

WELSH FINANCIAL INCLUSION STEERING GROUP

Meeting Note – 14 October 2016, Merthyr Tydfil

Present

Chair

Andrew Jacobs (AJ) Financial Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government

Welsh Government Officials

Charlotte Anscombe (CA) Financial Inclusion Unit
Laurie Davies (LD) Tackling Poverty
Helen Freese (HF) Welsh Government, Education
Erika Helps (EH) Financial Inclusion Unit
Kathryn Markey (KM) Financial Inclusion Unit

Members / Deputising for Members

Joe Allen (JA) ABCUL Policy Officer for Wales
Farida Aslam (FA) Monmouth Housing Association
Jonathan Brenchley (JB) Corporate Relations Wales & West, Barclays Bank
Danielle Cope Action for Children
Leanne Herberg (LH) Cardiff and the Vale Credit Union
Rhian Hughes (RH) Financial Inclusion Champion, Wales Co-operative
Centre
Craig Lane (CL) Citizens Advice Cymru
Paul Langley (PL) Community Housing Cymru
Helen Matthews (HM) DWP (Universal Credit Programme)
Sean O'Neill (SO'N) Children in Wales
Jayne Simpson (JS) National Probation Service (representing Tony Kirk)
Iwan Williams (IW) Older People's Commissioner's Office

Secretariat

Jan Morgan (JM) Financial Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government

Apologies for non attendance

Ian Albert (IA) Department of Work and Pensions
Elizabeth Emmons (EE) Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit
Rhys Evans (RE) Independent member
Tony Kirk (TK) National Probation Service (representing interests of
National Offender Management Service in Wales)
Lisa Hayward (LH) Welsh Local Government Association
Geraint Willington (GW) Education Consortium
Lee Phillips (LP) Money Advice Service (MAS)
Blod Lewis (BL) Barclays Bank
Beverley Morgan Welsh Government Tackling Poverty
Karl Thomas (KT) Welsh Government, Housing Policy Division
Pat McCarthy (PMc) Welsh Government, Education (Curriculum Core
Subjects)

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1. Welcome & Introductions

- 1.1 AJ welcomed members to the first meeting of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) and thanked them for attending the meeting at short notice. AJ welcomed Jayne Simpson who was deputising for Tony Kirk, Helen Freese who was deputising for Pat McCarthy and Laurie Davies who was deputising for Beverley Morgan. Apologies were received from Ian Albert, Elizabeth Emmons, Rhys Evans, Tony Kirk, Lisa Hayward, Lee Phillips, Blod Lewis, Geraint Willington and Karl Thomas.
- 1.2 AJ explained that there had been a number of changes since the group last met prior to the publication of the Financial Inclusion Strategy in March. The new Programme for Government - 'Taking Wales Forward' was recently published. Our financial inclusion work was included in the document as part of the 'Prosperous and Secure' strand. Recent changes within Communities Division were outlined with Amelia John replacing Eleanor Marks, Angharad Richards replacing Paul Dear and AJ replacing Chris Gittins as head of the Digital and Financial Inclusion Units.
- 1.3 AJ invited the new members of FISG to introduce themselves and to outline their particular perspective on the financial inclusion agenda in Wales.

2. Discussion and agreement of the proposed Terms of Reference for the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG)

- 2.1 KM gave a brief overview of the progress that has been made since the publication of the first Financial Inclusion Strategy "Taking everyone into Account" was published by the then Welsh Assembly Government in July 2009. It was explained that the Minister for Communities and Children has agreed to changes to the membership and proposed terms of reference of the Financial Inclusion Development Group which is now a Steering Group to oversee the development of the Delivery Plan and monitor progress against the Strategy's commitments.
- 2.2 A commitment has been made to produce a Delivery plan by December 2016 in order to continue our shared goal to help alleviate financial exclusion and over- indebtedness in Wales. KM explained a number of constructive comments had been received from a variety of stakeholders at the public consultation events. These would either be incorporated into or would be used to inform the content of the Delivery Plan. The Delivery plan will have links to other related strategies to avoid duplication and the key mechanism to achieving this will be the FISG.
- 2.3 KM explained it was proposed to have a full FISG membership, who will meet as necessary during 2016 (likely to be two or three meetings), to review and agree the development of the Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan. The core group will then meet up to three times a year to review progress on the Delivery Plan.

