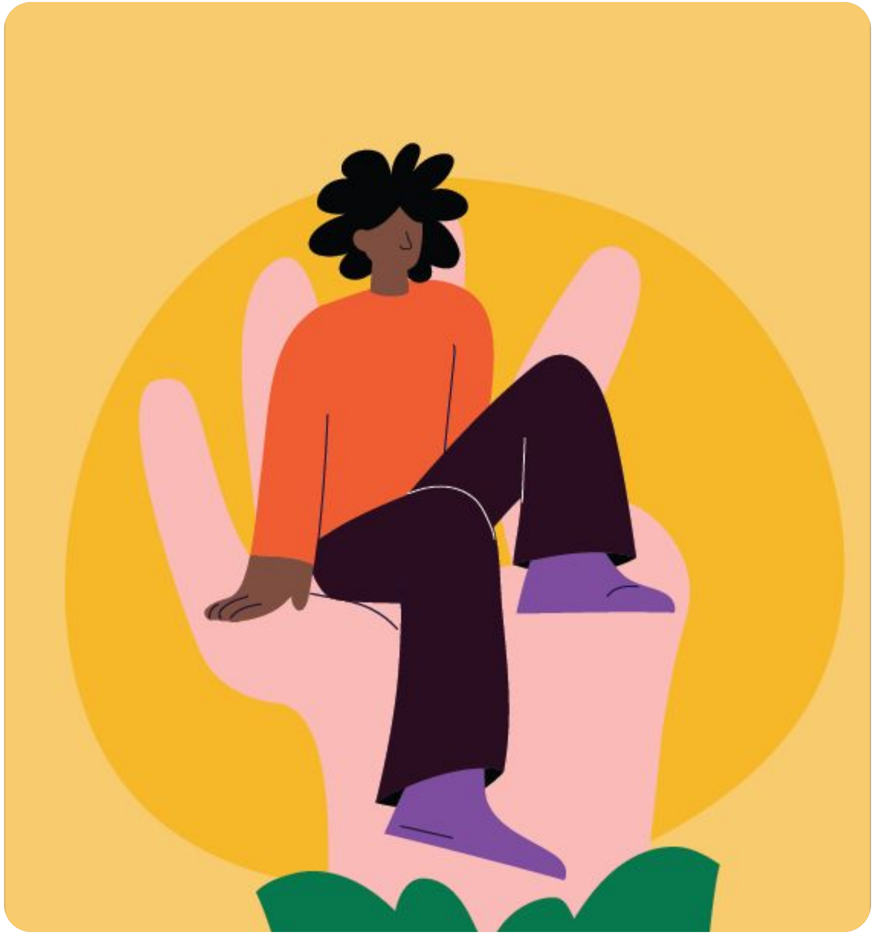
Impact of Single Front Door



- Data led and digital supported integration
- Enabling multiple referral routes to single triage service
- Allowing local residents to access the right support at the right time based on their support needs

Core elements of successful employment support

- **Person-centred support that works –** tailored, one-to-one help driving engagement and outcomes
- **Relentlessly data-driven –** live data used to identify need, track performance, and improve results in real time
- **Whole-person, joined-up support –** tackling health, skills and wider barriers alongside jobs
- **Great advisers make the difference –** frequent, high-quality support that motivates and delivers results
- **Digital at the core –** smarter tools driving access, consistency and efficiency at scale, including:
    - Microsoft Enterprise Platform – MS Teams, Power BI, Co-Pilot
    - Programme Management System – Enspirio by Iconi
    - Better Off Calculator – Policy in Practice



Is this innovation replicable across other areas?

- Absolutely!
- If commissioners **procure a strategic partnership** targeted at the broader needs of the residents instead of a narrow transactional contract, any area can achieve what West London has!
- This does mean that **commissioners have to be brave**.
- You must accept that **you have to share risk**. But the rewards clearly outweigh the risks if properly planned, executed and managed.

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Paul Garlick

Head of MAST Operations,
Policy in Practice

Data-led employment campaigns

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Poll:

What is your biggest employment related challenge right now for your residents locally?

