

WELSH FINANCIAL INCLUSION STEERING GROUP

Meeting Note – 21 March 2017, Merthyr Tydfil

Present

Chair

Andrew Jacobs (AJ) Financial Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government

Welsh Government Officials

Charlotte Anscombe (CA) Financial Inclusion Unit
Sally Hunt (SH) Equality & Prosperity
Amelia John (AmJ) Deputy Director, Communities Division
Pat McCarthy (PMc) Education (Curriculum Core Subjects)

Members / Deputising for Members

Farida Aslam (FA) Monmouth Housing Association
Jonathan Brenchley (JB) Corporate Relations Wales & West, Barclays Bank
Lisa Hayward (LH) Welsh Local Government Association
Leanne Herberg (LH) Cardiff and the Vale Credit Union
Will Atkinson (WA) Community Housing Cymru
Jocelle Lovell (JC) Financial Inclusion Champion, Wales Co-operative
Centre
Sean O'Neill (SO'N) Children in Wales
Lee Phillips (LP) Money Advice Service (MAS)
Graham Roberts (GR) DWP (Universal Credit Programme)
Jayne Simpson (JS) National Probation Service (representing Tony Kirk)

Secretariat

Jan Morgan (JM) Financial Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government

Apologies for non attendance

Ian Albert (IA) Department of Work and Pensions
Danielle Cope (DC) Action for Children
Elizabeth Emmons (EE) Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit
Rhys Evans (RE) Independent member
Craig Lane (CL) Citizens Advice Cymru
Tony Kirk (TK) National Probation Service (representing interests of
National Offender Management Service in Wales)
Geraint Willington (GW) Education Consortium
Iwan Williams (IW) Older People's Commissioner's Office
Karl Thomas (KT) Housing Policy Division, Welsh Government

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1. Welcome, Minutes & Matters arising

- 1.1 AJ welcomed members to the third meeting of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) and thanked them for attending. AJ welcomed Jayne Simpson who was deputising for Tony Kirk, Jocelle Lovell who was deputising for Rhian Hughes and Will Atkinson who was deputising for Paul Langley.
- 1.2 The minutes from the 28 November 2016 meeting were accepted as a true record. All actions from the previous meeting had been completed.
- 1.3 There were no matters arising.

2. Update and discussion on draft Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan.

- 2.1 AJ gave a brief overview of the progress that has been made to date since the Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan (FIDP) was published in December. He said that a lot of work has already taken place which has been captured in FIDP and thanked members for their updates.
- 2.2 AJ explained that the first part of the discussion would touch on developments within FIDP which Welsh Government has lead responsibility for. It was recognised that some actions may prove more challenging than others.
- 2.3 *Theme 1 - Access to affordable credit and financial services*
AJ and CA gave updates on the LINK Financial Inclusion Programme, the credit unions application-based grant scheme funding for 2017/18 for activities aligned with the FIDP and partnership working on the DAF programme. JL gave an update on the payroll pilot to explore the potential of credit unions sharing a resource to boost their payroll deduction engagement with employers. She explained that the pilot has now been completed and a number of positive outcomes have been identified. The evaluation report would be available at the end of March 2017. LH said the Cardiff & Vale Credit Union would be taking forward the payroll agenda. **AP** JM to circulate report to FISG members for information.
- 2.4 *Theme 2- Access to financial information including debt advice*
AJ explained that some of the commitments and actions for this theme align with the Welsh Government's Information and Advice Action Plan, which would be progressed more quickly once Paul Neave, the new Head of Advice Services, takes up post in May. AJ provided an update in respect of debt advice funding for Wales for 2018/19 and the opportunities to align with the MAS for the integration of services.
- 2.5 *Theme 3 - Building financial understanding and capability*
AJ noted Commitment 15 within the Delivery Plan aligns with the delivery of MAS Financial Capability Strategy which contains 77 actions relating to 5 specific groups, including Children/Young People and Older People. AJ gave an update in respect of Digital Inclusion and explained that the Digital Inclusion Strategic framework and Delivery Plan was published in March 2016 and would be reviewed in the summer of 2017. He also mentioned the data sharing implications of the UK Government's Digital Economy Bill, which

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could help with implementing solutions for people who are struggling with their bills.

