

ITEM No ...6.....

REPORT TO: CITY GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 4 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT ON: DUNDEE ADVICE STRATEGY UPDATE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

REPORT NO: 355-2023

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is further to Report No 164-2022 which was submitted to Policy and Resources Committee on 27 June 2022 and gives an update on the progress of the advice strategy in Dundee covering the work of Dundee City Council Advice Services (DCAS), Dundee CAB (CAB), Brooksbank Centre and Services (Brooksbank), SCARF and Aberlour. This report covers operational developments and, where available, the latest documented outputs and outcomes for each area of work. It also demonstrates how these interventions have mitigated some of the worst impacts of the cost-of-living crisis for those with the least financial resources living in Dundee.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended the Committee notes:

- a) the Dundee Advice strategy annual update for 2023;
- b) over £15.1 million of financial gains for clients secured by Dundee Advice Strategy Partners; and
- c) the initial draft advice strategy actions proposed for 2024 as set out in section 5 of the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The work set out within the action plan may generate reports and further actions that could have direct financial implications for the Council. As and when required, such reports will be considered by the appropriate Committee(s). Additional external funding will also be sought as required.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Advice Strategy for Dundee

Dundee continues to face significant challenges related to disproportionately high levels of deprivation as underlined in the Fairness and Local Child Poverty Action Plan Report (162-2023). This means increased levels of income inequality, poverty and social exclusion.

However, in response to this Dundee City Council is still setting an ambitious goal of striving to match the Scottish Government's overall national target of reducing child poverty to less than 10% of children living in relative poverty. There is a long way to go however front line advice work can help to achieve this aim, especially through concerted partnership working.

Advice agencies in Dundee continue to see customers that present with insufficient income, face lower life expectancy and the prospect of higher household living costs. It is therefore essential that mitigation services are in place to assist individuals to access the supports that they require. However, these services need to

- 1) be responsive to customer need;
- 2) reduce the stigma often associated with seeking advice; and
- 3) prove to offer efficiency and value for money in the face of financial pressures.

Since the advice strategy was conceived those partner agencies signed up to it in Dundee have strengthened their links to other networks. Front line services have been especially proactive in looking to deliver services in new and innovative ways that support the 3 requirements listed above.

In the last year the 4 separate organisations providing advice in Dundee (DCAS, Brooksbank CAB and SCARF) have coordinated delivery of advice in a mixed economy, (i.e. a mixture of both internal and external advice services) and have worked together for better effect in relation to the following areas of work as defined by the original business plan objectives agreed between the partners and linked directly to the City Plan, Council Plan and the Dundee Fairness Strategy. Since then we have seen Aberlour join as one of the parties and are currently in the process of negotiating with Hillcrest and Dundee Law Centre as possible future partners to the strategy.

4.2 2022/23 Income Maximisation outputs reported by the three main benefits and debt agencies, were as follows: Council Advice Services (£10,056,681), Brooksbank Centre and Services (£3,395,019), Dundee Citizens Advice Bureau (£1,699,282). In total the three main agencies managed to secure £15,144,301 in gains for the citizens of Dundee.

In terms of debt rescheduling, outputs reported by the three main benefits and debt agencies, were as follows: Council Advice Services (£2,599,156), Brooksbank Centre and Services (£1,508,535). Dundee Citizens Advice Bureau (£1,967,029). In total the three main agencies managed a total debt figure of £ 6,074,720 in 2022/23.

4.3 **Areas of Priority**

In 2022/23, the main organisations undertook the following interventions under the advice strategy's main priority areas. The Advice Strategy for Dundee Report (164-2022) divided these into the following areas:

- Children and Families;
- Fair Work and Enterprise;
- Health, Care and Wellbeing;
- Community Safety and justice;
- Building Stronger Communities;
- Fairness;
- Prevention/Early Intervention; and
- Workplace Development.

This section of the report will give an update on developments in each of these areas to date. Note that many of the developments or initiatives are crosscutting and can have a positive impact on several different areas. For example, the partners' work in Linlathen and in GP surgeries will also have a significant impact in the area of children and families and tackling child poverty. In such cases we have picked the area closest to the prime function of the work undertaken.

4.4 **Children and Families (1)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.5 **Morgan Academy Schools Project**

Within the context of the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2022-2026) Council Advice Services' Connect Team and Morgan Academy aimed to develop a more integrated and effective service offer to maximise support available to families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs. An advice and support service is now being offered to Morgan Academy families and the families of Morgan Academy cluster of associated primary schools.

The project, a test of change for 1 year, aims to provide holistic family support in an accessible setting where trusted relationships already exist.

This is a co-location model with a dedicated member of the Connect Team operating as a point of contact for Morgan Academy support staff, based within the school throughout the week.

Launched in late June 2023 just as the school was breaking for summer, the co-located officer has nevertheless supported 65 families in that time (19 weeks), making 58 benefit applications and successfully generating £152,421 in financial gains for families. The intention is to replicate this test of change in a second school, utilising budget investment monies (Report No. 161-2023) to tackle social inequalities and address child poverty, again for a period of 1 year.

