

ART Case Study - Benefits and finance support uptake in Newham

Context

Supporting residents to be financially secure and to maximise their income, including through unclaimed benefits, is a part of Newham's 50 steps program. (London Borough of Newham Council, 2024).

Many Newham residents are not claiming the benefits and finance support they're entitled to. An initial review noted the main reasons resident may not claim their benefits:

- Residents may not be aware of their rights
- The process might be unnecessarily complex
- There may be unknown barriers to access.

Health Equity Ambition

- Encouraging more people to access the benefits and financial support they are entitled to, **maximising incomes and reducing family poverty levels.**

Method of Change

- Listening to and learning from local partners to make **effective changes to reduce health inequalities.**
- **Provide high quality and targeted advice** to increase uptake of benefits.

The What

Newham Public Health team decided to do a larger review of what the barriers to access were:

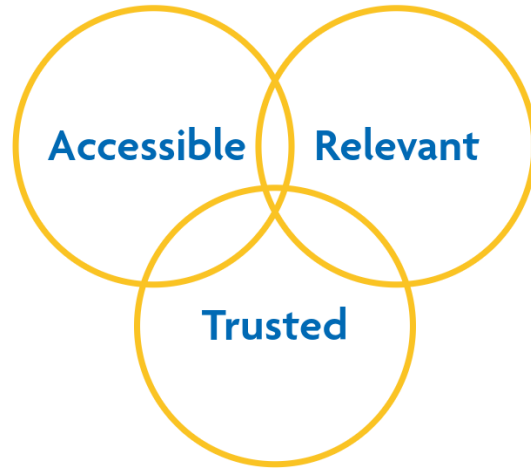
- Meetings were scheduled with the providers to scope the available benefits support services
- Detailed surveys were distributed to partners and through distribution lists.
- Details were collected of places that services were advertised, such as on the Well Newham website.

The review then gathered information about what barriers to access **key groups might face**. The groups included:

- People in parts of the process known to be challenging, such as moving from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit
- People with mental health difficulties
- People with access needs (no car, wheelchair users, limited free time).

Our tools - The ART Framework

The ART Framework



What are the barriers to uptake within our control as service providers?

WE ARE NEWHAM.

The barriers stopping key groups accessing the mapped services were categorised, using the ART framework.

The aim of the ART framework is to **shift agency** for accessing and using health promoting services from current/potential service users to providers.

ART recognises that **accessibility, relevance and trust** are three key elements that encourage people to use our services, and that the absence of these elements can create a barrier to uptake.

Using ART meant that the review led to an overview of the ways barriers arose in each service, which gave the team immediate insight into trends, such as that **access** was a near universal issue.

Barriers to Benefit Uptake Access

Finding	Resident / Frontline	Access	Relevance	Trust
Teams and services struggling with capacity to support residents causing long waiting list for form filling	R	x		x
Changes to benefits such as migration from HB to UC causing challenges (closing or late applications)	R	x		
One benefit may impact or close down another benefit claim	R		x	x
Language barrier to accessing advice	R	x		
Digital inclusion to accessing benefits	R	x		
Precarious immigration status – the right to access many public services	R			x
Unstable housing impact contact and continuity of support	R	x		x
Domestic abuse and control by partner when on a joint claim – resident is unaware how much they can claim or are entitled to.	R	x		
Residents with mental health problems may need support or social worker to assist in engagement	R	x		
Mobility and carer responsibilities are barriers	R	x		
Certain residents not providing full disclosure of their income	F	x		x
Lack of funding to create the material to reach residents	F	x		
Lack of knowledge or training to give advice and support	F	x		
Limited access to data around the uptake	F	x		

Next Steps Identified from the Review

A (Accessible) + R (Relevant): Q&A with Frontline workers

- Online **and** in person session
- Invite organisation who offer benefit or finance support advice
- Understand the types of barriers and challenges
- How can we help them overcome these challenges.

T (Trusted): Empowering Local Champions

- Keeping the volunteer champions up to date with all the information on Whatsapp
- Provide the champions with any relevant trainings on the SWA
- Review the feedback and evaluation report

A (Accessible): Infographics

- Redistribute existing infographics
- Update the Well Newham website
- Create a video with relevant information
- Think about creating infographics in different languages

A (Accessible): Working with GPs and ELFT

- Helping pharmacies display short, clear messages about available support.
- Sharing leaflets in registration packs

Insights from ART

- There was a heavy lean toward accessibility being an issue, rather than relevance or trust.
- Within the category of access, there was a range of barriers including:
 - Tight deadlines for applications
 - The need for an advocate or support worker that was not provided
 - A lack of reach caused by service funding falling short.

These insights meant that the next steps could lean toward accessibility, to create maximum impact.

ART helped to provide a bridge between mapping barriers and producing solutions that focused on where change could be most needed, but did not lose focus on equity.

Repeating an ART analysis after this implementation would be an effective way to see whether accessibility was improved by these steps.

Using the ART Framework



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If you have any questions and want some support – please get in touch with the Newham Health Equity Programme team:
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