- 2.6 The general consensus was that banks and credit unions have been doing excellent financial capability work in schools. JB explained that the main focus and drive is now shifting towards employability and life skills and over 20,000 young people had already been through the Barclays Life Skills programme in Wales. AJ said he had attended the MAS Talk, Learn, Do Pilot event in Cardiff where practitioners explained how much they valued the initiative and the need for it to be embedded into other programmes.
- 2.7 PMc said the Pioneer Schools networks are now working on the high level approaches to the individual Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLE), following which they will consider how financial education will be represented in the new curriculum, both under mathematics and health and wellbeing. The Digital Competence Framework would also be essential in taking forward the financial inclusion agenda. PMc said research has shown that the focus on reviewing the teaching and learning of financial education in Welsh schools has to be maintained in order to succeed in reaching targets in the future. The National Network for Excellence in Mathematics (NNEM), announced last November by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, is expected to be launched in mid July 2017, to better support the teaching of maths.
- 2.8 LP provided updates regarding the expected MAS merger with Pension Wise and the Pensions Advisory Service; the MAS What Works fund, with current estimated spend of £1.7m for Wales (representing 16% of the total grants for the UK). She explained that the Children and Young People and Parents & Teachers financial capability outcomes frameworks, which would be published in English and Welsh, would encourage teachers to use the evaluation tool for financial education. LP mentioned the work being undertaken by the Welsh Financial Capability forum to capture information of people who are working in the financial capability field without any formal training, in order that this group can be supported to gain qualifications, so the advice is consistent across the sector.
- 2.9 JL gave a quick update on the next phase of the Welsh funded project *Your Money Your Home* in Cardiff, Newport, Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr and said she would provide information which can be circulated to the group within the next 2 weeks.
- 2.10 There was a general discussion concerning Scotland's first Financial Capability Week which also included a series of consumer facing events run by Lloyds Money for Life programme, in partnership with Youth Scotland, where young people will be going out across Scotland to ask young people about their hopes and fears for their financial future. An initial discussion took place to assess the feasibility of having a UK Financial Capability Week in Wales in November 2018. It was agreed to consider this further and for a sub group to meet to discuss and plan the event.

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2.11 GR gave an update on the roll out of Universal Credit in Wales and the importance of providing budgeting support in preparation for this. He said a full roll out is expected to finish GB wide by 2018. National roll out of Universal Credit Full Service (UCFS) commenced in May 2016 and there are currently 50 Jobcentres which have transitioned from UC Live Service to UC Full Service. Flintshire Jobcentres will start the Wales roll out in April with Shotton Jobcentre rolling out on 5th April with Mold and Flint Jobcentres following a week later. Roll out across GB will continue at five Jobcentres each month until July when scaling up will commence and 30 Jobcentres will transition. He explained that there will then be a “firebreak” during August and September with roll out re-commencing in October with 50+ Jobcentres transitioning. These monthly volumes will then continue right through to the end of roll out in September 2018. A contingency period (as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee and National Audit Office) has been built into the roll out plan between October 2018 and June 2019 with Managed Migration of stock legacy claimants commencing in July 2019 and ending in March 2022 when all legacy claims will have converted to Universal Credit.

3. Key Challenges to progress

3.1 AJ opened the discussion and asked for any views on the key challenges facing the development of the FIDP. The general consensus of the group was that there was much good work being undertaken in the financial inclusion field which is not being fully reflected in the FIDP and this needs to be addressed so that information can be captured and disseminated effectively and avoid silo working.

3.2 A number of suggestions were made for suitable ways this could be achieved. WA suggested the CHC Advisory network regarding links to the private and social rental sector. AJ said he would contact colleagues in WG Housing regarding advice services provision. He said adopting a bottom up approach to determining priorities could be encouraged to improve engagement. LP suggested talks with Cymorth Cymru might also be useful.

3.3 AmJ suggested making links to the emerging priorities of the Ministerial Taskforce for the South Wales Valleys as the Taskforce which seeks to improve prosperity, tackle poverty and regenerate the South Wales valleys. It was suggested that the Future Generations team could be brought into this agenda. SH suggested the WG Warm Homes programme, which includes the Nest and Arbed schemes. These provide low income households with access to a range of free advice and support to reduce their energy bills and maximise household income through benefit entitlement checks and debt advice.

3.4 LP suggested using case studies within the FIDP document to showcase what WG is doing to help alleviate financial inclusion. She said that preventative work is really important and should be embedded into multi strands i.e. education and employment. PMc said the new curriculum could be used to start the process. He suggested that LP, LH and RE may wish to meet with the Pioneer groups, alongside Estyn and Consortia colleagues to discuss further. LP said she would speak to colleagues to see how this

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agenda could be progressed in Wales. General consensus that a sub group of FISG should be formed to take this agenda forward

4. *Next steps and any other business*

- 4.1 AJ thanked FISG members for their input and constructive comments and said the date for the next meeting is likely to be in mid July.

Jan Morgan
March 2017