

Plymouth City Council



Income Maximisation: a strategy for Plymouth

April 2006 to March 2009

**Aiming to make people
healthy, wealthy, safe and
wise**

Please ask if you would like this Income Maximisation Strategy 2006-2009 in another language, large print, Braille or audio format; telephone 01752 304321

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Our Vision for Income Maximisation

We want to see Plymouth maximise the take-up of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits and minimise problems with debt, for the benefit of individuals and the whole city, by becoming a place in which:-

- partners from all sectors work well together in a co-ordinated and customer-focused way to provide services and initiatives which maximise income;
- quality assured, expert and professional income maximisation advice services are available from voluntary and statutory sector providers;
- community and voluntary sectors' expertise and innovation is used to best effect to support and promote income maximisation;
- integrated city centre debt, Welfare Benefits and Tax Credit services are complemented by outreach, and appropriate location-based and neighbourhood services, prioritising neighbourhoods in greatest need.
- income maximisation services provide equality of access to our diverse communities taking account of: age, disability, faith, gender, race and sexual orientation;
- Benefits and Tax Credits help increase employment and also provide appropriate support for those who cannot work;
- the positive benefits of income maximisation in reducing poverty, stimulating the local economy, promoting well being and maximising government funding for Plymouth, are championed and understood.

By doing this, income maximisation will contribute to narrowing the gap between our most and least deprived neighbourhoods and in making Plymouth one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone through people becoming healthier, wealthier, safer and wiser.

Councillor Alan Weekes

(Portfolio holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)

Councillor Mark King

(Portfolio holder for Housing and Neighbourhood Services)

Colin Trend

(Chair of Plymouth Welfare Rights Forum and Devon Money Advice Forum)

April 2006

Executive Summary

This Income Maximisation Strategy has been developed by Plymouth City Council (PCC), in partnership with other organisations to improve Income Maximisation (IM) in Plymouth. IM is a process to ensure that a person's potential money coming in is maximised, and money going out is controlled, via avenues such as Welfare Benefits and Tax Credit claims and budgetary and debt advice. Historically, Plymouth has provided a range of IM services and initiatives, but the city requires a more co-ordinated approach to this, supported by a practical strategy and action plan for implementation. This strategy will build on successful work regarding Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits take-up, and debt services delivered by statutory and voluntary sectors.

Increasing the level of Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit increases the amount a local authority receives from the government. So far, in 2005/06 in Plymouth, over £29 in Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit take-up and almost £11 of potential increased local authority funding has been realised for every £1 invested in take-up projects. However, large numbers of people are missing out on their entitlement to Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits or experience problem debt. Unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits in Plymouth is estimated to be between £17 million and £25 million per year.

Income deprivation affects people's quality of life. When comparing Plymouth's most deprived neighbourhoods to its most affluent, not only are the differences measurable in terms of wealth, but statistically, people from deprived areas are likely to be unhealthier, more susceptible to crime, and perform worse at school.

In August 2005, an IM working group was initiated comprising of representatives of all sectors. Feedback from subsequent consultation indicated strong support for PCC to lead the development of an IM strategy. As a result, this IM Strategy has been developed with seven aims to address priorities identified. Key components are: -

- Ensuring our income maximisation services are provided to a high professional standard, delivered by the most appropriate service providers;
- Providing quality-assured expert advice and support services;
- Providing services which promote income maximisation through innovation and engagement of diverse communities;
- Running campaigns and publicity / information initiatives;
- Maximising opportunities to co-ordinate and link income maximisation e.g. through integrated and "one-stop" services, partnership working and joint commissioning;
- Commissioning and developing services to provide best value in line with this approach.

Key outputs and outcomes include: maximising claiming of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits; increasing external funding received; dealing with problem debt; helping tackle poverty and reducing the gap between our most and least deprived communities, and helping to tackle worklessness.

National Government recognises the role that IM plays in helping people improve their lives. IM also has a direct role to play in helping meet Plymouth City Strategy's strategic objectives e.g., improving health and well-being, developing a prosperous economy and promoting inclusive communities, along with a number of other local strategies.

The IM action plan provides detailed outputs and outcomes, against which progress will be monitored.

1. Introduction

1.1 People with inadequate income are likely to experience poorer quality of life and less opportunity than others. Quite simply, if you do not experience income or money problems, you will be healthier, wealthier, safer and wiser.

1.2 Despite this, we know that every year, large numbers of people in Plymouth are missing out on their entitlement to Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits¹, or are experiencing problem debt. This also means that the City's overall income and expenditure is not as high as it could be. The amount of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits claimed increases the amount of potential local authority funding provided by the government via the Formula Spending Share (FSS).

1.3 In response to these issues, this Income Maximisation Strategy 2006-2009 has been developed by Plymouth City Council (PCC), in partnership with other organisations to improve Income Maximisation (IM) in Plymouth.

1.4 IM is a process to ensure that a person's potential money coming in is maximised, and money going out is controlled, via avenues such as Welfare Benefits and Tax Credit claims and budgetary and debt advice².

1.5 On the basis of consultation with a wide range of partners in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors, and analysis of the current and future situation in Plymouth, this strategy specifically aims to: -

- Maximise take up of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits across the City;
- Ensure minimisation of problem debt and increase financial awareness across the City;
- Provide an effective network of IM services within the city and neighbourhoods;
- Provide information about financial inclusion and education;
- Raise awareness of energy efficiency, including fuel poverty;
- Contribute to the co-ordination and promotion of IM services and information;
- Monitor, evaluate and review the IM Strategy.

1.6 Information is provided on the background and context of IM work in Plymouth, and how we intend to approach future work, together with a detailed action plan for implementation from 2006 to 2009.

2. Background

2.1 Plymouth is a city of 244,400 people, with 105,200 households. This demographic breakdown is approximately: -

- 124,000 females;³
- 120,000 males;
- 49,000 children;
- 51,000 people over 60;
- 12,000 who are permanently sick or disabled;⁴
- 5,000 people from Black & Minority Ethnic communities.⁵

¹ See appendix 1

² See appendix 2

³ Plymouth City Council website, www.plymouth.gov.uk

⁴ An atlas of health and its determinants at neighbourhood level within Plymouth, Public Health Development Unit, February 2004

⁵ Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008, Plymouth City Council

2.2 Historically, Plymouth has provided a range of IM services and initiatives and there have been a number of attempts to improve the strategic approach to this work⁶. However, it is widely acknowledged that the City requires a more co-ordinated approach to this, supported by a practical strategy and action plan for implementation.

