



# Newcastle Financial Inclusion Group

Councillor Joyce McCarty

Neil Munslow, Service Manager: Active Inclusion

25 March 2021





## Welcome – getting the most out of a Teams meeting & meeting format

- If possible turn your camera on to provide some face-to-face experience
- Mute your microphone when not talking to reduce background noises
- If you want to talk let us know by using the “raising your hand” function, you can also make comments & raise questions on the chat function. There will be opportunities for questions or comments throughout the presentation
- After the presentation you will be asked to split into smaller discussion groups. Join by clicking on the second link when advised

# Our financial inclusion aims – a reminder:



- Maximise income & respond to the welfare reforms
- Support residents to manage their money, reduce harmful debt & prevent homelessness
- Help residents to train, gain & remain in employment
- Promote affordable credit options
- Reduce fuel poverty & promote access to bank accounts
- Tackle food poverty

## **Simplify financial inclusion by helping you to do more with less & to:**

- Better understand residents' challenges & talk to them about financial inclusion
- Know where to go when you can't help
- Know where to get information, advice, support & training
- Become involved & develop solutions to the challenge's residents face

For all the above we want to make a demonstrable difference by making it **everyone's business to promote financial inclusion**





## Active Inclusion Newcastle partnership approach to homelessness prevention & financial inclusion – statement of intent

Our aim is to make it everyone's business to prevent homelessness & financial exclusion at the earliest opportunity to better support residents to have the foundations for a stable **LIFE**:

- Somewhere to **L**ive – a home
- **F**inancial inclusion – debt & budgeting
- An **I**ncome – benefit entitlement
- **E**mployment – inclusive growth

# Our context challenges & opportunities to respond



**£119m**

An estimated **annual loss of £119m in working age benefits** by the end of 2025-26

**£345m**

An estimated **£345m reduction in Newcastle City Council's budget by 2023**, due to government cuts & increasing Coronavirus cost pressures

**£5.20m**

Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) rent arrears by March 2020 (£3.41m increase from 2012)

**38,557**

Residents fed by the Westend Foodbank April to Dec 2020

**35,872**

Residents on Universal Credit – **12,840 more on Universal Credit a 56% increase** between Mar 2020 & Nov 2020

## Known responses in 2019-20 \*

**3,745**

cases of homelessness prevented

**22,920**

residents helped to secure £28.6m of welfare benefits

**3,853**

residents received debt advice

**3,779**

awards for discretionary funding (Crisis Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments & Supporting Independence Scheme)

**69,199**

visits to Active Inclusion Service website pages

**50**

YHN evictions (75% decrease since 2008)

**74%\***



652 instances of people found rough sleeping April 2020 to Jan 2021 (2,462 instances June 2019 to Mar 2020)

# Helping to make Newcastle a fair city – some of what's happened since the last Financial Inclusion Group



- Newcastle received the [World Habitat Awards 2020](#) Gold Award for our homelessness prevention work – over 24,000 households prevented from becoming homeless since 2014
- Newcastle City Council & YHN leading an approach of having no evictions into homelessness by reviewing & renewing the Sustaining Tenancies guidance
- Preparing for the introduction of the Breathing Space regulations, the Council has a dual role as both a creditor & provider of regulated debt advice & support
- Newcastle City Council and Crisis partnership to end homelessness
- Motion to Council – access to food is a right
- Work with West End Foodbank to support people using the foodbank to access advice & support to help address issues relating to money & or housing





- Whilst many of the structural causes of child poverty are outside the control of the Council & local organisations there are opportunities to build on existing good practice, improve our identification of families who need support before they reach crisis point & improve how organisations work together. Our long-term aims are to:
  - Improve our understanding of child poverty levels & the experiences of families living in poverty to help better target support
  - Support families to maximise household income, tackle problem debt & to have suitable & sustainable homes, before problems reach crisis point
  - Develop measures to show the impact we are having on child poverty
  - Improve the coordination of responses to child poverty, considering whether & how the work of existing partnerships could better link together
  - Work with the North East Child Poverty Commission to make Newcastle an area of good practice
  - Work with other local authorities & organisations across the region to identify good practice & share learning

## Prevention – supply

- YHN 27,000 homes, 75+ Support & Progression, Financial Inclusion Team
- Money Matters – 5
- Welfare Rights – 20
- Multidisciplinary Team – 5
- Floating support
- CTV preventative outreach partnership with JCP
- Private Rented Service
- LAASLOs – 2

