

## REPORT

To: CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: AREA/REGISTRATION SERVICE: JOINT WORKING WITH DWP (DEPARTMENT OF WORK AND PENSIONS)
From: HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES		
Date: 5 December 2007	Ref: JAF/BN	

**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on joint working activities between the Area/Registration Service in North Lanarkshire and DWP the aim of which is to increase awareness of entitlement to benefits.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 The Area/Registration Service in North Lanarkshire and DWP have explored ways in which they could work together for the benefit of our customers since 2004. Initially, arrangements were made for representatives from the Pensions Service to attend registration team meetings. As a result of the first joint venture Department for Work and Pensions Leaflets were made available at Area/Registration Office receptions.
- 2.2 The next initiative was to launch the issue of Bereavement Packs. This involved Registrars issuing Packs containing information leaflets with contact details for the Pension Service. Feedback received from the Bereavement Pack pilot was positive.
- 2.3 Following joint discussions it was agreed that the process could be further improved by the introduction of a more direct personal service. This involved Registration staff with the consent of bereaved dependents arranging home visits with the Pensions Service for bereaved dependants over 60 years. A new process was designed and a two week trial was run from the Airdrie Area/Registration Office in March 2007. This involved the Pensions Service acknowledging receipt of an email from the Registration Service, contacting the customer to make arrangements for a home visit and making home visits requested by the bereaved. No major issues were identified during the pilot and as planned the new process was introduced in all Area/Registration Offices on 2 April 2007.

**3. Findings**

- 3.1 An evaluation report covering the period 8 March to 30 September 2007 indicates 155 customers were referred by the Area/Registration Service to the Pensions Service. Of the 155 customers, 87% were visited by the Pensions Service.
- 3.2 The remaining 13% were telephoned and/or the customer decided not to take up the service.
- 3.3 Details of the claims, monetary gains and referrals made to other Agencies in the period April –June 2007 are as follows:

Type of Claim	No of Applications	Weekly Awards Made	Annualised
Pension Credit	39	£1,447	£75,244
Attendance Allowance	10	£624	£32,448
State Pension	20	£1,093	£56,836
Bereavement Benefit	3	£248	£12,896
Carers Allowance	2	Underlying entitlement	
Housing Benefit	9	£445	£23,660
Council Tax Benefit	28	294	£15,288
Totals	111	£4,161	£216,372
Single Payments			
Funeral Payment			£2,202
Bereavement Payment			£23,237
Arrears of weekly awards			£14,802
<b>Grand total of Awards and Arrears Paid</b>			<b>£256,613</b>

(Data Source: DWP)

3.4 Forty five customers were referred to other local agencies including North Lanarkshire Handyperson Service and Safer Homes and Fire Safety.

3.5 Customer feedback has been very positive. Here are some examples:

“Absolutely fantastic service, this partnership working helped to ease the transition of being widowed. It was nice to know people cared”.

“I heard so many conflicting stories about what I would get, it was good to have someone come out and explain my entitlements and complete the forms for me”

“wonderful service” .....“process very easy and painless”.

#### 4. Recommendation

The Committee is requested to note the progress of this joint working initiative to date and that further progress will be monitored and reported.

*J. O. Fleming*  
**Head of Central Services**

Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact John Fleming, Head of Central Services on Extension 2228.