- Finding suitable job opportunities
- Knowing who to target
- Accessing the right training or qualifications
- Managing health/disability related barriers
- Other

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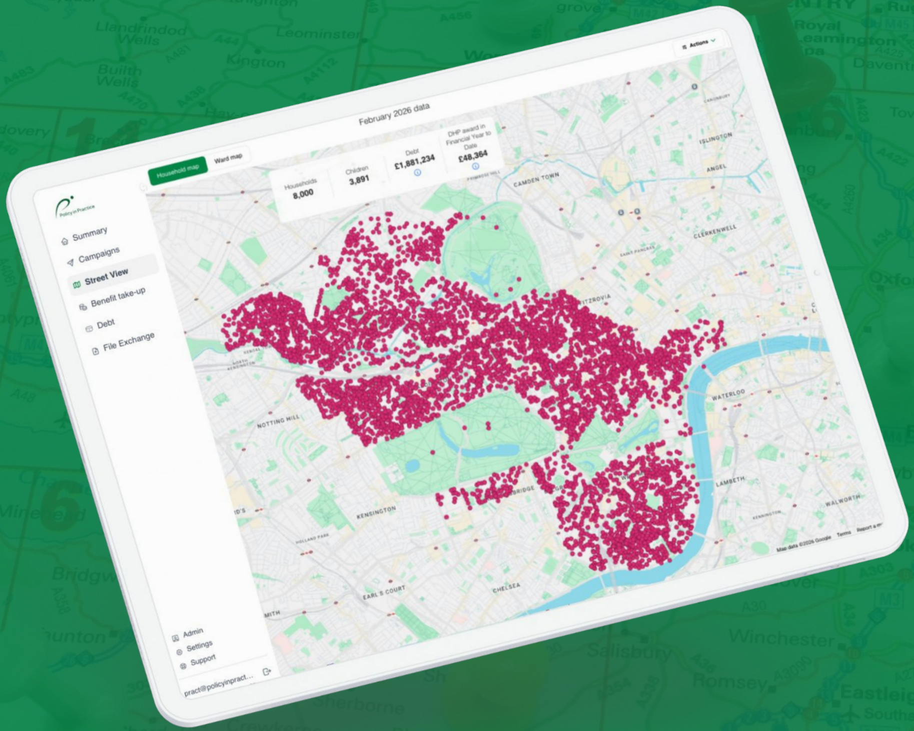
Low Income Family Tracker and campaigns



Campaigns LIFT can support with

- Employment support
- Debt collection
- Homelessness prevention
- Discretionary support allocation
- Income maximisation
- Social tariff eligibility
- Social care cost reduction
- Energy efficiency/EPC rating

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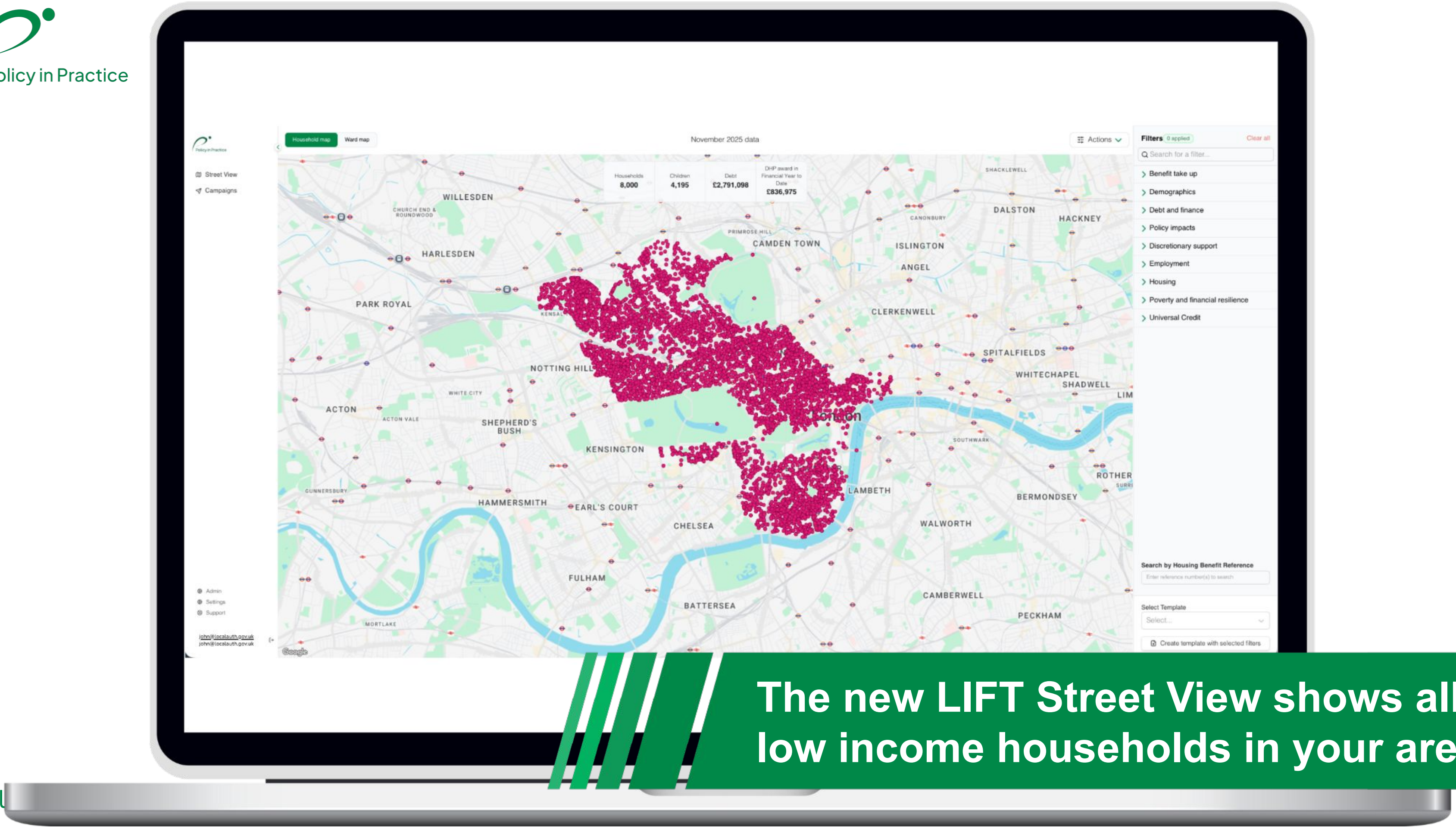