## Relief – supply

Major issue daily headroom to respond to crisis demand

- City Road drop in
- 779 supported accommodation rooms
- 600+ staff
- Cherry Tree View
- Housing First
- Complex needs / Dual diagnosis – 4 staff

## Advice & advocacy support

- Faith & community groups
- Crisis Skylight – 56 staff
- Shelter – 17 staff

## Homelessness demand assessment – 7 HPOS

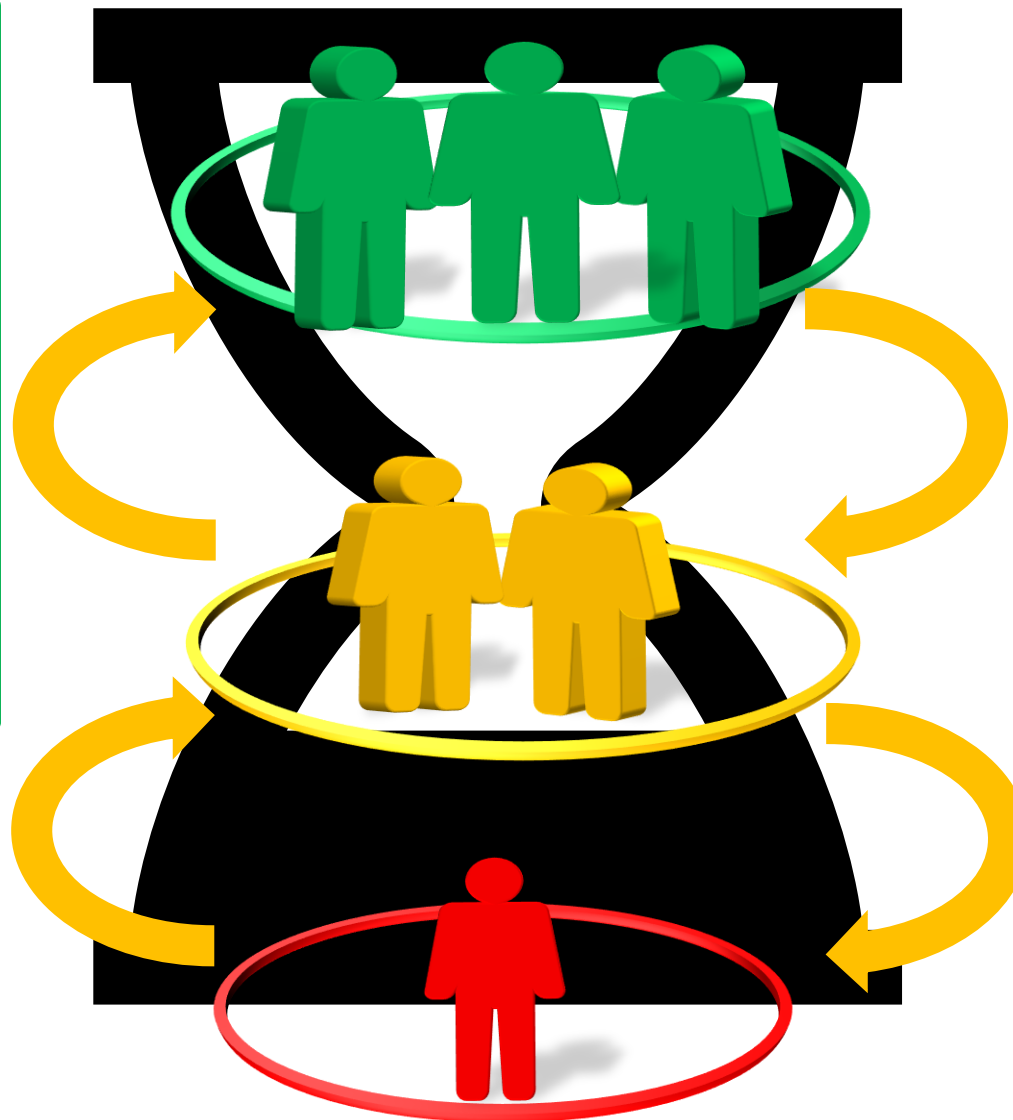
3 Seniors, 8 rough sleeping outreach workers & Rough Sleeping Coordinator

