

WELFARE REFORM - DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR MIDDLESBROUGH

Strategic Overview

	To include	Leads	Timescales	Progress
Monitor/Identify Emerging and Respond	<p>Further develop robust working arrangements between Middlesbrough Council's Corporate Welfare Reform Group (CWRWG) and Middlesbrough Partnership's Financial Inclusion Group (FIG) and work with partners to continue to monitor/identify key emerging issues and trends in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Universal Credit/IT; ▪ Education and training; ▪ Health and Wellbeing; ▪ Employment/Economy/Private Sector; ▪ Financial Capability/Debt; and ▪ Communications. 	CWRWG and FIG		<p>FIG and CWRWG continue to monitor/co-ordinate the strategic response.</p> <p>New strategic governance arrangements being proposed for CWRWG</p>
Task and Finish Group Approach	Establish time-limited task and finish groups (as deemed necessary) to look at specific issues linked to the delivery of Welfare Reform Action Plan.	CWRWG and FIG		

Education and Training

	To include	Lead	Timescales	Progress
Develop a Partner Training Plan	Develop a training plan to meet the needs of partner organisations (utilising best practice, avoiding duplication and sharing resources).	Paul Wales (WMNT)		
Develop a Community Training Plan	Continue to develop a 'train the trainer' type package and supporting resources that will enable partners and community volunteers to deliver awareness raising sessions in communities.	<p>Paul Wales (WMNT)</p> <p>Lisa Fearn (Fabrck) will be involved but not as Lead.</p>		

Encourage Wider Sign up to Nellbooker	Increase partner agency sign-up to the Nellbooker Electronic Referral System, which will ensure ease of client referrals to advice agencies. This to include delivery of appropriate partner training.	Jo McNally Nicola Payne		
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Health & Wellbeing

	To include	Lead	Timescales	Progress
Mental Health	Carryout a mapping exercise to establish available mental health support provision across Middlesbrough and based on the outcomes develop: new approaches that will strengthen linkages between 'points of first contact' (e.g. financial advisory services) and mental health services; and gaps in current service provision.	Nigel Sayer Joe Chidanyika (Public Health)		
General Health & Wellbeing	Establish whether the reforms are having a wider impact on health and well being issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, diet, exercise and fuel poverty and assess whether a wider partnership response might be required. Connected to the above, establish whether there are crime related issues that need to be addressed.	Joe Chidanyika (Public Health)		
Family/Child Poverty	To link in with Middlesbrough Children and Young People's Trust to establish the impact of the Welfare Reforms on Family/Child Poverty and assess whether a wider partnership response might be required.	Lesley Spaven		

Employment/Economy/Private Sector

	To include	Lead	Timescales	Progress
Engagement with the Private Sector	Seek greater engagement with the private sector including the need to assist employers in providing information and support to their employees on how the welfare reforms may impact on them (e. g. staff briefing sessions/advice days).	Claire Elliot		

Employment Opportunities	Work with partners that have a focus on providing town wide employment support and information to establish whether further work required to link such work and services with those affected by the welfare reforms.	Claire Elliot Viv Norris (Area Housing Manager- Erimus Housing) will be part of the group, but not Lead.		
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IT/Universal Credit

	To include	Lead	Timescales	Progress
Access to IT and Support	Undertake an exercise to establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what IT facilities are available to residents in claiming Universal Credit (UC); • what level of support (if any) is available to residents both in the use of IT and the UC system; • are there any gaps; and • how could such services be best promoted. 	Jo McNally Sarah Batty (Tandem) Jen Brittain Linda Bacon, Resident Involvement Team Manager at Fabrick will be part of this group, but not as Lead		
Staff Training	Whether specific training is required for staff to assist in supporting their customers when making UC claims. This includes the need to clarify staff liabilities in providing such assistance to claimants	Paul Wales (WMNT) Sarah Batty and / or Julie Sedgwick, Tandem advisers at Fabrick, will be involved but not as Lead		
Budget Management	Assist in the promotion and development of the Big Lottery Community Hub enhanced advice website, email and associated services to provide direct advice to residents. Promote the 'B Prepared' project to residents and organisations to ensure	John Daniels (CAB)		

	<p>residents are prepared for the introduction of Universal Credit.</p> <p>Explore whether further opportunities exist in helping residents.</p> <p>Work closely with the DWP particularly on implementation and transition and whether there were any flexibilities that could be applied locally.</p>			
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Financial Capability

	To include	Lead	Timescales	Progress
Promotion of Pioneer Credit Union and other CUs	Deliver the action plan agreed between Fabrick and Middlesbrough Council which seeks to further develop and promote Pioneer Credit Union	Nigel Sayer John Botham (Fabrick)		
Financial Capability	Deliver the Big Lottery funded community hub enhanced service which will provide capacity to undertake financial inclusion work across a number of areas. This to include the continued development of the Thorntree hub and the extension of the service into a further hub.	John Daniels (CAB)		
Benefit Advice Days	Arrange further benefit advice days in local communities.	Jo McNally Nicola Payne		
Funding Opportunities	Seek funding opportunities and multi-agency bidding approaches that could assist with the delivery of the Welfare Reform Action Plan.	Nigel Sayer		
Middlesbrough Money Advice Service Projects	Identify and establish strong links between financial capability focussed Projects to enhance co-ordinated working (e.g. Know Your Money Keep the Change and the B Prepared project) Work to be incorporated within work of the Fin Cap Group above.	John Daniels (CAB) Lisa Fearn (Tandem) to assist with the work of the Fin Cap Group		

Baseline Indicators	Continue to monitor key baseline indicators (such as homelessness, children into care, DV incidents etc) that help track the longer-term impact of the reforms which might lead to identifying areas of possible further action.	Sarah Brannen		
Review of Advisory Services	Assist in the delivery of those actions considered relevant arising out of the Review of Middlesbrough Advisory Services.	Mark Davies (MVDA)		

Communications and Information

	To include	Lead	Timescales	Progress
Middlesbrough Partnership website	Develop and update information on the Middlesbrough Partnership website.	Jo McNally		
Partnership Communications Network	Undertake a review of the current network details, the sharing information and working arrangements.	Jo McNally		
Partnership Communications Group	Undertake a review of current working arrangements/membership and, based on the Welfare Reform Action Plan, develop a work plan. To carryout a communication exercise regarding unclaimed benefits across Middlesbrough	Helen Sturdy (Fabrick) Jo McNally		