



## ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEM

This is a supplement to the original agenda and includes a reports that is additional to the original agenda.

### NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

**Date:** Wednesday, 14 January 2015

**Time:** 2.00 pm

**Place:** LB31 - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG

**Governance Officer:** James Welbourn, Governance Officer, **Tel:** 01158763288

**Email:** james.welbourn@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

### AGENDA

### Pages

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|-----------|---|----------------|
| <b>10</b> | <b>FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE<br/>COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS - KEY DECISION</b><br>Report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adults and the<br>Strategic Director for Early Intervention. | <b>3 - 18</b>  |
| <b>11</b> | <b>FINANCIAL VULNERABILITY ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE<br/>COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS - EXEMPT APPENDICES</b>   | <b>19 - 26</b> |

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Agenda Item 10

**COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**14 JANUARY 2015**

<b>Subject:</b>	Financial Vulnerability Advice and Assistance Commissioning Intentions		
<b>Corporate Director(s)/ Director(s):</b>	Alison Michalska, Corporate Director – Children and Adults Candida Brudenell, Strategic Director for Early Intervention		
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	<b>Councillor Graham Chapman – Portfolio Holder for Resources and Neighbourhood Regeneration</b> <b>Councillor Alex Norris – Portfolio Holder for Adults, Commissioning and Health</b>		
<b>Report author and contact details:</b>	Bobby Lowen, Lead Commissioning Manager 0115 876 3571 <a href="mailto:alan.lowen@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">alan.lowen@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a>		
<b>Key Decision</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Subject to call-in</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Reasons:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £1,000,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital	
Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Total value of the decision:</b> £6.467m			
<b>Wards affected:</b> All	<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder:</b> Councillor Chapman – 17 December 2014		
<b>Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:</b>			
Cutting unemployment by a quarter			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour			<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City			<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre			<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down			<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport			<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing			<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs			<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events			<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b> This report puts forward recommendations for commissioning advice and support to assist citizens who are vulnerable to financial difficulty.			
<b>Exempt information:</b> Appendix 3 to this report is exempt from publication under paragraph 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972: Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. Having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. It is not in the public interest to disclose this information because it will reveal legal advice provided which identifies risks to the Council in respect of which a legal challenge could be made in the courts. This is information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.  Appendix 4 to this report is exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). Having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. It is not in the public interest to disclose this information because to make available to other organisations contract values of existing contracts, which are planned to be market tested, would prejudice the open tender process.			

<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	
<b>1</b>	To approve the reconfigured model of advice and support to assist citizens in (or at risk of) financial difficulty (see appendix 1) to be delivered from 1 October 2015.
<b>2</b>	To approve the commissioning of advice services detailed in section 1.2 and in exempt appendix 4.
<b>3</b>	To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Early Intervention to approve the outcome of the tenders and award contracts to secure best value for Nottingham's citizens.
<b>4</b>	To delegate authority to the Head of Quality and Efficiency to sign contracts arising from the tender process once the tender outcome is agreed.
<b>5</b>	To approve the procurement of a freephone telephone number for access to advice and support for citizens in financial difficulty as detailed in exempt appendix 4.
<b>6</b>	To approve the variation of the contract for the Crisis Intervention Drop In (CIDI) service as detailed in exempt appendix 4.
<b>7</b>	To approve the creation of a fund for the trial of activities designed to prevent financial difficulty from occurring or worsening as detailed in exempt appendix 4.
<b>8</b>	To note the savings of £0.200m per annum against funds currently allocated towards the provision of advice and assistance for citizens who are vulnerable to financial difficulty from the start of the 2015/16 financial year.
<b>9</b>	To approve expenditure associated with the contracts included in this report.
<b>10</b>	To approve dispensation from contract procedure rules 5.1.2 under financial regulation 3.29, in order to extend contracts for current services at a reduced level of funding (see exempt appendix 4) for a period of up to 6 months in order to ensure uninterrupted delivery of support for citizens.
<b>11</b>	To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Early Intervention to extend current contracts at a reduced contract value for services detailed in exempt appendix 4 for a period of up to 6 months for the period 1 April 2015 to the 30 September 2015.