The new LIFT Street View shows all low income households in your area

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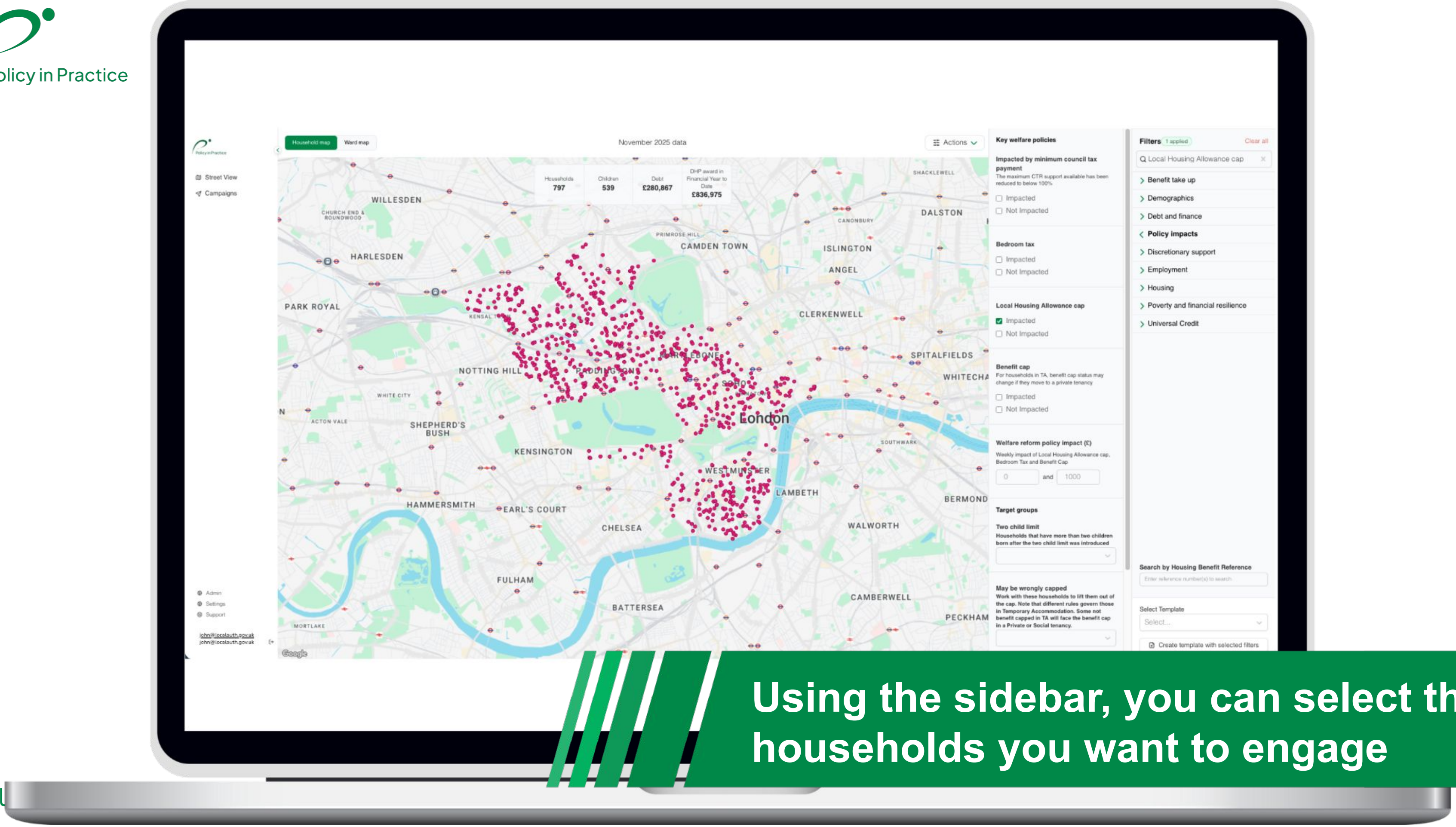

