

**Note of the National Advice Network in Wales Meeting, held on Thursday 31 July 2017 – Citizens Advice Cymru office, 4th floor, Trafalgar House, 5 Fitzalan Place, Cardiff CF24 0ED**

**In attendance:**

Bob Chapman, Chair of the National Advice Network (BC)  
Lisa Hayward, WLGA (LH)  
Dr Sumina Azan, Public Health Wales (SA)  
Lara Ramsay, Big Lottery (LR)  
Fran Targett, Citizens Advice Cymru (FT)  
Salli Edwards, Flintshire Citizens Advice (SE)  
JJ Costello, Shelter Cymru (JC)  
Andrew Jacobs, Financial and Digital Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government (AJ)  
Paul Neave, Head of Advice Services, Welsh Government (PN)

**Item 1 – Welcome, apologies and introductions**

1.1 BC welcomed everyone to the 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Advice Network in Wales.

1.2 Apologies were noted from:

Lee Phillips, Money Advice Service  
Kay Powell, Law Society  
Stephanie Barry, Financial Inclusion Unit, Welsh Government

**Item 2 – Chair's report**

2.1 BC circulated his update report to members ahead of the meeting to highlight his recent work.

2.2 BC confirmed that he will be meeting with Peter Wyman on the 08/08/2017 to discuss his debt advice funding review.

2.3. Notes of the Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017 agreed as a correct record.

**Item 3 – Update from Welsh Government**

3.1 Proposals for funding and developing sustainable advice services

- PN talked through the above paper circulated to members ahead of the meeting. It was recognised that rolling funding forward will create concerns from providers about inability to access Welsh Government grants. Though, general acceptance that it was sensible to undertake competitive grant exercise as effectively as possible. Welsh Government should tell the story of why it is not feasible to deliver competitive application process in the autumn 2017. For example, IAQF assessment service needs to be established, proposal from UK

Government to devolve debt funding, DEWIS mapping needs further development, needs analysis lacking channel preference, etc.

Feedback from the Independent Advisor Forum also included concerns that Supporting People services, who claim to provide advice, are only undertaking triage/signposting. Highlighting the need for advice/support services to come together in order to better plan services being delivered within a locality with advice/support sectors working to their own particular strengths.

The ability to offer a longer tender period would be welcomed by providers.

### 3.2 Financial Guidance and Claims Bill

- AJ set out the pressing time scale the DWP and Treasury worked to, in order to get the Bill on the UK legislative programme. They needed 'in principle' approval to the provisions within the Bill from the Welsh Government and, as parts of the Bill fall within the legislative competence of the National Assembly for Wales (NAW), this included the Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary laying a Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) before the NAW. A debate on the Bill/LCM in the NAW is scheduled for October 2017.

Welsh Government needs more in-depth discussions on the detail within the Bill ahead of Committee briefings and the debate in the NAW. This includes the level of and mechanism for devolving debt advice funding; the linkages with money guidance/financial capability; and how the current MAS consultation and the Wyman review relate to issues such as these.

The proposal from HM Treasury of how they will calculate the funding for debt advice will be critical to the ongoing support for the LCM within the NAW and Welsh Government. In all its consultation responses the Welsh Government has consistently expressed the view that any devolved funding for debt advice should be subject to a fair and transparent funding formula based on need, reflecting Wales' higher relative indebtedness.

FT noted that arguments made previously by Lynne Schofield (before MAS was created) – secured needs based funding and not Barnett.

*Action:*

*BC to attend the DWP/HMT stakeholder event on the Bill on the 3/08/17.*

*BC to draft NAN response to MAS consultation and circulate for comments.*

### 3.3 DEWIS Provider Map

- PN provided an update on the development of the map. The Social Welfare Advice category is almost complete. Providers already registered on the map will be contacted to review/update their entry and asked to place service information under the new social welfare category. All other stakeholders to be asked to upload their information onto the DEWIS site. Welsh Government has editor rights on the DEWIS site and will check for any inconsistent information prior to new service entries being published.

#### **Item 4 – NAN – Key Messages Document**

4.1 PN outlined the content of the latest draft of the key messages document. It was suggested that the title be amended, to 'Supporting well-being through advice services' and there is a need to explain the 'social welfare' definition.

*Action: PN to amend the document and circulate for comments prior to be publication on the NAN website.*

4.2 SA mentioned a recent report by the Future Generations Commissioner on well-being in Wales, which made seventeen recommendations following an analysis of their work to date with PSB's.

*Action: SA to send the report to PN to be circulated around NAN*

#### **Item 5 – NAN Annual Review of Information and Action Plan**

5.1 BC explained that he met with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss the above. The Cabinet Secretary was pleased with both the NAN review and with the layout of the document, which made it easy to follow.

5.2. It was accepted by all that NAN has a pivotal role to play in the successful attainment of all the actions in the IAA.

#### **Item 6 – Developing plans for the initiatives where NAN has requested Welsh Government funding in 2017/18**

6.1 BC reported that the Cabinet Secretary had indicated that some funding might be available to undertake initiatives, identified in the NAN annual review of the IAAP. PN talked through the paper circulated prior to the meeting.

- Embed Prevention work in crisis interventions

There was a broad discussion on this activity, including, how to stop repeat customers; how to make more people resilient; many providers already provide holistic advice. Agreed this is a comprehensive and complex area of work and it needs detailed consideration to identify the breadth and depth of any project within this area.

*Action: PN to invite NAN members to join a working group to take this work forward.*

- Channel Preference

BC explained that this was missed off the final specification for the needs analysis. Agreed it is a priority activity and will be useful for future commissioning. It was noted there's an important difference between 'need' and 'preference', and research will need to determine what channel works best.

*Action: Welsh Government to request research is scoped and commissioned as soon as practical.*

- Tribunal Representation

It was thought there would be lots of pre-existing data on this area and perhaps a volunteer/s from NAN could undertake initial research. However, progressing this activity was not considered a priority.

### **Item 7 – Membership – National Advice Network**

7.1 PN explained that advice has been sent to the Cabinet Secretary recommending that the BC is reappointed as the Chair until the 31/12/2018. The present members will be invited to remain on the NAN until 31/12/2018. Due to the summer recess confirmation letters may not be received by the 05/08/17. However, PN noted that renewed membership would commence from the 06/08/17.

7.2 Additional NAN 'core group' members were discussed. PN also informed the meeting that the Cabinet Secretary has been considering extending membership of the Core Group to include the equalities sector, trade unions and the public sector

*Action: BC and PN to identify potential representatives.*

### **Item 8 - AOB**

BC raised the recent Supreme Court decision – fees for employment tribunals. He was unsure what the position will be for all those who chose not to take their case to a tribunal due to the fees. Agreed that NAN will maintain its interest in this issue.

### **Item 9 – Meeting close and date of future meeting**

It was agreed the next meeting for the core group will be held on 16 October 2017 in Cardiff.