

Review of Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Services in Edinburgh

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Review of Welfare Rights and Debt Advice Services

Rocket Science commissioned by the Edinburgh Partnership to:

- Engage with providers, funders and stakeholders
- Map the provision of welfare rights and debt advice in Edinburgh, in order to understand the need and demand
- Review of good practice
- Propose recommendations for a common approach in Edinburgh



The vision for services

Deliver a more coordinated approach to planning services

Agree and implement a **common Edinburgh approach**

Ensure that services are:

- more **accessible** to residents in need of support
- **targeted to those in greatest need** including specific groups
- more **co-ordinated** and avoid duplication
- highest **quality**
- **consistent** across the city



THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP

Engagement Process

Mapping exercise: 85 service providers contacted

- 17 gave information that they did not deliver services
- 33 did not respond to the emails
- 35 were sent mapping sheets and 25 returned completed for 31 services

Stakeholder input

- 38 people from 24 services/ organisations interviewed
- 2 Network of Network events
- Consensus building workshop

Presentation and discussion with Edinburgh Partnership Board to finalise the report





Mapping the provision of welfare rights and debt advice in Edinburgh

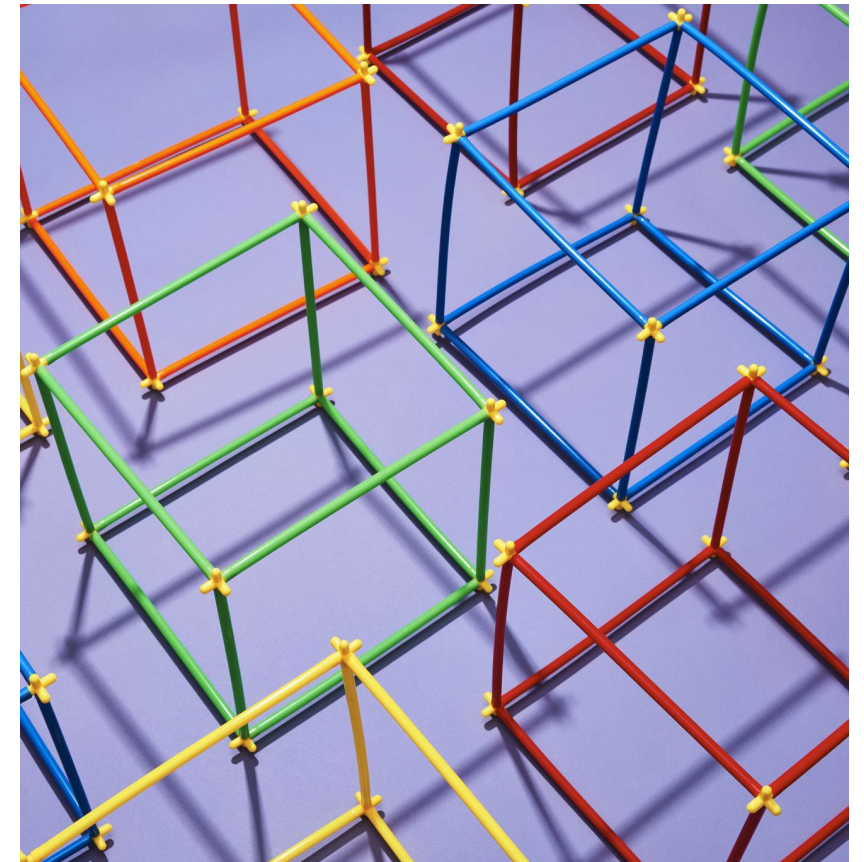
31 services in Edinburgh

Main providers:

- The City of Edinburgh Council Advice Shop
- CHAI (Community Help and Advice Initiative)
- Citizens Advice Edinburgh
- Granton Information Centre

Total of 28,194 services user in the last year

Equates to approximately 5% of the population of Edinburgh



Summary of Key Findings

Landscape complex, fragmented and disconnected

Gaps in particular settings and services, but not city wide

Caseloads are high and getting more complex

Some services have had to restrict services or stand-down parts of projects as a result

Summary of some of the key aspects

- Funding mainly short term and competitive
 - Impact: many services and their staff feel insecure
 - Spend a lot of time trying to secure funding and retain staff
- Workforce issues: recruitment, training and supervision, and retention
- Clear links between any welfare rights and debt advice services and employability services
 - creating well supported, progressive routes to help individuals and their households to move out of poverty



Review of Good Practice

Deliver through a mix of channels: face-to-face, by phone and online

Promote services through a range of different channels, and actively monitor who engages with their services