Using the sidebar, you can select the households you want to engage

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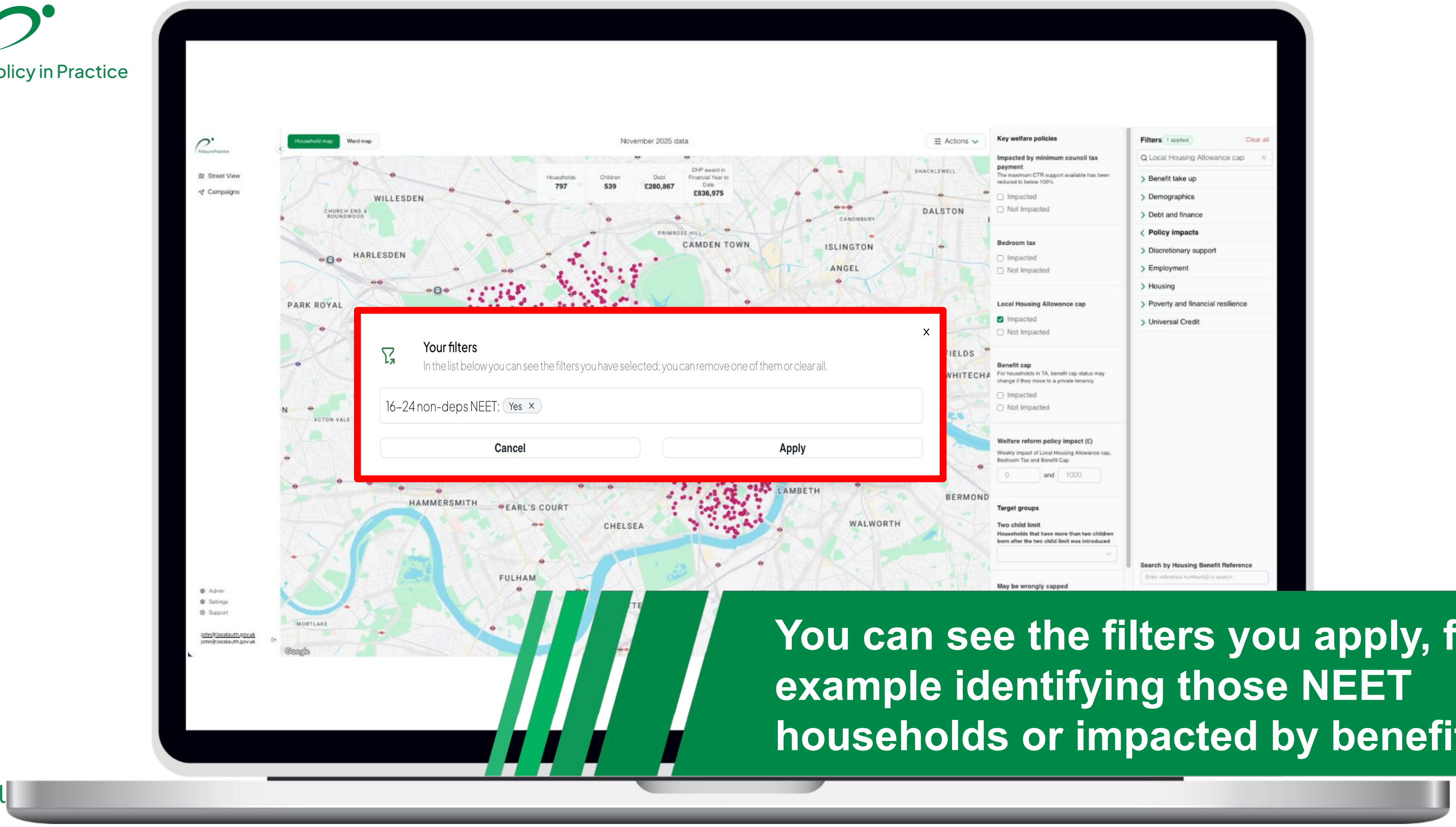