2.3 This strategy will build on successful work regarding Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits take-up, and debt services delivered by statutory and voluntary sectors. Examples of such services delivered by the voluntary sector include: -

- Pensioner projects, visiting people in their own homes;
- Via GP's surgeries and Plymouth Hospitals;
- Dedicated services for people with disabilities;
- Dedicated services for people with mental health issues;
- A drop in service for young people and single parents.

2.4 Although some IM work has been jointly commissioned, most projects have not been co-ordinated on a city-wide basis. PCC is currently working to improve the way future services are commissioned in order to provide more joined up services for the City.

2.5 The city currently has over 30 statutory and voluntary sector organisations that provide formal Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit or money advice services as a major part of their daily work. Of these, PCC has funded or match funded three organisations to provide these types of services. They are Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Advice Inc and Routeways/Childrens Information Service⁷.

2.6 Plymouth has three credit unions that aim to provide access to community banking, affordable lending and promote financial inclusion for everyone, irrespective of their financial position⁸.

2.7 PCC has a statutory duty to administer and provide advice regarding Housing and Council Tax Benefits and delivers this via its Revenues and Benefits Team and its associated visiting team. PCC provides a visiting benefit advice service in partnership with The Pension Service, administered by the client financial services team⁹, and telephone benefit checks via its customer services team. There is also a dedicated Welfare Rights Adviser based in Housing Services and plans to increase staff working in this area, as well as an IM Officer providing corporate advice and support based within the Social Inclusion Unit.

2.8 The Department for Work and Pensions administers Welfare Benefits, Pension Credit and State Retirement Pensions to people over 60 via The Pension Service, and Welfare Benefits to people under 60 via Jobcentre Plus. Both provide services to improve Welfare Benefits take-up and support the Government's Welfare to Work Agenda. The Inland Revenue administers Working and Child Tax Credits, but provides no local take-up services.

2.9 PCC has portfolio holders for Safer and Stronger Communities and Housing and Neighbourhood Services who provide leadership and representation at Cabinet level regarding IM issues.

⁶ A Welfare Benefits Take-Up Strategy for Plymouth, J Lee and D Croucher, Social Inclusion Partnership, November 2002

⁷ Other joint commissioners are Single Regeneration Budget and Plymouth Primary Care Trust.

⁸ They are West Plymouth Credit Union, Fortress Credit Union and Hope Credit Union.

⁹ The client financial services team is responsible for administering the Fairer Charging policy. Where a service user is provided with community care or supporting people services, a contribution towards the cost may be required from the service user. This will be determined following completion of a financial assessment for services required and a comprehensive Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit check.

2.10 Successful recent Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit take-up campaigns in Plymouth include: "Tell granny/granddad", "Quids For Kids" and "Don't lose out.....find out". Further details are contained in appendix three.

2.11 The majority of voluntary and community sector projects are funded either via PCC, Single Regeneration Budget, Plymouth Primary Care Trust, or a combination of the three (see appendix four). For the majority of projects, these funding streams either cease or are being reviewed in March 2006. As a result, organisations are entering into exit strategies and the inevitable outcome is that many are unable to offer ongoing support to those who need it after Spring 2006. However, PCC is working with partners to respond to this through improved commissioning.

3. Why we need income maximisation

3.1 If you suffer from income deprivation, it is likely that there will be direct effects on your quality of life. When comparing Plymouth's most deprived neighbourhoods to its most affluent, not only are the differences measurable in terms of wealth, but statistically, people from deprived areas are likely to be unhealthier, more susceptible to crime, and perform worse at school.

3.2 Despite this, we know that every year, large numbers of people in Plymouth are missing out on their entitlement to Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits or experience problem debt. The estimate of unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits in Plymouth ranges between £17 million and £25 million per year¹⁰. If this money was rightfully claimed and received, it would have a positive impact on people's lives (see appendix five) as well as the City's economy and services.

3.3 Although there is a time lag in the system, the level of Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit claims affects the amount a Local Authority receives from the Government via the Formula Spending Share (FSS) with good take-up potentially increasing this. So far, in 2005/06 in Plymouth, over £29 in Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit take-up and almost £11 of potential increased Local Authority funding has been realised for every £1 invested in take-up projects. For example, each new Attendance Allowance claim has the potential to increase the FSS by £1,500. Further information is contained in appendix four.

3.4 Without comprehensive advice services and specific activities to encourage people to claim Welfare Benefits or Tax Credits, or seek money advice, many people will miss out on entitlements to benefits and a way out of poverty. Research has confirmed that barriers to obtaining advice are:-,¹¹

- Fear of stigma, humiliation and loss of independence;
- Ignorance and misconceptions about the benefits available;
- Mistrust of government agencies and statutory authorities;
- Perception that making the claim is not worth the effort;
- The length and complexity of claim forms;
- Frequent changes to rules and regulations;
- Difficult to understand information;
- Standard of decision-making is not universally high;
- Inability of statutory agencies to advise competently across a complex array of Benefits and Tax Credits;
- The statutory benefits agencies do not have systems to identify eligible customers, and have limited experience of benefits take-up campaigns.

¹⁰ A Welfare Benefits Take-Up Strategy for Plymouth, J Lee and D Croucher, Social Inclusion Partnership, November 2002

¹¹ Tackling pensioner poverty; encouraging take up of benefits, National Audit Office, 2002

3.5 The following are a few of many case studies of people in Plymouth who have directly benefited from receiving good quality income maximisation advice.

Mrs B came to a benefit drive with a letter threatening eviction from her property due to non-payment of rent, and very little financial means of paying it. A claim form was completed and as a result, she was awarded £60.96 per week Housing Benefit and £10.17 per week Council Tax Benefit. This has resulted in the threat of eviction being withdrawn.

Mrs J needed advice as she was suffering from a condition that affected her mobility, and did not know what she could claim. Following a successful claim for Attendance Allowance, and an increase to her Pension Credit, she received an extra £106.10 per week.

Mr B had claimed Attendance Allowance before, but had been turned down. He didn't bother appealing, and was reluctant to reclaim. After a little persuasion, he was advised to try again, and has recently received an extra £96.05 per week in Attendance Allowance and an increase to his Pension Credit.

3.6 A recent public survey in Plymouth following the Quids For Kids campaign (see appendix three) illustrates how public awareness of entitlement to Tax Credits/Welfare Benefits can be raised by such high profile initiatives¹². The survey showed that:-

- 96% of people with children surveyed were aware of Child Tax Credit;
- 81% of people surveyed were aware of Working Tax Credit.