Advice services should be flexible and able to adapt to every different client's needs

Sites for co-location should be chosen carefully, with client preferences and needs in mind

Build clients' confidence and capability to tackle issues effectively themselves



Recommendations

STRATEGY - A shared strategy for welfare rights and debt advice services

BRANDING and ACCESS - A unified brand and access point for services

OUTCOMES AND DATA – A coherent approach to collecting and sharing data about a shared set of outcomes across services

UNDERSTANDING NEED and DEMAND - Design services which meet the needs of people and are accessible to them where and when they need them through co-design with communities and use of data

QUALITY – Develop a consistent set of standards for commissioned services so that people who access services experience the same high standard of advice across Edinburgh

WORKFORCE - A workforce plan for welfare rights and debt advisors with shared training and wellbeing resources, and a new route into welfare rights employment / volunteering opportunities for those with lived experiences

EARLY INTERVENTION - Explore options for proactive intervention and early identification of financial issues

Implementation

Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3



CITIZEN LED

SERVICE

CULTURE



STRATEGY

- Create a **Strategy Group** for implementation LOIP Priority 1
 - Develops and drives the implementation of a strategy based on the Review
 - Supports the creation of a strong network of providers and funders to share learning and drive good practice
 - Leads a process of engagement to attract the support of key stakeholders by understanding how it can contribute to a range of objectives around debt, poverty, health and employment
 - Drives collaboration through standards, workforce development, collaborative commissioning and shared indicators of performance for the service as a whole
- Supported by the Income Maximisation and Poverty Group



BRANDING and ACCESS

A unified brand and access point for services in Edinburgh

- A network of services to share resources and training
- Advice services should be commissioned under a unified “advice for Edinburgh” brand
- Explore feasibility and option of a single number and access point for advice services in Edinburgh (clients triaged to generalised service before being connected into specialist advice)



OUTCOMES AND DATA

A **coherent approach** to **collecting and sharing data** about a **shared set of outcomes** across services

- Setting targets and outcomes at an overall Edinburgh level to incentivise **collaboration** and referral across services
- Shared targets across services and include other indicators to demonstrate **collective impact** of services
- **More coherent** monitoring and evaluation would allow us to assess how priority groups are being supported



UNDERSTANDING NEED and DEMAND

Design services which meet the needs of people and are accessible to them where and when they need them through **co-design with communities and use of data**

- **Co-production** and **co-design** of services with those who access them, and those who currently do not access them, to understand local need and barriers to access
- Centralised analysis of data: to understand need and demand, to inform design of services
- Design person-centred services
 - Holistic
 - Reduce the need for clients to re-tell their story
 - Seamless handovers between services
- **A mix of universal services, targeted outreach** in communities and **specialist services**, with local services delivered within the **20-minute neighbourhood plan**
- Pilot work with a test and learn approach



QUALITY

Develop a **consistent set of standards** for commissioned services so that people who access services experience the **same high standard** of advice across Edinburgh

- Clients access the **same standard of experience** and access to **high quality** advice delivered through **compassionate interactions** which build **trust and feelings of safety**
- A **client-centred charter of quality standards** should be co-designed with clients. The SNSIAP should form part of a wider set of standards, and support smaller organisations to achieve these
- Consistent access to translation and interpreters



WORKFORCE

A **workforce plan** for welfare rights and debt advisors with **shared training and wellbeing resources**, and a **new route** into welfare rights **volunteering/employment opportunities for those with lived experience**

- Centralised resources for welfare rights advisors and debt service providers:
 - Shared recruitment, training and information
 - Peer support
 - Dedicated wellbeing initiative
- Build in time and resource to funding for staff terms and conditions, training and support to ensure staff wellbeing and benefits are on par with public sector terms and conditions
- Work with employability services to develop a client to welfare rights adviser volunteering/employment pathway, valuing lived experience of accessing welfare rights and debt advice

EARLY INTERVENTION

Proactive intervention and early identification of financial issues:

- Identify opportunities for proactive and early intervention, taking a **whole system** and **life course approach**
- Identify data held in public systems which can act as an **early warning system** to allow people to be diverted into debt and welfare rights advice. Similarly, areas of high **unclaimed amounts of benefits** can be identified to target specific benefits.
- Develop a **financial education and capability offer** which can be provided as part of ongoing support to people who access services

Proposed collaboration model

**Supporting the
creation of a
strong network
between service
providers**



Thank you

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Any questions or thoughts