You can see the filters you apply, for example identifying those NEET households or impacted by benefit cap

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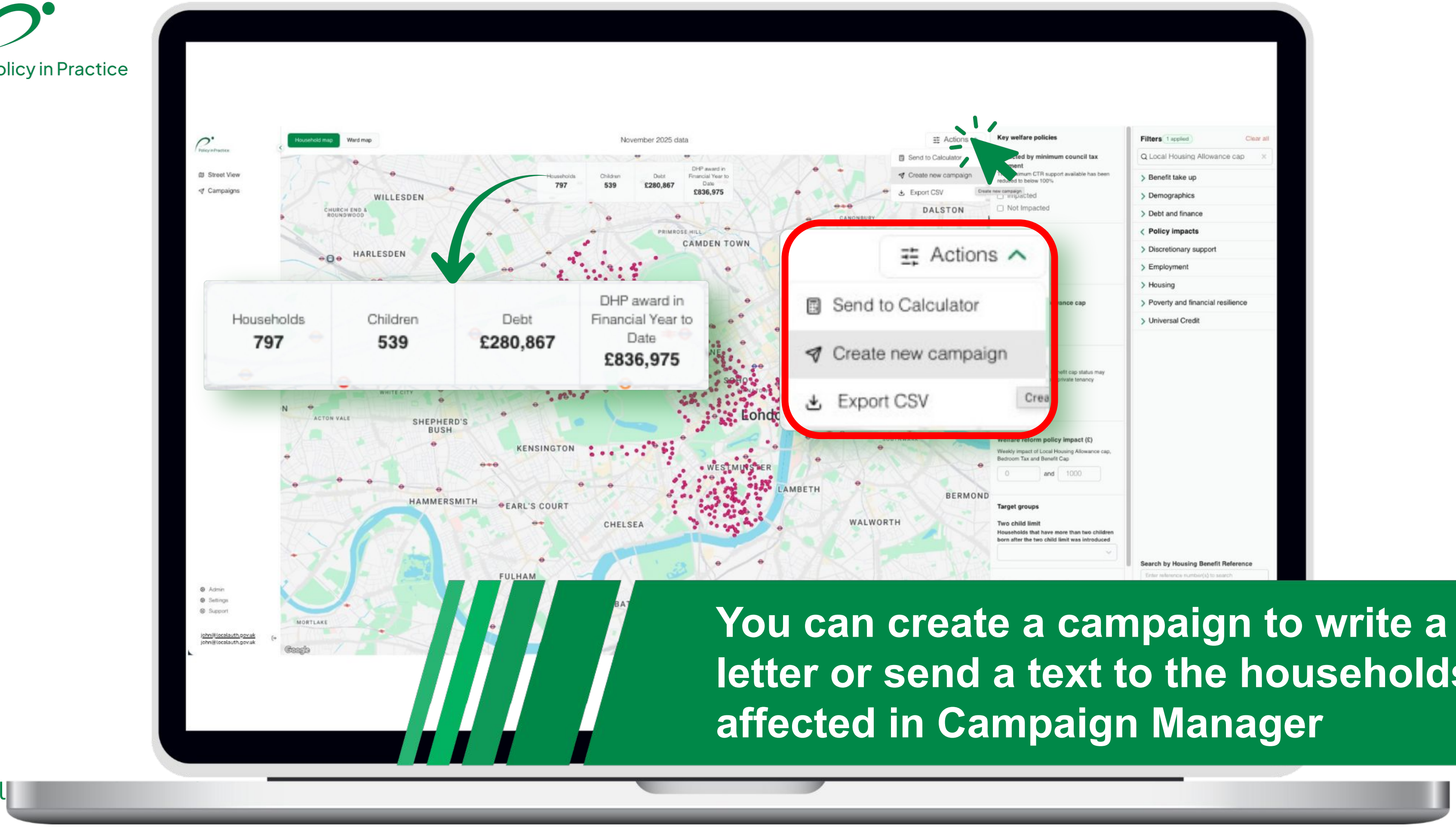