4. What we need to do to maximise income

4.1 In August 2005, an IM working group was initiated comprising of representatives of all sectors. Eight themed meetings were held in August and September 2005, with invitations to consider improving the strategic approach to IM in Plymouth. The topics discussed were:-

- Financial Inclusion;
- Care (older people, younger people and disabled people);
- Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit Take-Up;
- Housing;
- Fuel Poverty;
- Financial Literacy & Education;
- Debt;
- Child Poverty.

4.2 Feedback from this consultation indicated strong support for PCC to lead the development of an IM strategy for Plymouth. Common themes arising from the consultation indicated that the strategy and associated action plan needed to address the following priorities:-

- The recognition that IM work is vital to help support Plymouth fulfil its vision;
- A lack of co-ordination of IM provision and commissioning;
- The need for a city centre drop in service for general advice;
- The provision of advice work in communities, particularly those of greatest need;
- The need to address a lack of debt and money advice in general;
- Although Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit take up work was good, there is a need for far more targeted take-up campaigns;
- The need to support vulnerable groups to enable them to access available services;
- A need for IM advice from GP's surgeries and Plymouth Hospitals;
- The need to promote credit union facilities;

¹² Child & Working Tax Credit report, Plymouth Points of View, Plymouth City Council, January 2004

- The need to raise the profile of fuel poverty issues;
- A need to address the lack of information available on key websites;
- A need for advisors to consult with each other particularly around casework, in a co-ordinated way;
- Quality control of services is patchy and requires improvement;
- The role of different organisations in provision of IM services is not fully understood city-wide;
- The benefits and success of IM work needs to be championed and well promoted.

5. How we will approach income maximisation

5.1 As a result of the consultation process, this IM Strategy and its associated action plan has been developed with seven aims to address the issues identified as priorities during consultation.

5.2 The action plan was distributed for consultation through Plymouth Welfare Rights Forum members, as well as other statutory, voluntary and community sector partners. It provides specific actions, targets and output/outcomes that will enable PCC and its partners to work together to co-ordinate and monitor progress and achieve the best possible results for the people of Plymouth.

5.3 The action plan will be monitored quarterly to ensure barriers are addressed and targets achieved.

5.4 The key components of this strategy and action plan are to build on previous success and improve income maximisation work in Plymouth by:-

- Ensuring our income maximisation services are provided to a high professional standard, delivered by the most appropriate service providers;
- Providing quality-assured expert advice and support services;
- Providing services which promote income maximisation through innovation and engagement of diverse communities;
- Running campaigns and publicity / information initiatives;
- Maximising opportunities to co-ordinate and link income maximisation e.g. through integrated and “one-stop” services, partnership working and joint commissioning;
- Commissioning and developing services to provide best value in line with this approach.

6. Outcomes

6.1 Key outputs and outcomes of improved income maximisation include: maximising claiming of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits; increasing external funding received; dealing with problem debt; helping tackle poverty and reducing the gap between our most and least deprived communities, and helping to tackle worklessness. Detailed outputs and outcomes are shown in the action plan.

6.2 However, IM has a wider impact of well being generally. Therefore, in addition to specific outcomes described in the action plan, this strategy has a positive role to play in supporting all four elements of the City Strategy’s vision by helping the people of Plymouth to be healthier, wealthier, safer and wiser. Further information is contained in appendix five.

7. City Strategy

7.1 Our Local Strategic Partnership's vision for the future of Plymouth is:-¹³

“By 2020, Plymouth will be one of Europe's finest, most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone

- A healthy place to live and work
- A city which creates and shares prosperity
- A safe and strong city
- A location for learning, achievement and leisure”.

7.2 IM has a direct role to play in helping Plymouth meet the City Strategy's strategic objectives particularly in respect of:-¹⁴

- Improving health and well-being
- Developing a prosperous economy
- Promoting inclusive communities.

7.3 IM issues, particularly access to advice services for Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits, are explicitly referred to in Plymouth City Council's: Housing Strategy¹⁵; Homelessness Strategy¹⁶; Supporting People Strategy;¹⁷ and Affordable Warmth Strategy¹⁸. This IM strategy therefore supports and complements the work being done in these areas.

7.4 Plymouth's Neighbourhood Renewal Floor Targets Action Plan is based around six themes: Housing, Liveability, Education, Health, Crime and Worklessness. All of these have direct or indirect links to IM, and this strategy aims to support appropriate work to deliver Neighbourhood Renewal targets and support priority neighbourhoods¹⁹.

7.5 In line with this, PCC and its partners are committed to IM that ensures people have access to advice and services that enable them to increase household income and help to alleviate poverty and the dangers of problem debt. This in turn will help address the social exclusion that people experience as a result of lack of income and also have a positive knock on effect for Plymouth as a whole.

8. National context and deprivation in Plymouth

8.1 National Government recognises the role that IM plays with regards to helping people to improve their lives. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions states:-

“Our economy and society are changing fast. Our welfare state must help us respond to these changes. It must focus its energy on tackling poverty and social exclusion. Society has a responsibility to support those unable to support themselves and should help to support people in acquiring the new skills they need for the jobs of the future”. (A new deal for welfare: Empowering people to work –Dept for Work and Pensions – January 2006²⁰)

¹³ Plymouth's City Strategy And Action Plan 2004-2009

¹⁴ IBID

¹⁵ Housing strategy 2004-2007

¹⁶ Plymouth Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006

¹⁷ Supporting People Five Year Strategy 2005-2010

¹⁸ Action For Warmth And Health, An Affordable Warmth Strategy For Plymouth, November 2003.

¹⁹ www.plymouth.gov.uk/nrs_document.pdf

²⁰ www.dwp.gov.uk/aboutus/welfare-reform/docs/A_new_deal_for_welfare-Empowering_people_to_work-Full_Document.pdf

8.2 The 2004 Index Of Multiple Deprivation²¹ gives details of areas smaller than neighbourhoods. These areas are called Super Output Areas (SOAs), which have a minimum population of 1000 and a mean of 1500. England has been divided into approximately 30,000 of these areas, 160 of which cover Plymouth.

8.3 Plymouth has six SOA's within the 3% most deprived in the country, and these fall within the following neighbourhoods:-

- Devonport;
- North Prospect;
- Barne Barton;
- Stonehouse, extending into the City Centre.

The 2004 Index Of Multiple Deprivation also shows that:-

- 27% of Plymouthians live in areas that are ranked in the top 10% most deprived nationally;
- Plymouth's ranking in the multiple deprivation index has worsened. In 2000, Plymouth was ranked 84th, in 2004, Plymouth was ranked 75th;
- Plymouth's ranking for income deprivation is 52nd;
- Plymouth's ranking for employment deprivation is 46th.