## Infrastructure support

- Active Inclusion Unit 13, NCC Commissioning 3, Crisis 3

## Homelessness & health related provision

- Joseph Cowan Healthcare Centre
- CNTW Gateshead/Newcastle Homeless Service (4 CPN's)
- Newcastle Treatment & Recovery (NTaR) – including Plummer Court / Harm min outreach worker





# Our work to promote financial inclusion – ongoing service delivery throughout lockdown



|  | 2019-20     | Q1 2020-21      | Q2 2020-21      | Q3 2020-21      |  |
|--|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>1. Maximise income &amp; respond to the welfare reforms</b>   |             |                 |                 |                 |  |
| Clients advised  | 23,198      | 4,521           | 5,794           | 4,543           |  |
| Benefit gains  | £28,991,470 | £6,894,439      | £6,737,120      | £6,524,969      |  |
| Digital skills courses (sessions / people attended)  | 77/412      | No sessions ran | No sessions ran | No sessions ran |  |
| CAN Help to Claim Service – Digital assistance with UC claims  | 1,157       | 266             | 327             | 281             |  |
| <b>2. Support residents to manage their money, increase financial resilience &amp; reduce harmful debt</b> |             |                 |                 |                 |  |
| Clients advised  | 3,853       | 493             | 661             | 763             |  |
| Debts written off  | £1,365,510  | £252,214        | £10,042         | £101,053        |  |
| <b>3. Support residents to train, gain &amp; remain in employment</b>                                      |             |                 |                 |                 |  |
| Residents supported into employment, voluntary work or apprenticeships                                     | 329         | 52              | 37              | 97              |  |

# Our work to promote financial inclusion – ongoing service delivery throughout lockdown



|   | 2019-20 | Q1 2020-21 | Q2 2020-21 | Q3 2020-21 |  |
|---|---------|------------|------------|------------|--|
| <b>4. Promotion of affordable credit as an alternative to high interest credit or loan sharks</b> |         |            |            |            |  |
| Moneywise Credit Union – number of members across their common bond area                          | 10,590  | 9,552      | 8,879      | 9,189      |  |
| Loans granted   | 2,224   | 293        | 355        | 626        |  |
| <b>5. Reduce fuel poverty</b>   |         |            |            |            |  |
| Energy Services – referrals received  | 588     | 119        | 98         | 88         |  |
| CAN – clients advised   | 1,285   | 134        | 185        | 208        |  |
| <b>6. Tackle food poverty</b>   |         |            |            |            |  |
| West End Foodbank – people fed  | 20,441  | 15,684     | 10,548     | 12,325     |  |



## **Newcastle Advice Compact** – meets monthly

Next meeting: 21 April 2021

## **Financial Inclusion Group seminar** – meets quarterly

Next seminar: 10 June 2021

## **Homelessness Prevention Forum** – meets quarterly

Next meeting: 9 June 2021

## **Newcastle Food Poverty Network** – meets bi monthly

Next meeting: 19 April 2021

For more information about financial inclusion, or to receive our Active Inclusion Newcastle information updates, email: [financial.inclusion@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:financial.inclusion@newcastle.gov.uk)



# **Financial Inclusion Group: Collaborative working to mitigate the impact of child poverty**

**25 March 2021**



# Reminder of the scale of the challenge of child poverty in Newcastle



Newcastle has experienced the **2<sup>nd</sup> highest increase in child poverty of any local authority area** (from 28.2% in 2014-15 to 39.2% in 2018-19), with Middlesbrough experiencing the highest increase



Between April & December 2020, **Newcastle West End Foodbank supported 38,557 residents, of which 15,720 were children**



The October 2020 school census shows that **14,429 pupils (35.1%) were known to be eligible for free school meals**; an increase of 1,306 since January 2020



In November 2020, **38% of the households in receipt of Universal Credit in Newcastle had dependant children**

The previous presentation has described some of our responses to this, which we hope to **build on through further collaborative working**





## **Essential components of collaborative working to mitigate the impact of child poverty**



# Having leadership, knowledge & understanding



**Leadership that shows Newcastle wants to end child poverty** – supported by statements, decisions & actions that demonstrate local commitment & national lobbying



**Knowing the families who are affected** by child poverty in Newcastle (& who are at risk of being affected)



**Understanding the reasons why** families are affected by child poverty in Newcastle & what could help them



**Knowing who to contact** who can help families by providing relevant services & support

# Providing services & support that are needed & accepted



**Targeting services & support** towards families affected by child poverty in Newcastle – e.g. Newcastle City Council’s work to ensure that families with children with special educational needs or a disability are offered a welfare benefits check, through which 5,083 families have received £18,646,617 in additional income between 1 April 2013 & 30 September 2020