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- 2.4 KM explained there will also be an extended membership group, whose members may be called upon to attend FISG meetings, to comment on papers in advance of a core FISG members meeting or to contribute to task and finish groups where their expertise will add value. All members of the extended group will also act as ambassadors for the promotion of financial inclusion and financial capability within their own sectors and be able to raise issues proactively.
- 2.5 KM said that in addition to the core and extended members, there are also a number of organisations who are keen to work with Welsh Government in relation to financial inclusion, which may take the form of subsets i.e. Credit Unions, Children's issues. KM said we will call on such assistance as necessary by the Financial Inclusion Unit and/or the whole membership of FISG who will agree and sign off the Delivery Plan.
- 2.6 KM invited views in relation to the proposed Terms of Reference (TOR). She explained that some comments had already been received concerning bullet point 2, regarding a reference to "sustainable solutions" where there needs to be a recognition that any new delivery ideas and solutions need to be sustainable in the longer term. A brief discussion ensued regarding the remit of the group for wider engagement, membership of the group, communication to partners/members and the addition of commitments for additional dates. KM and EH felt that FISG members were a voice from their sector rather than a representative for it. **Action - KM said this would be considered and a revised TOR would be issued in due course.**

3. Update on timeframe for development of the Delivery Plan to support the Financial Inclusion Strategy 2016

- 3.1 KM explained the Delivery Plan will be an online living document based around three themes - access to affordable credit and financial services, access to financial information, including debt advice, and building financial understanding and capability - which will be monitored/updated annually to maintain validity. She outlined the proposed document structure and said it was going to be based on a similar model to the Information and Advice Action Plan.
- 3.2 KM gave an overview of links with MAS Financial Capability Strategy for Wales and how it will be incorporated into this work. She explained that we will be working with the MAS Steering group to decide on actions which are relevant to Wales. Amelia John is now on the UK Financial Capability Board. She invited EH and JA to explain how their respective areas regarding Information Advice Action Plans and the Credit Unions Strategy will have appropriate theme links to relevant partners and organisations to ensure collaborative and consistent delivery of actions. There was a general consensus that digital inclusion should be embedded across the three themes. AJ will ensure that appropriate links are also made to the Digital Inclusion agenda in Wales. HF provided an update on the timescales in relation to Estyn undertaking their thematic review this academic year.

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Estyn's project plan has been received with publication expected in Spring 2017. Findings from their review will then be taken into account into the new Areas of Learning and experience for mathematics and numeracy. KM said the Financial Inclusion Strategy 2016 will remain a point in time document and the Delivery plan will be a living document to reflect any changes in the FI landscape.

- 3.3 KM explained that officials had already met colleagues from Knowledge Analytical Services (KAS) regarding monitoring and evaluation to discuss current/recent evaluations of a number of programmes/initiatives that will contribute to the Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan. A number of the actions will relate to programmes/initiatives run by other parts of the Welsh Government or other organisations, which will themselves be subject to monitoring and evaluation of some kind. We will mainly be considering the FI Strategy using the three separate themes. The general view from FISG members indicated that there is much good work being undertaken in the FI field which can be referenced within the Delivery Plan.
- 3.4 KM said that impact assessments covering Welsh Language and Equalities were published in draft as part of the consultation on the draft Financial Inclusion Strategy in 2015. Updated versions of these impact assessments and a Children's Rights impact assessment were prepared for the publication of the Financial Inclusion Strategy in March 2016. As part of the process for developing the Delivery Plan, consideration will be given to updating the impact assessments for publication alongside the Delivery Plan

4. Close and Next Meeting

- 4.1 AJ thanked FISG members for their constructive comments and said the date for next meeting will be Monday 28th November – date will be circulated.

Jan Morgan
17 October 2016