You can create a campaign to write a letter or send a text to the households affected in Campaign Manager

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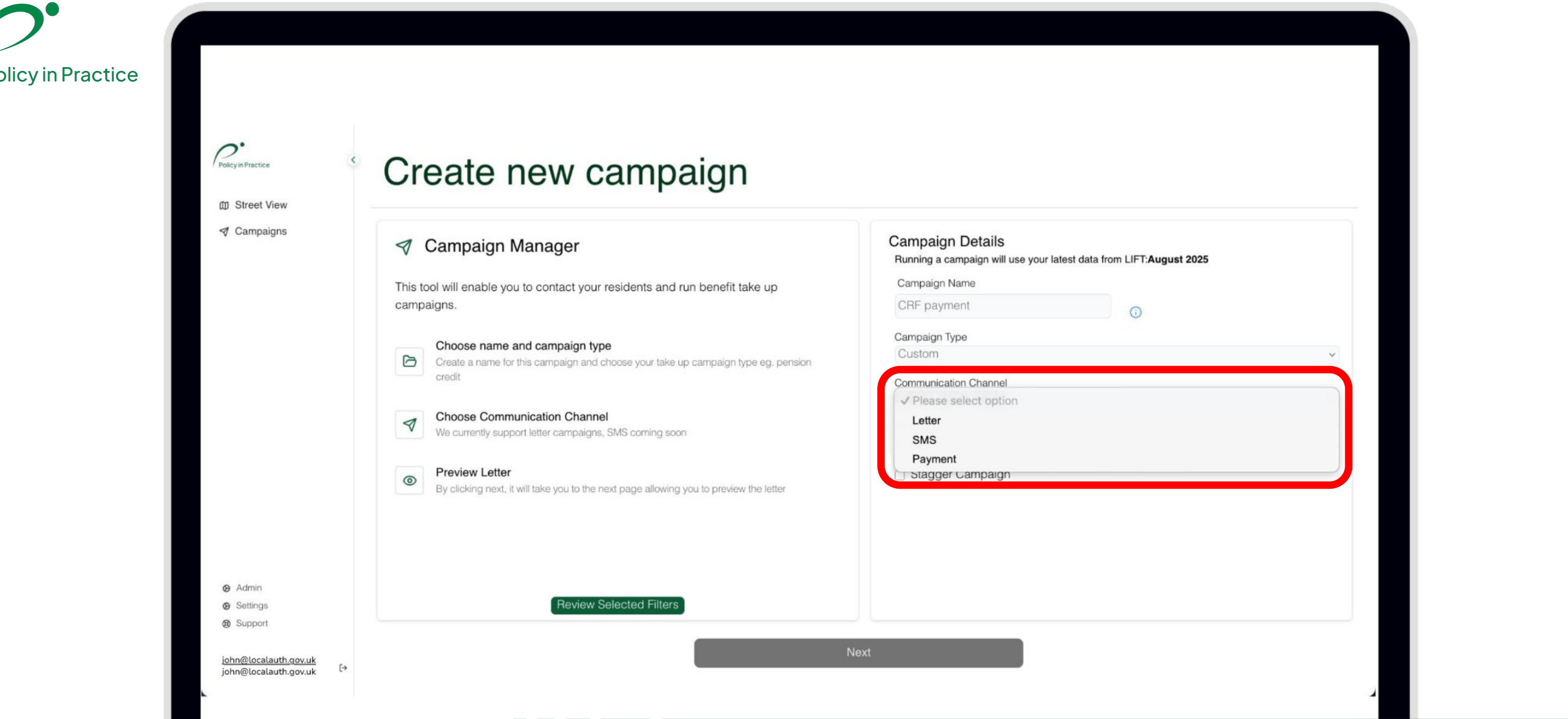

The campaign can be a letter, SMS or a payment (cash, voucher, white goods, etc.)