**Being trusted by the families** who are affected so that the relevant services & support can engage with them, both to understand their situations & to help them



**Having systematic strong working relationships** between relevant services & organisations (that aren’t just based on individuals), to help support to be provided timely & effectively – e.g. a Welfare Rights Officer being colocated with Early Help



**Demonstrating the impact** of our responses to families who are affected by child poverty in Newcastle







**What a place needs to have to support collaborative working to mitigate the impact of child poverty**





**Specialist advice** to help families to carry out some of the essential functions that relate to their money, for example to:

- make welfare benefit claims, appeals & renewals
- reduce expenditure to maximise household budgets
- manage debt through negotiating with creditors, agreeing repayment plans & writing off unaffordable debt



**Financial support** to help families to cope with changes or difficult circumstances, for example:

- [Crisis Support Scheme](#)
- [Supporting Independence Scheme](#)
- [Discretionary Housing Payments](#)
- charitable grants & other flexible local sources

# Support for frontline staff & volunteers



**Information resources & workforce development opportunities** to help multi-agency staff & volunteers to know how to identify & respond to issues related to child poverty



**Partnership arrangements** to support multi-agency staff & volunteers to get to know each other, work together, & raise issues & ideas

# Support for families to contribute their insights



**Ways for families to contribute their experiences & ideas**, so that their insights strengthen our collective understanding of the issues & the effectiveness of our responses



# Flexibility to adapt our responses to the issues raised



**Identification of & consideration given to** where services & support don't respond to families' needs & how improvements could be made, such as identifying gaps between the support provided & creating opportunities for better integration



**A flexible approach to providing support** that can adapt to local experiences & the frequent changes to national policies, organisations & families' circumstances



## **Options to build on existing collaborative working to mitigate the impact of child poverty in Newcastle**



# Options to build on existing collaborative working



**Add to or adapt existing workforce development materials & information resources** to support multi-agency staff, volunteers & families to identify & mitigate the impact of child poverty



**Target the above support** to specific groups of staff, volunteers & / or families

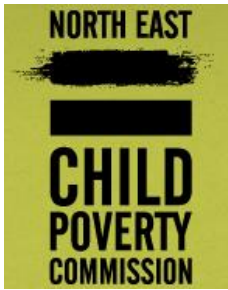


**Pilot strengthened partnership arrangements** in a specific geographical area, in specific settings, between a group of services / organisations, or around a specific theme



**Develop flexible sources of support for families** to test meeting new or previously unmet needs (dependent on additional funding or existing sources being adapted)





# Holiday Activities and Food programme

- **Holiday Activities & Food programme (HAF)**

- 2020 and 2019: £9million across small number of areas (including Newcastle)
- 2021: £220million across whole of England

- **2021: £1.7million for Newcastle**

- To provide free, high quality, fun, enriching activities and nutritious food




# Why focus on HAF?

- **Timely:**
  - FSM numbers rising, as well as those struggling but not FSM eligible
- **Positive investment in children, young people and families**
- **Year round and long-term?**
- **Example of how existing collaborative work could be built on:**
  - 7,000 children and young people reached via 70 delivery partners in Newcastle in 2019

# Maximising HAF opportunity in Newcastle

## How do we maximise this opportunity?

- Building on existing collaborative working / partnerships
- Growing the number of families being reached by financial inclusion support
- Ensuring financial inclusion work across the city promotes the HAF offer
- Making every contact with a family count



And how do we do all this in an inclusive, non-stigmatising way?

# Example of collaborative working to mitigate the impact of child poverty in practice



## Active Inclusion multidisciplinary team providing proactive preventative advice & support



# Family R: Background & identification



- A couple with 5 children aged between 5 months & 16 years old
- They live in an overcrowded **3 bedroom housing association tenancy**, which they are unable to move from due to rent arrears
- They were identified through the **corporate debt review** as they had Council Tax arrears, a Housing Benefit overpayment & rent arrears



- The family's debts totalled **£2,390.61 of priority debts** & **£16,367.47 of non-priority debts** & they had been contacted by an enforcement agent (bailiff)
- Their 8 year old child has allergies & eczema & their baby had been in hospital with kidney problems, so the team felt they **may be entitled to Disability Living Allowance** (DLA)
- During their screening, the team also identified that the family may benefit from an **Early Help Plan**