8.4 Further statistics illustrating the current situation around income maximisation issues both nationally and locally can be found in appendix six.

9. Conclusion

9.1 This strategy sets out the context and background to IM work and explains why we need an IM strategy and action plan in Plymouth. It outlines what we need to do to improve IM and how we intend to achieve this, together with links to the City vision and strategy. The following action plan provides the detailed outputs and outcomes, against which we will monitor progress.

²¹ www.statistics.gov.uk, Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004, "Severe deprivation is particularly concentrated in the urban areas of Plymouth and Bristol"

INCOME MAXIMISATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2006-2009

Aim 1 – Maximise take up of welfare benefits and tax credits across the City					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
1.1 - Ensure take up of welfare benefits and tax credits.	1.1a - Explore opportunities to commission and establish welfare benefits and tax credit advice services, encouraging partnership work where appropriate.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Achieve a total of at least £1m per annum of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	Increase the number of people receiving advice and rightful entitlement to Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	April 2006 and quarterly review.
	1.1b - Target, co-ordinate and deliver regular welfare benefit and tax credit take up campaigns, in partnership with voluntary and community sector organisations.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. Lead name to be representative from organisation(s) delivering Welfare Benefits and Tax Credit contract 2006-2009.	Achieve a total of at least £1m per annum of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	Increase the number of people receiving advice and rightful entitlement to Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	July 2006 and quarterly review.
	1.1c - Explore opportunities to support the development of PCC Customer Services to improve further welfare benefit and tax credit take up advice.	Plymouth City Council, Department for Work and Pensions. PCC Customer Services (Hannah Metson)	Achieve a total of at least £1m per annum of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	Increase the effectiveness of people receiving a benefit health check.	April 2007.

Aim 1 – Maximise take up of welfare benefits and tax credits across the City (Cont)					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
	1.1d – Explore opportunities for Plymouth City Council to promote welfare benefits and tax credit take up via its statutory duty to administer Housing Benefit, Council Tax and the Fairer Charging policy.	Plymouth City Council. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Achieve a total of at least £1m per annum of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	Increase the number of people receiving advice and rightful entitlement to Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	April 2007.
	1.1e - Support partners (e.g. Community Legal Service accredited organisations) to make funding bids in order to support and develop provision of welfare benefits and tax credits advice.	Plymouth City Council, Community Legal Service (CLS) accredited organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Provide bidding support for up to 2 partners per annum.	Increase the level of external funding for Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits advice.	April 2006 and yearly review.

Aim 1 – Maximise take up of welfare benefits and tax credits across the City (Cont)					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
1.2 - Support vulnerable groups to access welfare benefits and tax credit services, working in partnership where appropriate (including older people, children, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues, people who are homeless, and BME communities including refugees).	1.2a – Work in partnership to explore and establish best practice in terms of engagement and service delivery for vulnerable groups.	<p>Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations.</p> <p>Lead name to be representative from organisation(s) delivering Welfare Benefits and Tax Credit contract 2006-2009.</p>	Target (including monitoring process) to be established by April 2007.	Improve access to vulnerable groups, and remove barriers to rightful entitlement of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits.	April 2007 and quarterly review.

Aim.2 – Ensure minimisation of problem debt and increase financial awareness across the City					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
2.1 - Ensure debt and money advice services are provided.	2.1 a – Explore opportunities to commission and establish debt and money advice services, encouraging partnership work where appropriate.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Services to be in place by April 2007.	Increase the opportunities for people to receive debt and money advice.	April 2007.
	2.1 b - Support partners (e.g. Community Legal Service accredited organisations) to make funding bids in order to support and develop provision of debt and money advice services.	Plymouth City Council, Community Legal Service (CLS) accredited organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Provide bidding support for up to 2 partners per annum.	Increase the level of external funding for debt and money advice.	April 2006 and yearly review.
	2.1 c – Explore opportunities for Plymouth City Council to promote access to debt and money advice via its statutory duty to administer Housing Benefit, Council Tax and the Fairer Charging policy.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary sector organisations. Money Advice Plymouth (Project Manager)	Services to be in place by April 2007.	Increase the opportunities for people to receive debt and money advice.	April 2007.

Aim.2 – Ensure minimisation of problem debt and increase financial awareness across the City (Cont)					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
2.2 - Support access by vulnerable groups to debt and money advice services, working in partnership where appropriate (including older people, children, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues, people who are homeless, and BME communities including asylum seekers and refugees)	2.2a - Work in partnership to explore and establish best practice in terms of engagement and service delivery for vulnerable groups.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau (Manager)	Target (including monitoring process) to be established by April 2007.	Improve access to vulnerable groups, and remove barriers to debt and money advice.	April 2007 and quarterly review.

Aim.3 – Provide an effective network of income maximisation services within the city and neighbourhoods					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
3.1 - Work towards provision of Income Maximisation services considering priority neighbourhoods.	3.1a - Explore the feasibility of establishing a one-stop multi-agency city centre advice service, to include regular outreach services throughout the City.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau (Manager)	Establish need for one-stop multi-agency city centre advice service.	Increase the opportunities for people to receive advice services.	April 2007.
	3.1b - Explore provision of Income Maximisation services in the priority neighbourhood renewal neighbourhoods.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Services to be in place by April 2007.	Increase the number of people receiving Income Maximisation advice, and reduce the gap between our most deprived and affluent neighbourhoods.	April 2007 and yearly review
	3.1c Make active link with Neighbourhood Renewal priorities and Floor Target Action Plans specifically in relation to income maximisation and tackling worklessness.	Plymouth City Council, Jobcentre Plus. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Target to be established.	Increase the number of people receiving debt and money advice, and reduce the gap between our most deprived and affluent neighbourhoods.	April 2006.

Aim.3 – Provide an effective network of income maximisation services within the city and neighbourhoods (Cont)					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
	3.1d - Investigate the provision of regular advice services from health settings, including Plymouth Hospitals and GP surgeries (reflecting 'Our Cities Health' priorities).	Plymouth City Council, Public Health Development Unit, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. Lead name to be representative from organisation(s) delivering Welfare Benefits and Tax Credit contract 2006-2009.	Identify initial range of locations for potential advice service delivery.	Increase the opportunities for people to receive advice services.	October 2006.
	3.1e - Explore and develop use of Plymouth City Council housing offices as venues for welfare benefit, tax credit, debt and money advice services for council tenants, delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector as appropriate.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary sector organisations PCC Community Services (Phil Harris)	Advisors located in the housing offices.	Increase the opportunities for people to receive debt and money advice.	July 2006.
	3.1f - Work with Plymouth schools, extended schools and children's centres to explore potential to use premises to provide income maximisation advice services.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary sector organisations. PCC Children's Services (Debbie Storey)	Identify feasibility of providing income maximisation advice services in Plymouth schools, extended schools and children's centres.	Increase access to information about Income Maximisation advice services.	April 2007.

