

WELSH FINANCIAL INCLUSION STEERING GROUP
Meeting Note – 22 November 2017, Merthyr Tydfil

Present

Chair

Andrew Jacobs (AJ) Financial Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government

Welsh Government Officials

Charlotte Anscombe (CA) Financial Inclusion Unit
Paul Neave (PN) Financial Inclusion Unit

Members / Deputising for Members

Jonathan Brenchley (JB) Corporate Relations Wales & West, Barclays Bank
Danielle Cope (DC) Action for Children
Elizabeth Emmons (EE) Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit
Helene Hayes (HH) Citizens Advice Cymru
Lee Phillips (LP) Money Advice Service (MAS)
Graham Roberts (GR) DWP (Universal Credit Programme)

Selina Mayo (SM) Community Housing Cymru
Iwan Williams (IW) Older People's Commissioner's Office

Secretariat

Lisa Wait (LW) Financial Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government

Apologies for non attendance

Will Atkinson (WA) Community Housing Cymru
Leanne Herberg Cardiff Credit Union
Farida Aslam Monmouthshire Housing
Sean O'Neill Children in Wales
Jocelle Lovell Wales Co-operative Centre

1. *Welcome, Minutes & Matters arising*

- 1.1 AJ welcomed members to the fifth meeting of the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) and thanked them for attending. AJ gave a special welcome to Selina Mayo who was attending the meeting for the first time from Community Housing Cymru and Lisa Wait who has recently taken over Jan Morgan's role in Financial Inclusion Unit in Welsh Government and is secretariat for the group. It was also noted that Rhys Evans has written to withdraw as an independent from the group due to work commitments.
- 1.2 The minutes from the 17 July 2017 meeting were accepted as a true record. It was noted that the action point AP in 3.1 for LP has been completed.

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2. **MAS Fincap Stats**

- 2.1 LP gave an overview of the recently commissioned survey by the Money Advice Service 'The Financial Capability of Children and Young People in Wales' which was launched during Financial Capability Week. The results show some positive figures, however there is still a long way to go.
- 2.2 LP highlighted some of the key findings of the survey, noting that there are some indicators where Wales is ahead of the rest of the UK, such as bank accounts and children seeing parents using cash. An area where Wales is lagging behind includes aspiration to want independence and leave home, which is 21% in Wales as compared with 30% for the UK.
- 2.3 Financial Education – 35% of children aged 7-17 say they have learned about money management at school. LP noted that this figure is higher in the rest of the UK and this could be due to children and young people not reporting it. Positively, over 9/10 young people who said they had learnt about money management at school said it was useful.
- 2.4 LP went on to present some of the other statistics from the survey including:-
43% save most of the time
3 in 4 talk to their parents about money
7 in 10 say they are a good role model although LP noted that the behaviour does not always match this.
- 2.5 LP advised members of the group to read the full report. It was also pointed out that low income households do not do as well as higher income households. Children from higher income households are far more likely to get a part time job in their teenage years.
- 2.6 The survey highlights that Family Financial Education is key to making a difference and that children and young people, with experience of handling money, do better.
- 2.7 AJ noted that these findings reinforce the cycle for worklessness and that Well being plans need to reflect how we engage with Future Generations. Three or four plans have advice referenced but no reference to financial capability. It was also raised that there is no reference to financial capability in the Future Generations and Well Being Act.
- 2.8 PN commented that he has been invited to attend a North Wales Public Services coordinators meeting in January 2018 to discuss how to embed access to social welfare advice into wellbeing action plans. PN mention that LP would be welcome to attend too.
- 2.9 It was agreed that the profile of Financial Inclusion/Education needs to be raised so it will be included consistently in Well-being plans. It was suggested a meeting with Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, would provide an excellent opportunity for this to happen. AJ advised that

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officials will look into approaching Sophie Howe's office to request a meeting. HH expressed an interest in being involved as a group. AJ also added that through the work of the National Advice Network there are meetings with PSB and this could be built upon.