4.6 **Aberlour's Tayside Poverty Pilot**

Aberlour Childcare Trust, one of Scotland's largest children's charities, began this project in December 2021, providing support, access to money advice and to a Debt Relief fund to alleviate the pressure of problematic debts for families in Dundee. Working in partnership with key advice agencies, a dedicated referral pathway into Welfare Rights, Brooksbank Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau was created. Most families are referred for income maximisation work and debt advice. Aberlour has provided 22 families access to the Debt Relief Fund totaling £78,200.00, supporting 79 people within those households. The average application for debt relief is £3553.00 per household. Aberlour have made payments to different debts for the families, but public debts have dominated the amounts settled. Public debt constitutes 85.1% of the total debts across all payments made.

As a result of this pilot and Aberlour's investment in financial co-ordinators to work across Tayside, it was agreed by existing advice partners to invite Aberlour in as a new partner to the Advice Strategy.

4.7 **NHS Tayside Financial Inclusion Pathway (Midwifery and Health Visiting Services)**

Established in 2021, this pathway has taken time to embed within NHS Tayside. Concentrating on the first 1000 days of a child's development, the service aims to make financial referrals from Midwives and Health Visitors part of their normal work role. They now ask a financial question of new mothers, obtain consent and make straightforward referrals directly to Council Advice Services for income maximisation and new benefit claims.

Managed by one member of staff in the Connect Team this process saw a huge increase in effectiveness in 2022-23 with 251 referrals and gains of £805,000 for new mothers.

4.8 **Fair Work and Enterprise (2)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.9 **Child Poverty Pathfinder Support**

Brooksbank's role as the central hosting venue for the operational work connected with the Linlathen area Child Poverty Pathfinder has expanded to include a diverse range of agencies providing on-site support to those struggling with the cost of living. This front facing, face to face service has grown through word of mouth and the work of the main agencies promoting access to it as a multi-agency venue offering access to employability advice. However, a large part of the work in preparing customers to seek employment involves traditional advice interventions.

In relation to advice provision, Brooksbank's money advisers offer detailed benefits and debt advice. The Council's DEEAP energy team offer energy efficiency advice to households. Dundee Citizens Advice Bureau offer generalist advice to supplement the other work and fill in the gaps. Having traditional, experienced advisers of all disciplines in place to support the Pathfinder's link worker support staff has greatly increased the project's scope and reported gains for customers.

Council Advice Services designed the recording method by which referrals made, gains, barriers reported and support needed was to be gathered. The period from September 2022 to

date has generated the following referrals for families showing the breadth of support being offered.

Referrals Made

		%
Action to Industry	3	0%
Adult	44	5%
Better Off Calculation (moving into work)	159	18%
College	15	2%
Department for Work and Pensions	100	11%
Enable Scotland	8	1%
Food Bank	18	2%
Fuel Bank	82	9%
Fuel Well	11	1%
Home Heating Support Fund	108	12%
Housing	57	6%
Jobs	31	3%
Nurse	0	0%
Occupational Therapy	3	0%
Parental Employment Support	67	7%
Social Security Scotland	63	7%
Welfare Rights	99	11%
Youth Employability Service	37	4%
Total	905	

Gains for the project sit at £605,636 as at 11/11/2023. The collaborative approach by the advice services partners has been one which we believe has benefitted the Pathfinder in that there has been enough work for all agencies to come together and manage efficiently and seamlessly.

4.10 **Health, Care and Wellbeing (3)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.11 **Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships progress (Co-location of welfare rights advisers in GP practice)**

Since 2015 Dundee has led the development of the Welfare Advice and Health Partnership model in Scotland, offering stigma free advice in GP surgeries across Dundee and culminating in a gold Chairperson's Cosla Award in 2017. Since the start of the model being adopted by Council Advice Services in Dundee it has been undertaken with the intention of widening the model to include the voluntary advice sector agencies. Brooksbank have been a trusted partner since the start and we intend to widen this to include Dundee Citizens Advice Bureau going forward into 2024.

Through the Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships 'Test and Learn Programme (the Programme) Scottish Government has provided additional funding to enable Welfare Rights Advisors to provide access to advice services in 150 GP Practices in some of the most socially and economically deprived communities in Scotland. Dundee received funding to expand the model in the city, resulting in the number increasing from 8 GP practices to 11. Nationally over 10,000 individuals have been able to access advice via their GP with national data showing that 89% of those individuals had never previously sought advice, a third have a household

income of less than £10,000, almost three quarters live in rented accommodation and a third live in families with children.