Aim3. Provide an effective network of income maximisation services within the city and neighbourhoods (Cont)					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
	3.1g – Investigate the feasibility of providing a single point of contact for telephone advice and signposting to city-wide income maximisation services.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Customer Services (Hannah Metson)	Identify feasibility of a single customer contact point.	Increase and co-ordinate access to city-wide income maximisation services.	July 2007.
3.2 – Co-ordinate and help secure partnership resources.	3.2a - Explore in partnership with voluntary and statutory organisations, the potential to secure external funding to support delivery of income maximisation services.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Identify potential external funding to support delivery of income maximisation services.	Improve provision of income maximisation services.	April 2006 and quarterly review.

Aim 4 – Provide information about financial inclusion and education					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
4.1 - Promote access to information about financial inclusion and education services.	4.1a - Ensure details of financial inclusion and education services are included in appropriate websites.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Details of financial inclusion and education services available on up to at least 2 websites.	Increase the availability of information about financial inclusion and education services via the internet and the number of people accessing it.	October 2006 and annual review.
	4.1b - Advertise financial inclusion and education services provided by Credit Unions.	Plymouth City Council, West Plymouth Credit Union, Fortress Credit Union, Hope Credit Union. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Details of financial inclusion and education services provided by Credit Unions available in at least 2 formats.	Increase the availability of information about financial inclusion and education services provided by Credit Unions.	July 2006 and 6 monthly review.
4.2 Promote education about financial inclusion.	4.2a - Explore with Children's Services the possibility of producing a financial awareness package for students and pupils.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary sector organisations, and education providers. Money Advice Plymouth (Project Manager)	Establish feasibility of producing a financial awareness package for students and pupils.	Subject to feasibility, increase the availability of information about financial inclusion and education services to students and pupils.	January 2007

Aim 4 – Provide information about financial inclusion and education (Cont)

Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
4.3 Promote training about financial awareness.	4.3a - Investigate feasibility of a financial training package for staff dealing with members of the public.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary sector organisations. Money Advice Plymouth (Project Manager)	Establish feasibility of developing a financial training package.	Subject to feasibility, establish a training package for use by relevant staff dealing with members of the public.	October 2006

Aim 5 – Raise awareness of energy efficiency, including fuel poverty					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
5.1 Promote education and awareness about energy efficiency and fuel poverty.	5.1a - Ensure links with Plymouth Affordable Warmth Strategy priorities.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Community Services (Colin Anderson)	Identify and agree shared priorities e.g. reduce the number of people in fuel poverty by increasing their income.	Ensure a co-ordinated approach to fuel poverty reduction.	April 2006.
	5.1b - Use appropriate communication channels to 'myth-bust' issues regarding fuel poverty.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Community Services (Kay Booth)	Identify key communication channels to 'myth-bust' issues about fuel poverty.	Increase knowledge and understanding of issues regarding fuel poverty.	July 2006.
	5.1c – Explore opportunities to deliver fuel poverty awareness sessions to multi-agency staff and advisors.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Establish a programme to support delivery of fuel poverty awareness sessions.	Increase knowledge and understanding of issues regarding fuel poverty.	July 2006.
5.2 Promote education and awareness for advice giving staff re fuel poverty.	5.2a - Explore feasibility of providing fuel poverty advice in the context of general income maximisation advice services.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau (Manager)	Identify at least 1 income maximisation advice service to work in partnership with fuel poverty advisors.	Increase knowledge and understanding of issues regarding fuel poverty.	October 2006.

Aim 6 Contribute to the co-ordination and promotion of Income Maximisation services and information					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
6.1 - Support links between statutory and voluntary sector advisors.	6.1a - Explore provision of practical support to the Welfare Rights Forum, and Devon Money Advice Forum.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. Money Advice Plymouth (Project Manager)	Identify specific support for the Plymouth Welfare Rights Forum, and Devon Money Advice Forum.	Improve links between statutory and voluntary sector advisors.	April 2006 and six monthly review.
6.2 - Ensure the availability of income maximisation information in a range of formats and locations	6.2a - Produce standard multi-agency literature on income maximisation issues; promote use amongst partners, and in public services settings across the city.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Produce literature in at least 2 formats using plain English.	Improve understanding of income maximisation issues.	October 2006 and six monthly review.
	6.2b - Lead and develop a communication initiative with the aim of producing a comprehensive on-line signposting service for advisors and service-users.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Establish a communication initiative.	Improve signposting to income maximisation services.	October 2006.

Aim 6 Contribute to the co-ordination and promotion of Income Maximisation services and information (Cont)					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
	6.2c - Explore the use of appropriate websites to include (i) a directory of debt and money advice giving agencies, and (ii) a directory of welfare benefit and tax credit advice agencies.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary and statutory sector organisations PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Produce 2 directories to be included on at least 2 websites.	Improve information relating to income maximisation service providers.	October 2006 and yearly review.
	6.2d - Produce a regular series of income maximisation fact sheets for circulation (and linked to appropriate websites) to advisors and service-users.	Plymouth City Council, voluntary sector organisations. Plymouth Citizens Advice Bureau (Manager)	Produce an initial fact sheet.	Improve information relating to income maximisation service providers.	October 2006.
	6.2e - Hold a city-wide welfare rights conference.	Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Welfare Rights Forum. Plymouth Welfare Rights Forum (Secretary)	Conference to be held in April 2006.	Provide an opportunity for information sharing, networking and awareness-raising about income maximisation issues.	April 2006.