Action point – WG to request a meeting.

Action point – WG will send information through the NAN.

- 2.10 AJ confirmed that the Minister was briefed on the findings of the survey ahead of its publication. The briefing also included an overview of what is being done to address the weaker areas that were identified in the survey.

3. *Fincap Week Feedback and Capturing ongoing activities.*

- 3.1 AJ opened the discussion and commented on the event at the Principality Stadium on the 14th November and the event at the Senedd on the 16th November, which was attended by the Minister Rebecca Evans, who also gave a speech at the event. Both events were successful.
- 3.2 Children and Young People Event - Principality Stadium – 14th November
The event was discussed. DC fed back to the group commenting that she had received very positive feedback following the workshop she led, and many people had approached her and asked for copies of the speech.
- 3.3 It was noted that 75 attended the event in the Principality Stadium including representatives from Parenting, Credit Unions, Housing Associations, Adverse Childhood Experiences and children's charities. It was agreed that it was a successful event and it was good to see how much work is being done in the field and the range of resources available.
- 3.4 Celebrating Financial Capability Work in Wales Event at the Senedd
It was noted that the event was attended by 65 people from a range of different organisations many exhibiting and talking about what they are doing to promote financial capability.
- 3.5 It was agreed by members of the group who attended the event that the 5 minute slot per speaker worked very well. HH commented that each presentation was sufficiently different which allowed the event to flow well. LP said that the event was very positive and that it felt like a celebration which was the intention. It was also very pleasing that the Minister also gave a speech at the event.
- 3.6 The group discussed building upon the success of Fin Cap week next year so it is even more successful. DC noted that it is all about the end user and this needs to filter down. DC also said that we need to consider being more creative and getting different sectors involved and working together and that this was a very good start which we need to build on for next year.

EE suggested that it would be useful if we could have a date for next year's Fincap week so we could get it in diaries in advance.

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Action point - diary marker to be circulated by WG to FISG members

- 3.7 Area of Learning Experience - In terms of Financial Education, it was noted that there seems to be a big push in Swansea on driving this agenda forward. AJ added that Celtic Credit Union, who also operate in the Swansea area, are involved in a group to develop the new curriculum, and a recommendation paper has been put forward.

4. *Financial Guidance and Claims Bill, Including 'Breathing Space' call for evidence*

- 4.1 AJ provided an update on the Financial Guidance and Claims Bill. It is nearing the end of its progress through the House of Lords and is having its third reading. As it went through the House of Lords, the Bill has created lots of debate. There have been several amendments to the Bill, with a key amendment relating to the concept of a 'Breathing Space'. In summary, this amendment will require the UK Government to ask the Single Finance Guidance Body to provide advice on how a Breathing Space scheme would operate. The amendment will not compel Wales to participate in the Breathing Space scheme as proposed by the Single Finance Guidance Body; it gives us the ability to 'opt in' if we feel the scheme is suitable to the needs of the people of Wales.
- 4.2 PN explained that HMT has recently issued a call for evidence on issues relating to a Breathing Space scheme – with responses due before the 18 January 2018. AJ felt that it was not for the Steering Group to respond as a collective, however, it is important for everyone to air their respective views.
- 4.3 AJ reported that positive progress is being made with HMT on the formula that will be used to calculate the level of funding to be devolved across to Wales for debt advice services and this will reflect the higher relative indebtedness figures for Wales. He also explained that a transition group (membership to include the Devolved Administrations, HMT, DWP) will be set up to work through appropriate issues and ensure there is a seamless transfer of responsibility for debt advice services when the Single Finance Guidance Body begins to function.
- 4.4 The plenary debate on the LCM is scheduled for early December. UPDATE - This has subsequently been postponed to 13 February.