Just over a third sought advice because they were unable to cope financially and about a third because they were unable to work for health reasons. Staff in over 80% of participating GP Practices said that having a Welfare Rights Advisor as part of the team helped them to offer wider support to meet patients' needs. GP's have stated that this allows them to spend more time on clinical matters:

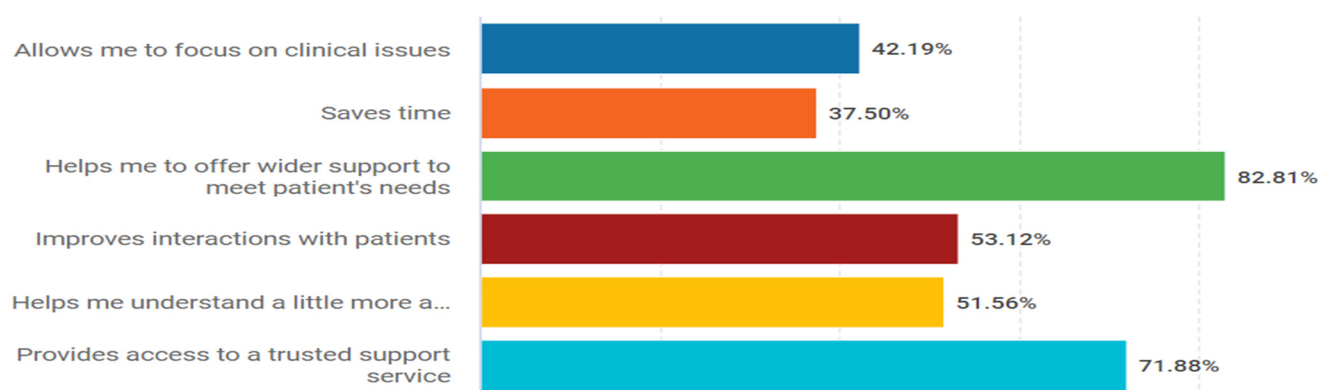


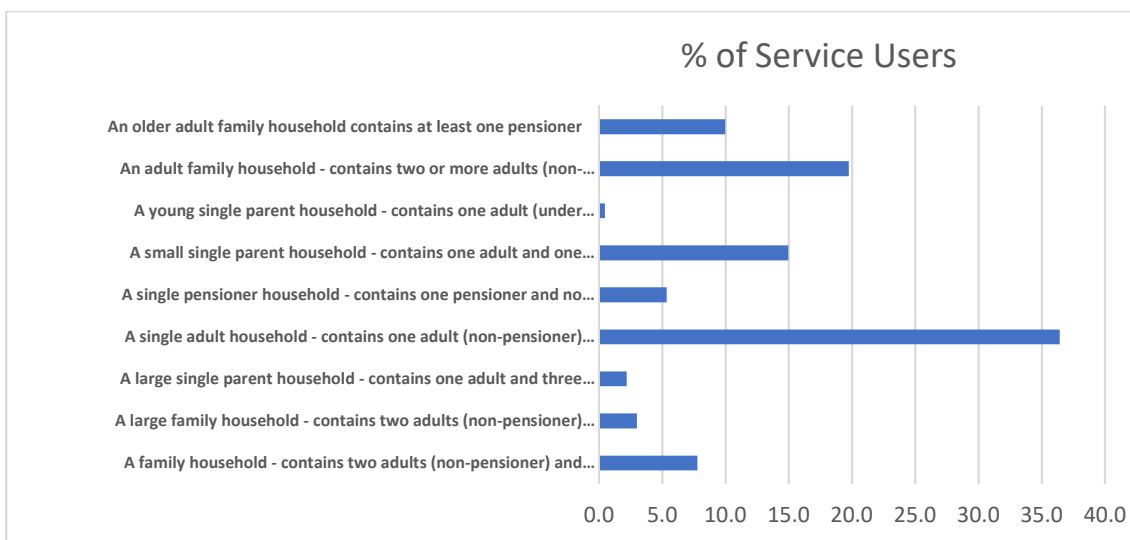
Figure One: Ways having a Welfare Rights Advisor in the practice helps team members in their role. Source The Improvement Service November 2023.

In Dundee some of the recent comments from the GP practices included

“For vulnerable patients e.g., poor literacy/education/access to technology having an advisor based in the building is a fantastic asset. We hugely value our embedded worker. He is a brilliant addition to our team and hugely helpful for our most vulnerable patients.”

“Patients and staff have great benefit. The help to patients and staff is great and Practice would not be able to manage this without a Welfare Advisor”

The breakdown of the types of customers accessing advice in Primary Care is also interesting as the proportion of families with children appear to be 5% higher across the country compared to traditional advice approaches. The Improvement Service see this as statistically significant given the breadth of data they currently collect from the 32 local authorities providing advice when compared to the Welfare Advice and Heath Partnership data which takes in 180 GP practices in Scotland with a Welfare Rights Adviser.



In Dundee the 11 practices currently offer this service to 72,989 patients. In the 12 months from April 2022-March 2023 the Partnership saw 1168 patients and claimed additional income of £2,042,254 for them.

4.12 **Carseview Welfare Service**

Brooksbank's Carseview Welfare Service is now being funded directly by the Scottish Government until March 2025, through £1m funding nationally to increase advice in accessible settings. In-patients and those supported by the Crisis Team can receive advice in hospital and in the community. The majority of patients assisted through the Welfare Service reside in Dundee, and the total of financial gains raised through the Project, in its first two years, was given as £1,102,387.79 in June 2023.