Aim 6 Contribute to the co-ordination and promotion of Income Maximisation services and information (Cont)					
Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
	6.2f - Work to ensure advice is offered in all appropriate formats including languages other than English, Braille and large print.	Plymouth City Council, statutory and voluntary sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Elisabete Dudley)	Offer targeted Income Maximisation information in key languages, Braille and large print.	Increase access to information about Income Maximisation advice services.	January 2007
	6.2g - Explore opportunities to provide on-line training and information sharing (e.g. use of consultation "chat rooms").	Plymouth City Council, statutory and voluntary sector organisations. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Identify feasibility of delivering on-line training.	Subject to feasibility, increase number of training mechanisms.	April 2007

Aim 7 Monitor, evaluate and review the Income Maximisation Strategy

Objectives	Actions	Partners/Lead	Targets	Output/Outcomes	Timescales
7.1 - Monitor and evaluate progress made towards overall aims identified in the Income Maximisation Strategy Action Plan.	7.1a - Set up and facilitate quarterly meetings to monitor and evaluate actions identified in the Income Maximisation Strategy.	Income Maximisation Strategy Steering group. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	1 meeting to be held per quarter commencing July 2006.	Improve strategic co-ordination and service delivery against agreed targets.	July 2006 and quarterly review.
	7.1b - Ensure findings influence future revisions of the Income Maximisation Strategy and action plan.	Income Maximisation Strategy Steering group. PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Review the Income Maximisation Strategy action plan (annually) to incorporate evaluation findings.	Improve strategic co-ordination and service delivery against agreed targets.	April 2007 and annually.
	7.1c – Produce regular updates on city-wide take-up of Benefits and Tax Credits.	Plymouth City Council PCC Social Inclusion Unit (Darin Halifax)	Take up figures provided regularly.	Improve understanding of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits take-up and promote achievement.	April 2006 and quarterly.

Appendix 1

A brief guide to Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits

ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

A tax free, non-contributory and non means-tested benefit paid to people aged 65 or over who have needed help with personal care for at least 6 months (For people aged under 65, please see section on Disability Living Allowance).

There are two rates of benefit depending on the amount of care and assistance required.

BEREAVEMENT ALLOWANCE

A taxable, contributory and non means-tested benefit, payable up to the 52nd week from the late spouse's death.

It is a weekly benefit payable to widows and widowers aged between 45 and state pension age.

BEREAVEMENT PAYMENT

A tax free, one off lump sum of £2000 payable when the late spouse has paid a certain level of national insurance contributions.

It is non means-tested and payable to the surviving partner as long as they or the deceased spouse were not receiving retirement pension at the time of death.

CARERS ALLOWANCE

A taxable non-contributory and non mean-tested benefit which is payable to someone who is caring for a person receiving Attendance Allowance, or the middle/highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance.

CHILD BENEFIT

A non-taxable, non-contributory and non means-tested benefit payable to anyone bringing up children.

The child must be aged under 16, or under 20 and studying in full-time non-higher education,

CHILDS TAX CREDIT-

A non-taxable, non-contributory means-tested benefit payable to anyone bringing up children. The child must be aged under 16, or under 20 and studying in full-time non-higher education

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

A tax free, non-contributory and means-tested benefit paid by the Local Authority, to help cover or pay towards Council Tax.

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE

A tax free, non-contributory and non means-tested benefit payable to people with disabilities before the age of 65, and who have needed care or had mobility problems for at least 3 months.

There are two components to the allowance based on care need and mobility issues.

Either or both of the components may be claimed.

HOUSING BENEFIT

A non-taxable, non-contributory and means-tested benefit paid by the Local Authority to help cover or pay towards rent

INCAPACITY BENEFIT

A non means-tested, contributory benefit that is taxable at the two highest levels. It is payable to people who are incapable of work for at least 4 consecutive days. Some occupational pensions may be taken into consideration.

People under 20 years of age should claim Incapacity Benefit In Youth.

The illness must have started before pension age, and the claim should be made within 3 months of the first day of sickness.

INCOME SUPPORT

A tax free, non-contributory and means tested benefit to help with everyday living costs. It can be paid to top up existing income or to people with no income. The amount you get depends on your family circumstances, your health, age, your income and any savings you may have. It is not payable to people who work for 16 hours or more per week, or have a partner that works 24 hours or more per week.

INDUSTRIAL INJURIES DISABLEMENT BENEFIT

A tax free, non-contributory and non means-tested benefit paid to people who become disabled because of an accident at work or due to certain prescribed diseases caused by their job.

JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE

The benefit is divided into two allowances.

Contributory Jobseekers Allowance is a taxable, non means-tested benefit paid to unemployed people aged 18 and above, who work for less than 16 hours per week.

Income-based Jobseekers Allowance is a taxable, means-tested and non-contributory benefit paid to unemployed people aged 18 and above, who work for less than 16 hours per week.

MATERNITY ALLOWANCE

A non-taxable, contributory and non means-tested benefit paid to pregnant women.

The benefit can be claimed from 11 weeks before the baby is due to the day following the child's birth.

The benefit is paid for a maximum of 26 weeks.

PENSION CREDIT

The Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit provides a guaranteed income for all pensioners. It is non-taxable, non-contributory and means-tested.

The Savings Credit element is paid to those aged 65 and over, who have saved for their retirement. It acts as a reward for those who have made provision above the basic State Retirement Pension.

STATE RETIREMENT PENSION

A taxable, contributory and non means-tested benefit payable at pension age.

SOCIAL FUND

A variety of lump sum payments, grants and loans administered by Jobcentre Plus.

Community Care Grants – a non-repayable grant for specific reasons such as help to resettle from institutional care.

Budgetary Loans – A repayable loan for things that you cannot pay for in a lump sum.

You must be receiving a means-tested benefit to apply.

Crisis Loans – A repayable loan available to anyone who needs help with day-to-day living costs or in an emergency.

Sure Start Maternity Grant – A non-repayable grant to help towards the cost of a new baby, available to families receiving a means-tested benefit and/or Child Tax Credit above the basic Family and Baby elements combined.

Funeral grant - A non-repayable grant to help towards the cost of a funeral, available to anyone receiving a means-tested benefit.

WIDOWED PARENTS ALLOWANCE

A taxable, contributory and non means-tested benefit payable to a widow or widower with dependent children aged under 16, or under 19 and in full-time non-advanced education.

WORKING TAX CREDIT

A tax free, non-contributory means-tested Tax Credit. It is paid as a top-up to earnings for families, couples and single people.

Appendix 2

Definitions

Income maximisation - Income Maximisation is a process to ensure that potential money coming in is maximised, and money going out is controlled, via avenues such as welfare benefits and tax credit claims and budgetary and debt advice²².

Poverty - A person is deemed to be experiencing poverty if they receive less than 60% of UK average household income, after housing costs²³.

Debt - Households deemed most at risk from poverty through debt repayments are those that:-

- Spend more than 25% of their gross income on unsecured borrowing repayments, or
- 50% or more of their gross income repaying their total borrowing requirements including secured loans²⁴.