# Family R: Establishing & ongoing contact



- From 6 November 2019 the team sent the family **2 letters** & made **4 telephone calls** & an **unannounced home visit**
- On 13 December 2019 the father in the family, Mr R, contacted the team **requesting support with debt**
- The team have **continued to work with the family during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as their situation has continued to change**, including when Mr R lost his job & was initially sent home on nil pay rather than being furloughed, which adversely impacted their welfare benefit entitlement

# Family R's priorities & perceptions of their situation



*I needed some support regarding my debts & wanted to know how you can help me*

*We have a lot of debts & do not understand the system*

*I'm worried that a bailiff might suddenly come to my house & that I might lose my home*

*Managing Universal Credit online is difficult*

*Once we can sort out the debts, it will be easier to budget*

*This debt is causing stress to me & my wife*

*My wife went to the jobcentre to inform them of her pregnancy. They told her we had to claim Universal Credit & this resulted in being benefit capped*

*I feel there is lack of communication between different sections / departments*


*The worries about debt has an impact on my wellbeing & makes me stressed*

# Family R: Shorter term mitigation




The multidisciplinary team helped the family to **reduce their expenditure** by:


 **Negotiating an affordable repayment plan for rent arrears** with their landlord

 Liaising with Northumbria Water to move them onto the WaterSure scheme, **capping their water bills** at £35 per month (more than halving their previous charge)

 **Successfully applying for a bed** from the Gregg's Trust

The multidisciplinary team helped the family to **manage their expenditure requirements & budget** by:

 Liaising with the Council Tax department to **set up a direct debit to repay the amount they owed**

 Working with the Department for Work & Pensions to **set up Housing Benefit overpayment repayments** & ensure no further money is owed

 **Setting up a £20 monthly repayment** for a parking fine

The family have **maintained all of the payment arrangements** since they've been set up

# Supporting family R to improve their situation in the longer term



The multidisciplinary team helped the family to **increase their income** by:



**Successfully applying for DLA** for their baby, which **removed the benefit cap**, & for the **disabled child & carer's elements of Universal Credit**, all of which have **increased the family's annual income by £11,544.52** (plus a backdated payment of £358.20). This included updating the Universal Credit journal, which they were struggling to do



Applying to the Carers Wellbeing Fund which **awarded £350 to pay for driving lessons** for Mrs R, improving her employability & making it easier for her to care for their youngest child

The multidisciplinary team helped the family with **parenting issues** by:



**Liaising with the children's school about attendance concerns** & supporting the family to understand their commitments around schooling. The school reported **improved attendance** in the autumn term (before the return to remote learning due to the pandemic)



**Supporting the family to understand their commitments around & arrangements for taking the children to medical appointments**, following concerns about non-attendance raised by a nurse through the Early Help Plan process



# Next steps & family R's perceptions of their situation following advice & support



- More than 15 months on from the multidisciplinary team establishing contact with the family, the team are **continuing to work with them** to support them to **understand & manage their changing circumstances** & to have the **foundations for a stable life**. This includes **identifying more debts as the family's trust in the team grows**
- Only once the team & the family **collectively determine that their situation has stabilised** will the case be closed. At that point, the team will capture the family's perceptions of their situation following the advice & support provided. Their youngest child's DLA award is due for renewal in 2022 & it's unlikely that a renewal will be successful, which may mean that they become subject to the benefit cap again, decreasing their income once more

*To be continued ...*

For more information



Newcastle City Council website:

[www.newcastle.gov.uk/financialinclusionforprofessionals](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/financialinclusionforprofessionals)

North East Child Poverty Commission website:

<https://nechildpoverty.org.uk>

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# Group discussion questions



-  1. What are your reflections on what we've presented as **essential components of collaborative working to mitigate the impact of child poverty**? What would you add, change or disagree with, & what would help to put them into practice?
-  2. Considering **what a place needs to have to support collaborative working to mitigate the impact of child poverty**, what are your reflections on what we already have in Newcastle? What do you think works & what do we need to strengthen & / or add, including why?
-  3. Would you like to follow up any of the **potential options to strengthen collaborative working**? If so, which ones & how? What ideas would you like to add to this list that you think could be achieved & would contribute to mitigating the impact of child poverty in Newcastle?