4.13 **Macmillan Welfare Benefits Service**

The Macmillan Welfare Benefits Service operates within Council Advice Services' Welfare Rights Team and aims to offer income maximisation and money advice to those affected by cancer and their families. In the 12 months from April 2022 - March 2023 the service helped more than 1125 patients, carers and family member across the city. By co-locating in health settings in Ninewells and elsewhere, advisers from Council Advice Services, part funded by Macmillan Cancer Support, have put £2,647,455 into the pockets of their service users as well as working with partners in Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership's Improving the Cancer Journey Project. This partnership arrangement ensures that those affected by cancer are offered a full holistic service. Advice strategy partners are fully aware of the service and refer in regularly where they identify those affected by cancer.

4.14 **Community Safety and Justice (4)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.15 **Expanded co-ordinated energy advice provision**

Energy advice provision expanded in Dundee following the highly successful 3rd iteration of Fuel Well Dundee scheme last winter. That scheme, operated by Council Advice Services, delivered vouchers to 10,800 households totalling £1,060,000 overall. Additional work with individual households flowed from those initial applications. Data showed a need to tackle

- higher energy costs due to increase in the energy price cap
- increased numbers of applicants struggling with inadequate heating systems; and
- increased numbers of applicants complaining of poor insulation and often drafty properties.

It also showed that 3 times as many households were facing problems maintaining an energy supply at their property in 2022/23 (6% of applicants) compared to the first Fuel Well scheme in 2020/21 (1.8%). As a result, we are now working with advice sector partners to provide targeted support to those households and others in a similar situation.

A budget investment proposal of £105,000 agreed at Policy and Resources Committee on 12th June 2023 (Report No. 161-2023) sought to prioritise increasing energy cost issues emerging from Fuel Well Dundee data, tackle indebtedness and keep households on energy supply. Advice Sector partners are being encouraged to refer customers to this fund which is managed by DEEAP and seeks to tackle high level fuel indebtedness.

To mitigate against the issue of customers maintaining their energy supply DEEAP have also successfully started utilising the Fuel Bank Foundation scheme since January 2023. This scheme provides crisis support to households who have self-disconnected or are at risk of self-disconnection. Crisis support is designed to provide breathing space while the client accesses support to tackle the issues that have led to fuel crisis. Despite crisis support being limited to avoid dependency on the scheme, since the 1st January 2023 Council Officers have made 1496 applications over 44 weeks, resulting in £41,760 worth of payments to keep people on energy supply.

Additionally, Dundee Citizens Advice Bureau received funding from British Gas Energy Trust to provide fuel vouchers to customers alongside holistic welfare rights and energy advice. Customers needed to have a pre-payment meter, had to be in energy crisis and could access up to 3 vouchers per year.

SCARF have secured funding through the Energy Redress programme to support private let and homeowners with energy saving advice and measures to complement the work being done by DEEAP and CAB. Since April 2023 Scarf have supported over 600 households with energy efficiency advice, financial assistance, advocacy service and access to Scottish Government, Dundee City and Scarf home improvement programmes.

SCARF has supported Dundee households with over £28,000 worth of fuel debt write off since April 2023. The Scarf programme has been confirmed and is now under the banner of LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) which provides in-home advice and soft measures.

Dundee City Council working with SCARF to deliver the ECO4 programme has seen over £38,000 worth of home improvements being carried out on homes in the city in the last couple of months with estimated fuel bill saving of over £26,000. Scarf and Dundee city councils ECO4 programme should see homes in Dundee benefit from Energy Companies Obligations funding for years to come.

4.16 **Building Stronger Communities (5)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.17 **Community Localities Outreach Expansion**

Both Dundee CAB and Council Advice Services have identified outreach provision as major priorities in the coming year. In addition to the Primary Care venues across the city (staffed by Council Advice Services and Brooksbank) and the various cancer linked outreach venues attended by the Macmillan advisers, Connect have successfully re-established the service in 11 community venues across Dundee¹. Dundee CAB's current operational development plan has committed to review their current outreach provision and implement additional outreach where evidence of need exists, if funding and capacity allow.

4.18 **Investing in Communities Funding - Lifting Linlathen**

¹ <https://www.dundee.gov.uk/welfare-reform/connect-service>

Brooksbank Centre and Services are linked into the Council led Fairness Initiative, aiming to improve financial wellbeing of residents and address inequalities experienced by the local community. Linlathen was ranked 9th in Scotland's SIMD 2020 index and Brooksbank & Dundee City Council were successful in a partnership bid to the Scottish Government's Investing in Communities Fund (ICF), to deliver a three-year project, 'Lifting Linlathen'. The bid included salary costs for three full-time posts (1 Money Adviser, 1 Benefits Adviser and 1 Community Engagement Officer), allowing Brooksbank to target resources in the local area. This work links into several of the Advice Strategy priorities including Children and Family by tackling child Poverty and fairness as a way of addressing inequalities experienced in Linlathen.