Fuel poverty - A household is considered to be in fuel poverty if it spends 10% or more of its net income on achieving:-

- The main living area has an average temperature of 21°C;
- Other occupied rooms have an average temperature of 18°C;
- Temperatures are maintained for 16 hours per day for homes that are occupied all day;
- Temperatures are maintained for 9 hours per day for those homes whose inhabitants are in work or full time education.²⁵

²² Adapted from An Income Maximisation Strategy for Edinburgh, May 2004 (www.leep.org.uk)

²³ Organisations such as Oxfam, Child Poverty Action Group and the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister currently use this definition.

²⁴ The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Dept for Trade and Industry use the phrase “over-indebtedness” to describe debt that has become a problem to the debtor. DTI – tackling with over indebtedness – 2004

²⁵ The UK fuel poverty strategy 2004, www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/fuelpov/index.htm.

Appendix 3

Examples of recent Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit Take-Up campaigns in Plymouth

Tell granny/granddad campaign

This initiative during 2004/05 encouraged pensioners to claim Housing Benefit and in particular Council Tax Benefit to which they were entitled. An advertising campaign was launched comprising of local publicity, leaflets with council tax bills, and posters. As a result, 940 extra pensioners made a claim, and over £800,000 of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits was achieved.

Quids For Kids

This campaign was launched in July 2003 to encourage people to claim Tax Credits. This project has evolved to include all Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits, and up to and including December 2005, has resulted in approximately £1.2 million of previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits being realised.

Don't lose out.....find out

In August 2005, this campaign resulted in two benefit open days via two different sites in Devonport. All aspects of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits, money and fuel poverty advice was available, resulting in 60 people attending, and over £84,000 in previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits achieved.

Appendix 4

Examples of Welfare Benefits/Tax Credit Take-Up funded by PCC, Single Regeneration Budget and Plymouth Primary Care Trust

Project	Project provider	Funding Sources	Total Funding per annum (Figures in brackets indicate PCC spend)	Total take-up from April 2005 to September 2005	Amount of clients seen	Potential total increase to F.S.S for 2008/09, via claiming of relevant benefits.
Quids for Kids	Routeways Childrens Information Service	SRB PCC PCT	£60k (£30k)	£238,988.56	193	£97,278
Mount Gould Hospital	DIAC	PCT SRB	£30k	£193,751.00	165	£135,841
GP Surgeries	Advice Inc	PCT	£30k	£397,483.40	126	£56,800
Pensioner take-up	Advice Inc	PCT SRB	£25k	£433,557.00	254	£207,700
Social Services referrals	Advice Inc	PCC	£50k (50k)	£315,650.40	185	£150,582
Mental health benefit take-up	MIND	SRB PCT	£30k	£189,847.00	76	£19,330
Care Direct	PCC/DWP	-	-	£747,784.00	389	£251,635
Client Financial Services	PCC	-	-	£695,414.20	332	£280,300
Devonport Benefit Project "Don't lose out...Find out"	Multi Agency event co-ordinated by Plymouth City Council. Held in August 2005.		-	£84,146.00	60	£16,600
TOTAL			£225k (£80k)	£3,296,621.56	1780	£1,216,066.00

Appendix 5

Income Maximisation and the City vision

IM has a positive role to play in supporting all four elements of the City's Strategy's vision by helping the people of Plymouth to be healthier, wealthier, safer and wiser:-

Healthy

"Our City's Health"²⁶ Plymouth's public health strategy states: "Poor health in a population has frequently been associated with the social, physical and economic conditions in which people live. Poverty and debt frequently lead to anxiety, depression and the breakdown of family relationships".

The tables below show Plymouth neighbourhoods with low and high incomes, and the direct links to poor health.²⁷

(Key to rankings 1= lowest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth, 43= highest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth)	Neighbourhoods with low household income	Households that consider themselves permanently sick or disabled.	General Health comprising of 5 separate datasets (heart disease mortality rates, cancer mortality rates, smoking rates, life expectancy and teenage conception rates)
Barne Barton	1	6	5
Stonehouse	2	1	1
North Prospect	4	3	2
Devonport	6	2	4

This can be compared with the three neighbourhoods with the highest levels of household income.

(Key to rankings 1= lowest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth, 43= highest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth)	Neighbourhoods with high household income	Households that consider themselves permanently sick or disabled.	General Health comprising of 5 separate datasets (heart disease mortality rates, cancer mortality rates, smoking rates, life expectancy and teenage conception rates)
Turnchapel, Hooe & Oreston.	41	29	33
Hartley & Mannamead	42	34	42
Woodford	43	32	35

²⁶ www.phwb.org.uk/ourCitysHealth

²⁷ An atlas of health and its determinants at neighbourhood level within Plymouth, Public Health Development Unit, February 2004

Poverty is associated with a higher risk of illness and premature mortality. If you suffer from income poverty, your life expectancy is seven years shorter than that of someone who has income in the top 15% of the population²⁸. Children are five times more likely to die in an accident, and 15 times more likely to die in a fire if they live in a home experiencing poverty.²⁹ Adults in the poorest fifth of the income distribution are twice as likely to be at risk of developing a mental illness as those on average incomes³⁰. Almost a third of working-age disabled adults live in income poverty. This is higher than a decade ago and higher than the rates for either pensioners or children³¹.

Wealthy

Increasing the take-up of Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits in Plymouth not only benefits the recipient, but also the local economy and has the potential to increase central Government funding of the Local Authority.

“Benefits take up puts extra spending power into the Local Authority area as increased benefit income is usually spent on local goods and services. Additional benefit money is most usually spent on housing, food, transport and leisure” (Quids For Kids-A Good Practice Guide)³².

The level of Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit Take-Up also affects the FSS, which is used to work out how much each Local Authority receives from the Government. This takes into account local financial deprivation indicators including the amount of specific Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit recipients in the City. For each person claiming a particular Welfare Benefit or Tax Credit in Plymouth over certain levels, the Council receives an amount of potential increased funding.

In 2005/06, Plymouth City Council, Plymouth Primary Care Trust and the Single Regeneration Budget have invested £225,000 in take-up projects. This funding has resulted in over £3 million in previously unclaimed Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits being realised and is estimated to have attracted a potential FSS figure of just over £1.2 million. This equates to over £29 in Welfare Benefit and Tax Credit Take-Up and almost £11 of potential FSS for every £1 invested³³

Safe

There is a direct link between poverty and reported crime. If you live in a low income area, you are also extremely likely to live in a high crime area. Potentially, increasing income can result in widening people’s choices and opportunities to keep safe.

The following tables show neighbourhoods with low and high incomes, and the comparison with reported crime, (British Crime Survey 2004/05³⁴).