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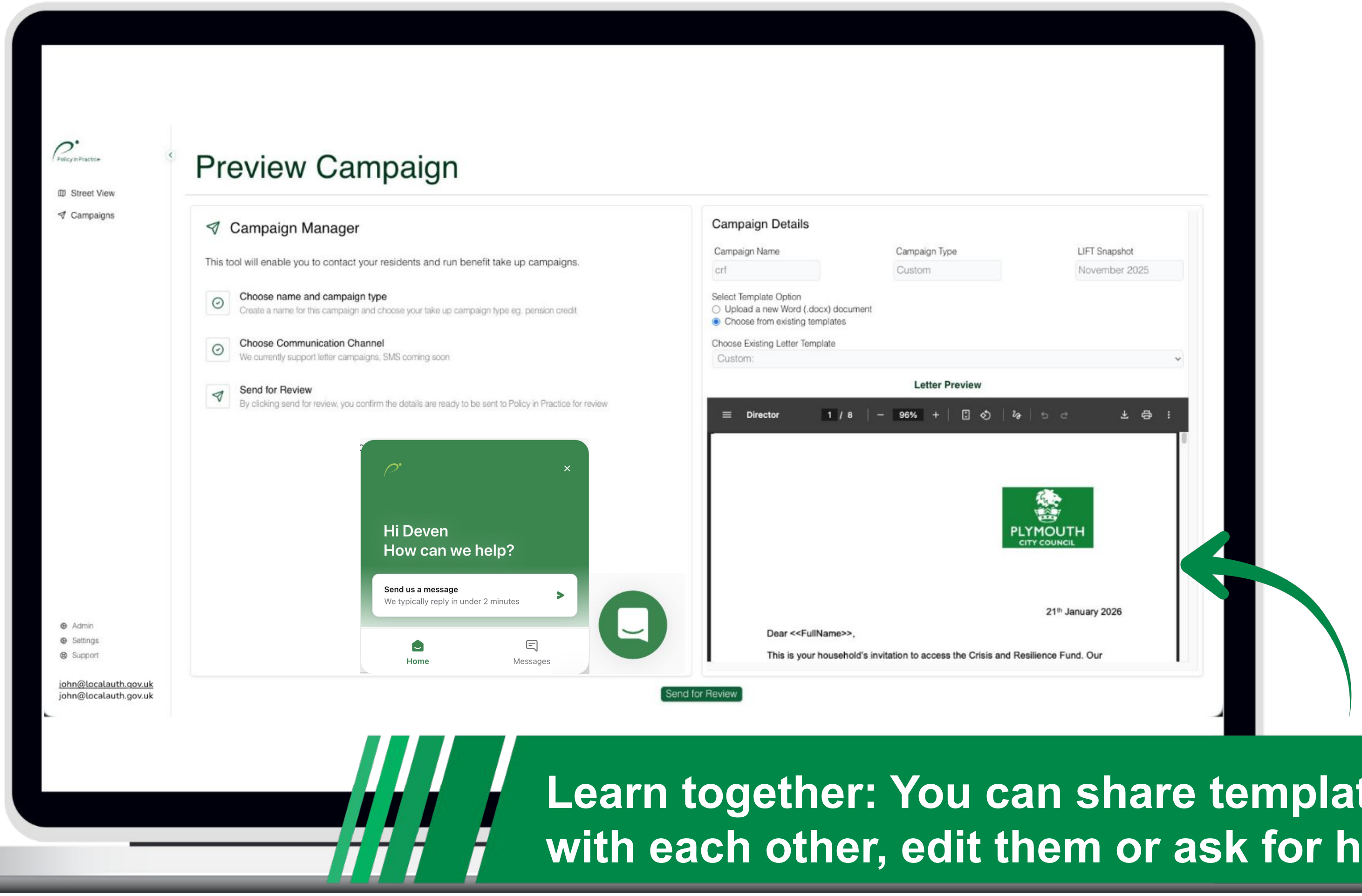

Learn together: You can share templates with each other, edit them or ask for help

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Data-led employment campaigns

Employment campaigns

1. NEETs - blog and case study.
2. Parents of children aged 16 - 18 who are at risk of becoming NEETs
3. Those impacted by the benefit cap
    a. Those that only need to work a few hours more a week to not be benefit capped
4. Those recently new to the unemployment market
5. Employment campaigns to help households sustain their tenancies
6. Those unemployed in Temporary Accommodation to assist in finding affordable properties
7. Council tenant specific campaigns
8. General employment support

Mail-out invites

- Job fairs
- Reverse job fairs
- Training
- CV workshops
- Employment support
- Free child care costs