4.19 **Fairness (6)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.20 **Gender Sensitive Services**

Advice strategy partners have focussed on strengthening ties with specialised gender support services such as Vice Versa (WRASAC) and with key organisations in Dundee who are working to support addicts (We Are with You, Integrated Substance Misuse Team SMS). The current partners are represented on a Commercial Sexual Exploitation working group as part of the Violence Against Women Partnership, feeding back to members that include Tayside Police, WRASAC, NHS and Housing Support. Approaches to co-location of services such as benefits advice and Scottish Welfare Fund representatives within Women's Aid and the newly established Women's Hub are already either established or are in the process of being established.

The partners' advisers have found that joint working approaches with support workers have led to increased customer engagement. Training needs have been identified and all partners are undertaking tailored programmes that will assist in the development of gender-sensitive approaches to future service planning.

Recently there has also been a concerted effort to strengthen and improve the No Recourse to Public Funds process for vulnerable individuals facing destitution who have no access to public funds because of restrictions due to their immigration status. Women and children in this situation are especially vulnerable to risk of harm whether due to domestic abuse or through the risk of commercial and sexual exploitation when people are dependent on someone else for their immigration status or income. We are looking to roll out a simpler process for all agencies in early 2024

4.21 **Older people Uptake Campaign**

Work has begun to identify and claim additional benefits for older people households in Dundee. A campaign led by Council Advice Services and Dundee CAB's Older Peoples Advice Service will play a critical role in publicising take up which started on a soft launch basis in October 2023. Initially work was undertaken to identify pensioner households who may be entitled. Data work internally within the Council has identified potential claimants across the city in 507 households.

4.22 **Prevention/Early Intervention (7)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.23 **Food Insecurity Developments: Trussell Trust Partnership**

In 2022 one of the gaps in provision identified by the advice strategy partners was the Menu for Change recommendations around food insecurity. Following input from Dundee Food Network and Faith In Community, the Trussell Trust invited services (including the advice strategy partners Council Advice Services, Dundee CAB and Brooksbank) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to support those attending Dundee & Angus Foodbank community

hub. This was to be done using the Cash First model, looking to provide welfare rights, benefits advice and/or income maximisation at the Dundee & Angus Foodbank Community Hub.

The invited Dundee advice partners have started working strategically and operationally together from July 2023. The initial model is due to run until June 2025, and together, the organisations involved will seek to unearth the roots of poverty as well as contribute towards overturning its existence in Dundee primarily –but not exclusively –via the provision of both emergency food as well as support in the areas of welfare rights, benefits advice and/or income maximisation on a co-located basis in Stobswell (Maryfield).

Similar to the Child Poverty Pathfinder in Linlathen at 4.9 above, we believe the existing Advice Strategy has benefited the ease by which the Trussell Trust Partnership has come together. All advice strategy partners have come on board seamlessly, again with no arguments over duplication of effort or competition and driven in part by a need to tackle a gap in provision identified in the original committee report (164-2022).

In addition, advice strategy partners have come together to offer training for Cash First Volunteers based at the Dundee & Angus Foodbank community hub and an iPad linking volunteers into advice from Council Advice Services has also been placed in situ at the venue for volunteers and customers to use as required,

Results since July appear to show small numbers of participants in the initial stages however in general those engaging are being assisted multiple issues around income maximisation, debt, energy and benefits advice. First quarter reports are being collated by the Trussell Trust at present, covering the period to October.

4.24 **Workplace Development (8)**

Under this priority the partners undertook the following new or expanded interventions:

4.25 **Advice Workers Forum**

Aberlour and Council Advice Services have reignited the Dundee Advice Workers Forum post Covid 19 to co-ordinate advice provision, identify local trends and identify areas of duplication in our work together, identify training needs and invite organisations to support efficient delivery of services. The forum also serves to invite benefit delivery agencies and Social Security Scotland have been in attendance at all meetings since the forum was restarted in late 2022. Attendance grows meeting by meeting and we hope to see our DWP partners attend in early 2023 following successful recent contact made.

4.26 **Aberlour Public Debt initiative**

Aberlour and Council Advice Services Welfare Rights Team are currently exploring consideration of systems change around families' accrual of public debt. This is supported by The Robertson Trust and Aberlour. Recently published research, commissioned by The Robertson Trust², highlighted that 86% of the problematic debt for families was public debt. Aberlour confirm that these figures are reflected through their work locally. Through the delivery of intensive family services, supporting families from early intervention to 'edge of care' with practical, emotional and therapeutic support the test of change considers whether financial support for families with complex needs is a valid form of support. Working closely with Welfare Rights and the Council's Corporate Debt Team and informed by the Fighting for Fairness commissioners we are looking to propose options for reviews and amendments to collection practices and systems change that more closely connects Council Advice Services with Corporate Debt and supports families with financial support when it's most needed.