(Key to rankings 1= lowest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth, 43= highest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth)	Neighbourhoods with low household income	Levels of reported crime within city neighbourhoods
Barne Barton	1 st	6 th
Stonehouse	2 nd	1 st
North Prospect	4 th	3 rd
Devonport	6 th	2 nd

²⁸ www.poverty.org.uk/summary/key_facts.htm

²⁹ IBID

³⁰ IBID

³¹ Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2005, G Palmer, J Carr and P Kenway, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

³² Quids for kids, A good practice guide, LGA 2002

³³ See appendix 4

³⁴ www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/bcs1.html

This can be compared to the three neighbourhoods with the highest incomes:-

(Key to rankings 1= lowest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth, 43= highest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth)	Neighbourhoods with high household income	Levels of reported crime within city neighbourhoods
Turnchapel, Hooe & Oreston.	41 st	40 th
Hartley & Mannamead	42 nd	42 nd
Woodford	43 rd	37 th

Half of those on low income do not have any household insurance, compared with a fifth for households on average incomes³⁵. Households with no household insurance are around three times more likely to be burgled as those with insurance³⁶. 72% of criminals are unemployed when they commit their crime³⁷ and 48% of criminals had a history of debt when they committed their crime³⁸

Wise

There is a direct link between income and educational attainment. If you are a child that lives in an area of low income, there is a significant chance that you will not perform as well at school as children from a more affluent neighbourhood³⁹.

The following tables are based around achievement of key stage 2 and 3 in Maths and English, Key stage 3 in Science⁴⁰, % of five or more A-C grades at GCSE and foundation stage children⁴¹

(Key to rankings 1= lowest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth, 43= highest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth)	Neighbourhoods with low household income		Neighbourhoods with the lowest levels of educational attainment
Barne Barton	1 st		6 th
Stonehouse	2 nd		3 rd
North Prospect	4 th		2 nd
Devonport	6 th		1 st

The three neighbourhoods with the highest income show the following

(Key to rankings 1= lowest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth, 43= highest ranking neighbourhood in Plymouth)	Neighbourhoods with high household income		Neighbourhoods with the highest levels of educational attainment
Turnchapel, Hooe & Oreston.	41 st		38 th
Hartley & Mannamead	42 nd		42 nd
Woodford	43 rd		41 st

Using receipt of free school meals as a measure, in 2004, 56.1% of children not receiving free school meals achieved five or more GCSE's at grades A-C. Only 26.1% of children receiving free school meals achieved the same.

³⁵ www.poverty.org.uk/summary/key_facts.htm

³⁶ IBID

³⁷ www.socialinclusion.gov.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=64

³⁸ IBID

³⁹ Dfes, national curriculum assessment GCSE and Equivalent Attainment by Pupil Characteristics, in England 2004

⁴⁰ Key stages 2 and 3 are national assessment tests taken by 11 and 14 year olds. They are used as a benchmark for parents to assess their child's progression and to decide national curriculum levels,

⁴¹ Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2005, G Palmer, J Carr and P Kenway, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The economic fortunes of people in their late 20s show the consequences of different qualifications for both work and pay. People in their late 20s with no qualifications face a far higher risk than their peers of unemployment (18% compared with an average of 5%)⁴². Anyone possessing at least A-levels or NVQ3, faces a below-average risk of being unemployed in their late 20s. Only graduates face a below-average risk of still being low paid by their late 20s (10% compared with an average of 25%). The risk for those with no qualifications is more than 50 %⁴³.

⁴² Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2005 – Guy Palmer, Jane Carr and Peter Kenway – Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

⁴³ IBID

Appendix 6

Income maximisation statistics nationally and locally

Income Poverty

Poverty in the UK

According to figures for 2004, income poverty affects 12.3 million of the UK population, or 5.14 million households⁴⁴. This equates to approximately 21% of the population. Children face a higher risk of income poverty than any other age group with 28% of children living in household units considered poor. Poverty affects 20% of people over 60, and has increased from 3.6 million to 3.9 million nationwide among working age adults without children⁴⁵. If you rely on Welfare Benefits as your main source of income, your chances of living in poverty increases by 80%⁴⁶.

However, recent government initiatives have resulted in significant reductions in poverty amongst pensioners and children. Pension poverty has fallen by at least 50% over the last 6 years⁴⁷ with over half a million children lifted out of poverty over the last five years⁴⁸.

Poverty in Plymouth

Using national averages, we can estimate that in Plymouth, approximately 1 in every 4.7 households experience income poverty, with over 13,600 children and 10,000 pensioners directly affected. However given Plymouth's position in The 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation, when compared to national averages, these totals are likely to be higher.

The ten neighbourhoods with the highest incidence of reliance on Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits are,⁴⁹:

1. Barne Barton
2. Stonehouse
3. City Centre
4. North Prospect
5. Morice town
6. Devonport
7. Keyham
8. East End
9. Ernesettle
10. Whitleigh

Debt

Debt in the UK

The national average household non-secured debt is £7563, which increases to £43,800 if you include mortgages. With mortgages included, this equates to every person in the UK as being approximately £18,017 in debt. On average, 5% of the population spend 25% or more of their gross income on unsecured borrowing repayments with 7% spending 50% or more of their gross income repaying their total borrowing including mortgages.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ National Statistics website, www.statistics.gov.uk

⁴⁵ Poverty, The Facts, CPAG 2004

⁴⁶ IBID

⁴⁷ www.odpm.gov.uk

⁴⁸ IBID

⁴⁹ An atlas of health and its determinants at neighbourhood level within Plymouth, Public Health Development Unit, February 2004

⁵⁰ Poverty, The Facts, CPAG 2004

Debt In Plymouth in relation to national averages

Using national averages, we can estimate that in Plymouth, the total personal debt including mortgages is approximately £ 4.3 billion with £795 million being owed in non-secured debt. This means that 1 in every 14 Plymouth households or 17,000 people have debt that brings risk of poverty through debt repayments. Again, given the national averages, it is likely that the actual figures are higher in Plymouth.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel Poverty in the UK

Although the figure is reducing yearly, fuel poverty currently affects approximately 5.7 million people, or 30% of households in the UK. 50% of pensioners live in fuel poor households, as do 17% of children. There are also approximately 40,000 excess winter deaths in the UK each year, of which the underlying cause is exposure to cold⁵¹.

Fuel Poverty in Plymouth in relation to national averages

Using national averages, we can estimate that in Plymouth, 1 house in 3 experiences fuel poverty, directly affecting 15,000 pensioners and 6,000 children. Devon is also the 2nd poorest county in England in terms of fuel poverty⁵².

⁵¹ www.defra.gov.uk/environment/energy/fuelpov

⁵² IBID