CRF funding

- Clothes for interviews
- Travel to interviews

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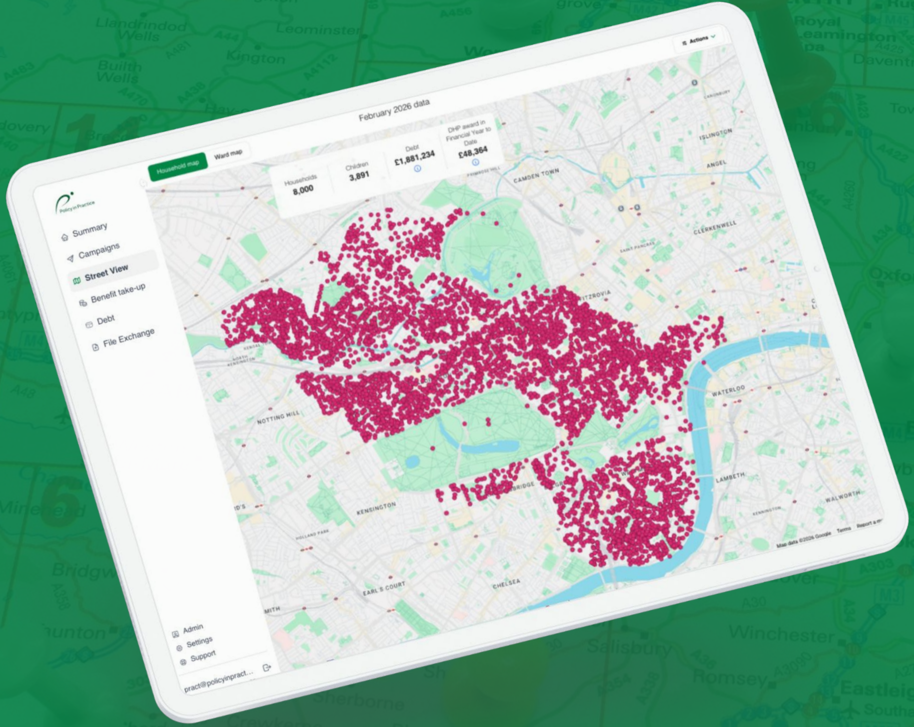
Top tips for data led holistic support



Areas to consider

- Person centered approach
- Pre plan target groups
- Funding opportunities
- Data sources
- Teams to get involved
- Community led support
- Community assets
- Monitor success

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Top tips for data led holistic support

Person centered approach

- **Aspirational based employment still key for me - doesn’t always align to benefit rules though - but aim high!!**
- Know people’s barriers to work
- Holistic issues households are facing key
- Know local opportunities - training or employment

Pre plan target groups

- What’s are the key areas locally in your poverty or homelessness strategies?
  - **Do you want to help with TA move on?**
  - **NEETs?**
  - Council tenants specific?
  - Short or long term unemployed?
- **Keep targeted - Otherwise can become unmanageable in terms of work loads and residents can become disengaged quickly**

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Top tips for data led holistic support

Funding opportunities

- DWP funding
- **Speak to DWP Partnership Manager, often funds linked to employment**
- Crisis & Resilience funds
  - Can help with interview travel or clothing
- **Local employment support initiatives in place for referrals**
- **Free child care costs**
- Invest to save

Data sources

- Employment can often take time and need support for a period after getting a role
  - **Needs to be targeted**
  - **Using up to date data**
  - **Needs to be accurate**
  - Be able to be separated into different categories to maximise offering
  - **Need to address wider issues and not just unemployment**

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Top tips for data led holistic support

Teams to get involved internally

- Welfare
- Council Housing
- Temporary Accommodation move on
- Revenues and Benefits
- **Communication**
- Internal debt teams
- **Strategy teams to ensure employment support in key policies (such as homelessness and poverty strategies)**

Community led support available

- What partners/commissioned services locally that offer CV writing, training and employment support?
- **Do you need to re think commissioning?**
- **Map key community support**
  - **mental health support**
  - **debt and budgeting support**
- Map key community assets

Top tips for data led holistic support

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Community assets are key

- **Know where the community assets are locally you could use**
- **Find the local issues to those areas**
- Ensure a well representation of assets across the Borough/area
- Residents more likely to travel to services nearer to home
- **Target support in or near Temporary Accomodation hot spots**

Monitor outcomes/success

- **Track outcomes**
  - **Not only about training or employment but also debt reduction, homelessness prevented, extra income achieved**
- Good to take to internal committees
- Good for local Members or Lead members
- **Get communications out there via channels**
  - **Helps with wider outreach**

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Discussion and Q&A

What's next

If you would like to find out about unclaimed benefits by area, collaborate with us or ask more questions, feel free to book a chat with us using this QR code or this **link**

Stay up to date with Policy in Practice and our upcoming webinars by **registering for our newsletter** or following us on **LinkedIn**

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Thank you to our speakers

Rebecca Lough, Advice & Policy Manager at Royal Borough of Greenwich

Richard Clifton, Chief Commercial Officer, Shaw Trust

Paul Garlick, Head of MAST Operations, Policy in Practice

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