4.27 **Trello Information Resource for staff**

² [Debt & Arrears in Scotland: Putting Money Owed to Public Bodies at the Forefront of the Cost-of-Living Crisis | The Robertson Trust](https://tinyurl.com/4dp4f6ua) Available at <https://tinyurl.com/4dp4f6ua>

Council Advice Services have been working with Faith In Community to provide an online resource for staff in Dundee looking to refer to the correct agency for customers' presenting issues. Whilst still in the early stages of development a list of helpful publicly available resources has been widely circulated on the Trello web platform to just under 100 staff across multiple organisations. The resources are currently being transferred onto a new Padlet online platform which will be released in 2024.

5.0 **Initial Draft Advice Strategy Actions proposed for 2024**

In relation to the coming year 2024, the advice partners will look to consolidate and strengthen the following existing models of service delivery in the advice strategy. These will be agreed with partners in the coming months, subject to any emerging issues connected with the cost of living crisis. Some examples of areas of work likely to be agreed include:

Consolidation and continuation of existing work already underway

- Foodbank co-location under the cash first Trussell Trust Partnership model will continue (4.23 above)
- Consistency of approach in energy advice from all agencies. Consolidation of all referral pathways to include more details on criteria, length of operation and impact. (4.15 above)
- Retention of our Welfare Advice Health Partnership model in the 11 GP surgeries in Dundee currently served. (4.11 above)
- Complete Pension Credit/Council Tax reduction take up campaign for 507 pensioner households identified. (4.21 above)

Expansion of current work or models

- Undertake a review of current debt advice protocols in the face of increased cost of living costs, especially around rent and mortgage costs
- Work has begun with Dundee's 4 Primary Care cluster groups as to whether other GP practices in Dundee wish to take up the Welfare Advice and Health Partnership model.
- Explore new models within GP surgeries that complement the WAHP model specifically:
 - A remote access model without physical co-location in practice
 - A model designed to assist GPs to manage Welfare benefits supporting information requests. (4.11 above)

Brand new or revised work or developments

- Produce a new fuel poverty strategy for Dundee in line with the Benefits and Advice Actions under the Fairness Plan.
- Reintroduction of welfare rights training courses for staff within services such as Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership and Children and Families Sections.
- Have a unified approach to tackling the need for prisoners to have their benefits on release.
- Work with partners to propose possible solutions and/or options around tackling the Public Debt issues highlighted in the Robertson Trust's report
- Work with Public Health Scotland and partners, including SCARF, on possible options to target those with respiratory conditions access help with their heating over the winter months. (see NHS Grampian energy support pilot³)

6.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 This report has been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment to identify impacts on Equality & Diversity, Fairness & Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. An impact, positive or negative, on one or more of these issues was identified. An appropriate senior manager has checked and agreed with this assessment. A copy of the Integrated Impact Assessment

³ <https://www.scarf.org.uk/scarf-partners-with-nhs-grampian-for-energy-support-pilot-scheme/>

showing the impacts and accompanying benefits of / mitigating factors for them is included as an Appendix to this report.

6.2 The progress presented in this report and all actions undertaken through the Advice Strategy will make an impact on reducing the levels of poverty experienced by people in Dundee.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The Council Leadership Team, Advice Sector Partners and community planning partners and members of the Fairness Leadership Panel have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

JACQUI KOPEL
HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES AND IT

ROBERT EMMOTT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2023

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Integrated Impact Assessment

Committee Report Number: 355-2023

Document Title: DUNDEE ADVICE STRATEGY UPDATE

Document Type: Strategy

Description:

A City Governance Report giving an update on the progress of the advice strategy in Dundee covering the work of Dundee City Council Advice Services (DCAS), Dundee CAB (CAB), Brooksbank Centre and Services (Brooksbank), SCARF and Aberlour. This report covers operational developments and, where available, the latest documented outputs and outcomes for each area of work. It also demonstrates how these interventions have mitigated some of the worst impacts of the cost-of-living crisis for those with the least financial resources living in Dundee.

Intended Outcome:

Committee notes the Dundee Advice strategy annual update for 2023 and the possible proposed draft future actions for 2024.

Period Covered: 01/04/2022 to 17/11/2023

Monitoring:

Through annual reporting and monitoring co-ordinated by Council Advice Services.

Lead Author:

Craig Mason, Senior Manager (Council Advice Services), Corporate Services,

craig.mason@dundee.gov.uk , 01382 431193,

Council Advice Services, Corporate Services, Floor 3, Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee DD1 1QE

Director Responsible:

Robert Emmott, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Corporate Services

robert.emmott@dundee.gov.uk, 01382 433633

Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee DD1 1QE

Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Impacts & Implications

Age: Positive

More older people in Dundee will have access to advice and financial support services from advisers across Dundee working in partnership with the Older Peoples Advice Service as well as from the service itself.

Disability: Positive

More older people in Dundee will have access to disability benefits advice (e.g. Attendance Allowance) and support services (e.g. referrals to Health and Social Care Partnership support) from advisers across Dundee working in partnership. More disabled customers will benefit from primary and secondary care health inputs from partners

Gender Reassignment: No Impact

Marriage & Civil Partnership: Positive

More partners of people in Dundee will have access to disability benefits advice (e.g. Attendance Allowance) and support services (e.g. referrals to Health and Social Care Partnership support) from advisers across Dundee working in partnership with the major partners.