5 *UC Challenges and Responses*

- 5.1 PN provided an overview of some of the changes to UC that were being announced in the UK Government's Autumn Budget. This included a longer period to repay an Advance Payment and a claimant will be able to access 100% of their UC monthly award. The 7 day waiting period is to be abolished and Housing Benefit claimants would get Housing Benefit run on of 2 weeks when they move onto UC. PN welcomed these changes but said more

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positive changes could have been introduced, particularly with regards to the UC work allowances to ensure that work pays.

- 5.2 GR commented that DWP funding is being made to LAs and some of the funding is focused upon personal budgeting support to help households to successfully move to monthly payments, open transactional bank accounts, set up alternative payment arrangements, including housing costs direct to a landlord. GR noted that referrals to LAs for budget support can come from anywhere, although the vast majority are made through the job centre.
- 5.3 PN commented that the implementation of UC will give the opportunity for more financial capability to be brought into households. UC also creates an opportunity for better working across sectors, for example between LAs, RSLs and third sector providers, to make sure outcomes for households are as effective as they possibly can be. PN was uncertain how well this is being done across Wales at the moment.
- 5.4 SM commented that many Housing Associations are working closely with local authorities.

6. *Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan Update*

- 6.1 A discussion took place amongst members of the group on how future updates would be managed as the delivery plan is now a large document containing a lot of information some of which has become outdated.
- 6.2 PN provided an update on the advice service elements within the plan

The Former Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children agreed that officials should work towards merging the three advice funds into a single fund that encourages effective collaboration between providers and maximises the use of all available resources. To maintain stability within the advice sector, whilst the new single fund is developed, it was also agreed to continue to fund the current five providers during the period April 2018 to Sept 2019. However, the providers will be required to work with officials on an ongoing basis to help develop their current services.

- 6.3 A competitive tender exercise is underway which closed on the 22 November appoint a contractor to establish the IAQF independent assessment service and commence the process of having existing Social Welfare Information/Advice Quality Standard Owners accredited to the IAQF.
- 6.4 DEWIS Cymru website now has a classification called 'Social welfare advice and information' - this will make it easier for members of the public to search for local services that can provide information and advice to help them to resolve their problems. All providers on the NAN stakeholder list have been asked to register on the website. It has a built in safeguard and Welsh Government has editor status.

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- 6.5 CA confirmed there is funding for credit unions included in the draft budget for next financial year, but no decisions have been taken on how this will be allocated. We are currently waiting for quarter three monitoring reports from credit unions that have received funding this year to take forward projects aligned with the Financial Inclusion Delivery Plan to consider outcomes and whether there is merit in rolling any of these projects forwards.
- 6.6 AJ updated the group on an outcome of the Credit Union Payroll pilot undertaken last year by the Wales Co-op centre as Public Health Wales have agreed to look for a payroll provider and will be procuring for this service.
- 6.7 EE informed that more money is available next year from proceeds of crime. Last year £48k proceeds of crime money was invested in projects for 10 organisations.

7 Any other business

- 7.1 HH raised the query of updating the delivery plan and asked the question whether we were able to look into a more user friendly way of updating the plan.
- 7.2 AJ commented that the purpose of the plan is to provide short updates with greater details recorded elsewhere.
- 7.3 LP suggested that the plan contains links to other documents rather than long updates.
- 7.4 JB raised the issue of online fraud and commented that Black Friday is predicted to raise online fraud to a record high. It was agreed that LW would circulate a document to members of the group detailing this issue.

Action point – LW to circulate Press Release from JB to the wider group.

- 7.5 LP explained about a current exercise by Money Advice Service to help better coordinate financial education in Wales and across the UK. MAS is currently mapping existing financial capability provision for children & young people. It was agreed LW would circulate the following link to FISG members and networks. (Click [here](#))
- 7.6 CA also stated that she would circulate the consultation on banking standards link following the meeting.
- 7.7 AJ thanked FISG members for their attendance, input and constructive comments. The date for the next meeting is likely to be in March 2018.

Lisa Wait

November 2017