Pregnancy & Maternity: Positive

Continuation of midwifery and health visitor inputs greatly enhances child development in the first 1000 days of a child's development through access to a dedicated maternity advice referral service.

Race / Ethnicity: Positive

The no recourse to public funds work ongoing will have a positive, more immediate impact to those from abroad suffering destitution and with no recourse to benefits or public housing.

Religion or Belief: No Impact

Sex: No Impact

Sexual Orientation: No Impact

Are any Human Rights not covered by the Equalities questions above impacted by this report?

No

Fairness & Poverty

Geographic Impacts & Implications

Strathmartine:	Positive
Lochee:	Positive
Coldside:	Positive
Maryfield:	Positive
North East:	Positive
East End:	Positive
The Ferry:	Positive
West End:	Positive

Positive Implications: Community venues across the city are being set up as a result of the co-ordination between partners and the ongoing joint working to move into localities.

Household Group Impacts and Implications

Looked After Children & Care Leavers: Positive

Welfare benefits work combined with support in local communities (such as school co-location) can assist care experienced persons to claim their entitlements and negotiate the often complex benefit system more successfully.

Carers: Positive

Co-ordinated advice work's concentration on income maximisation includes consideration for carers within casework. Services such as Primary care co-location and Macmillan Benefit's advisers offer support to carers including benefits, debt support and employability advice (e.g. better off calculations)

Lone Parent Families: Positive

Benefits advice targeted at lone parents in primary care is a way to increase numbers of lone parents accessing stigma free advice (5% higher than traditional approaches. Increase in gender sensitive services also increases access to support for those most vulnerable.

Single Female Households with Children: Positive

Benefits advice targeted at lone parents in primary care is a way to increase numbers of lone parents accessing stigma free advice (5% higher than traditional approaches. Increase in gender sensitive services also increases access to support for those most vulnerable.

Greater number of children and/or young children: No Impact

Pensioners - single / couple: Positive

Positive impacts for pensioner households in Dundee needing advice and assistance around means tested, disability and carers benefits as well as access to support from other agencies including Health and Social Care Services. Benefit take up campaign for Pension Credit and Council Tax Reduction in operation.

Unskilled workers or unemployed: Positive

Co-ordination by advice agencies around the Linlathen Child Poverty Pathfinder will increase opportunities for this group. General advice work assists unemployed customers to understand and to negotiate statutory benefit conditions.

Serious & enduring mental health problems: Positive

Expansion of primary and secondary care health supports for customers will mean greater access to advice for this group. Also the Carseview Welfare Project will support more of the customers falling into this category to access advice

Homeless: Positive

Co-ordinated debt advice, energy advice and income maximisation all jointly help to prevent homelessness by financially boosting customers' circumstances and preventing or mitigating indebtedness.

Drug and/or alcohol problems: Positive

Increase in gender sensitive services increases access to advice and support for this group.

Offenders & Ex-offenders: Positive

Moves to have a unified approach to tackling the need for prisoners to have their benefits on release will improve their life chances post incarceration.

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Employment Status: Positive

Co-ordination by advice agencies around the Linlathen Child Poverty Pathfinder and the direct links into employability will increase opportunities for customers seeking work. General advice work assists unemployed customers moves into work by providing them with financial information allowing them to make an informed choice.

Education & Skills: Positive

Socio Economic Disadvantage Impacts & Implications

Advice work also seeks to inform and demystify aspects of day to day life such as the impact and difficulties associated with debt. Money advice provides households with the skills to prevent future indebtedness and new innovations such as Aberlour's Tayside Poverty Pilot seeks to link this to general ongoing support. Also the work of the energy advisers in DEEAP, Scarf and CAB all serve to explain the intricacies of energy usage and energy efficiency to consumers.

Income: Positive

The advice partners raised over £15 million in benefits and financial supports. Income maximisation is a proven method whereby households can be moved out of poverty through boosting their income and claiming the proper entitlements. Advice interventions mitigate against some of the worst impacts of the cost-of-living crisis for those with the least financial resources living in Dundee.

Caring Responsibilities (including Childcare): Positive

Co-ordinated advice work's concentration on income maximisation includes consideration for carers and childcare costs within casework. Services such as those delivered in the Linlathen Child Poverty Pathfinder take this into account when working with employability services when asked to forecast financial changes when moving into work and paying for extra childcare,

Affordability and accessibility of services: Positive

Income maximisation is a proven method whereby households can be moved out of poverty through boosting their income and claiming the proper entitlements. Advice interventions mitigate against some of the worst impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and in many cases allow household income to rise to the point that has a positive effect on affordability concerns.

Community venues across the city are being set up as a result of the co-ordination between partners and the ongoing joint working to move into localities allowing better accessibility to advice.

Fuel Poverty: Positive

The work of the energy advisers in DEEAP, Scarf and CAB all serve to reduce fuel poverty through access to energy efficiency advice, debt write off, negotiation with energy providers, access to grants and energy vouchers and even structural improvements to properties that increase energy efficiency of customer homes.

Cost of Living / Poverty Premium: Positive

The advice partners raised over £15 million in benefits and financial supports. Income maximisation is a proven method whereby households can be moved out of poverty through boosting their income and claiming the proper entitlements. Advice interventions mitigate against some of the worst impacts of the cost-of-living crisis for those with the least financial resources living in Dundee. Access to debt relief as described in the Aberlour Tayside Poverty Pilot will negate some poverty premium issues as will general work being done by the 3 energy teams within DEEAP, SCARF and CAB

Connectivity / Internet Access: Positive

Outreach venues will include connected ipads for customers going forward, allowing communities to access advice out-with normal working times.

Income / Benefit Advice / Income Maximisation Positive

Co-ordination of existing benefits advice and income maximisation services will have a positive impact on the citizens of Dundee. All agencies are seeking to boost Dundee Household incomes through benefit checks and by co-ordinating effort through take up campaigns and data analysis we will achieve a wider reach and better results through pooling resources and experience.

Employment Opportunities: Positive

Co-ordination by advice agencies around the Linlathen Child Poverty Pathfinder and the direct links into employability will increase opportunities for customers seeking work. General advice work assists unemployed customers moves into work by providing them with financial information allowing them to make an informed choice.

Education: Positive

The Morgan Academy Schools Project aims to develop a more integrated and effective service offer to maximise support available to families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs. Adequate income mitigates the impacts of deprivation, allowing access to more services for pupils and fewer signs of the impacts of poverty associated with deprivation including educational attainment.

Health: Positive

The strategy's work concentrates heavily on areas where health services work hand in hand with advice provision. An increasing number of patients affected by changes to the welfare benefits system experience a negative impact on their health and well-being. With health being a determinant of many other outcomes for people, and income maximisation being able to improve household incomes and in turn tackle social isolation, poor diet and poor health generally we believe this will have a huge impact on health for those accessing good advice in Dundee.

Life Expectancy: Positive

Health inequalities existing between affluent and deprived areas are due to poverty and deprivation impacting on health and life expectancy. Lack of income generally can be a determinant of life expectancy however income maximisation via advice can mitigate against this.

Mental Health: Positive

Primary Care co-location and the Brooksbank Carseview Welfare Service, through their casework will have a positive impact on patients mental health. Debt and benefits work generally helps to improve peoples' stress levels, ability to cope and general wellbeing through assistance and solutions to sometimes seemingly intractable problems customers find themselves in.

Overweight / Obesity: No Impact

Child Health: Positive

The Aberlour Public Debt initiative and the support work from Aberlour staff and the NHS Tayside Financial Inclusion Pathway (Midwifery and Health Visiting Services) will both have a positive impact on child health. GP Co-location will more generally allow better access to advice through stigma free GP surgery locations where mothers are 5% more likely to access advice services than traditional methods.

Neighbourhood Satisfaction: Positive

Co-ordination by advice agencies around the Linlathen Child Poverty Pathfinder and the direct links into employability will increase opportunities for customers seeking work. Multi agency work including advice provision will deliver greater satisfaction at that local level. The Lifting Linlathen Project also complements the Pathfinder.

Transport: No Impact

Environment

Climate Change Impacts

Mitigating Greenhouse Gases: Positive

DEEAP's energy advice work will take into consideration more sustainable forms of home heating/use of heating systems.

Adapting to the effects of climate change: Positive

DEEAP's energy advice work will take into consideration more sustainable forms of home heating/use of heating systems.

Resource Use Impacts

Energy efficiency & consumption: Positive

DEEAP's energy advice work will take into consideration more sustainable forms of home heating/use of heating systems.

Prevention, reduction, re-use, recovery or recycling of waste: No Impact

Sustainable Procurement: No Impact

Transport Impacts

Accessible transport provision: No Impact

Sustainable modes of transport: No Impact

Natural Environment Impacts

Air, land & water quality: No Impact

Biodiversity: No Impact

Open & green spaces: No Impact

Built Environment Impacts

Built Heritage: No Impact

Housing: Positive

DEEAP's energy advice work will take into consideration more sustainable forms of home heating/use of heating systems, home energy efficiency (including building fabric issues)

Is the proposal subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)?

No further action is required as it does not qualify as a Plan, Programme or Strategy as defined by the Environment Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005.

Corporate Risk

Corporate Risk Impacts

Political Reputational Risk: No Impact

Economic/Financial Sustainability / Security & Equipment: No Impact

Social Impact / Safety of Staff & Clients: No Impact

Technological / Business or Service Interruption: No Impact

Environmental: No Impact

Legal / Statutory Obligations: No Impact

Organisational / Staffing & Competence: No Impact

Corporate Risk Implications & Mitigation:

The risk implications associated with the subject matter of this report are "business as normal" risks and any increase to the level of risk to the Council is minimal. This is due either to the risk being inherently low or as a result of the risk being transferred in full or in part to another party on a fair and equitable basis. The subject matter is routine and has happened many times before without significant impact.