## **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Analysis of the current offer of advice and support completed to inform the Financial Vulnerability Advice and Assistance Strategic Commissioning Review (FVAA SCR) suggests that there are a number of opportunities to use resources more effectively to assist citizens experiencing or at risk of financial difficulty. The commissioning of advice services in line with a new model (appendix 1) is therefore recommended in order to make better use of resources to assist citizens in financial difficulty and to manage pressure on the Council's budget.
- 1.2 Approval is sought to procure the following services in accordance with the outcome of a competitive tender in order to deliver the model described in appendix 1 and to secure best value for Nottingham's citizens:
- Neighbourhood Advice Provision in Community Settings
  - Citywide Advice Services
  - Community Specific Advice for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
  - Community Specific Advice for Deaf Citizens
  - Housing Debt Advice
- Current contracts let by NCC for the delivery of advice services (which it is intended that the above services will replace) are also due to expire 31 March 2015 (see recommendation 7 and section 1.5 of this report). Indicative values of each service can be found in exempt appendix 4.
- 1.3 The creation of a freephone number (also to be free via mobile phone) for access to advice is proposed in order to remove a barrier to support for citizens in financial difficulty.

- 1.4 Approval is sought to vary the agreement with Framework Housing Association for the provision of the Crisis Intervention Drop In (CIDI) service in order to deliver the model described in appendix 1 and to deliver savings needed to manage pressure on the Council's budget. Details of this variation of service and the associated change in contract value can be found in exempt appendix 4.
- 1.5 A range of possible approaches for helping citizens to avoid financial difficulty (or worsening difficulty) have been identified through the FVAA SCR. The creation of a fund paid for by reducing investment in reactive support is proposed in order to allow for the trial of services designed to assist citizens before difficulties escalate and increase in their impact and/or become more costly to resolve.
- 1.6 Budget pressures faced by the Council mean that savings of £0.2m per annum against the current commitment of funds for the provision of advice and assistance for financially vulnerable citizens are needed from 2015/16 in order to contribute to overall savings needed to balance the Council's budgets.

## **2 BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

- 2.1 In March 2014, Executive Board Commissioning Sub-Committee approved plans for a strategic commissioning review of advice and support commissioned by the Council to assist citizens experiencing financial difficulty (known as the Financial Vulnerability Advice and Assistance SCR or FVAA SCR). This review has been prioritised as part of the Early Intervention Directorate's work programme to ensure the Council's response to assist citizens in difficulty is effective (as recommended by the Council's Welfare Reform Task and Finish Group) and in light of increasing demand for assistance within the City.
- 2.2 The recommendations set out within this report are based on a proposed new model of advice for financially vulnerable citizens developed with input from citizens and other stakeholders through a collaborative strategic review process. This process has sought to benefit from the experience of stakeholders (including advice providers, citizens with experience of financial difficulty, providers of associated services and other experts) by seeking out their involvement in the delivery and interpretation of research and in the formation of plans for the future provision of advice services.
- 2.3 Research completed to inform the FVAA SCR identifies financial vulnerability as a significant issue for Nottingham. A report to Executive Board Commissioning Sub-Committee on the 16 July 2014 on progress with the review identified that:
  - many people in the City are experiencing or are at significant risk of financial difficulty, with high rates of unemployment, benefit dependency and a high proportion of citizens experiencing unmanageable debt;
  - demand for advice and assistance with financial problems is increasing;
  - deprivation characterised by low or insecure financial standing is linked to other important outcomes affecting citizens' quality of life (including their health) and prospects.
- 2.4 A number of areas of opportunity to improve support for citizens and manage pressure on budgets have been identified through the FVAA SCR. These include:
  - working to prevent difficulty from occurring or worsening, and increasing resilience among people at risk;
  - improving the co-ordination of advice and support so that more people get the right support at the right time (according to their need and ability), and so that resources (e.g. advice workers' time) are put to the best use;

- helping more people to avoid or self manage reoccurring difficulty, including by supporting more people access to employment or training.

2.5 An options generation process has been followed to work with stakeholders to develop plans for reshaping advice provision in order to capitalise on these opportunities. These plans have been refined with the input of a project group with representation from NCC, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders. Further refinement of plans has come through a two stage consultation process that has sought feedback from citizens and other stakeholders.

2.6 Key features of the model developed through this process include:

- The introduction of a single assessment and an appointment / case management system to help to offer a more consistent response across advice services, and to give citizens (and professionals) access to appointments across all advice provision in the City from one contact. Assessments are to be provided by experienced advisors to support the resolution of difficulties at the first point of contact where possible. The aims of this approach include:
  - offering a clearer access / more co-ordinated pathway of support to target resources (e.g. staff time) more efficiently and to improve the experience of citizens;
  - reducing the duplication of assessments and advice delivered to the same citizens across services;
  - supporting prioritisation of access based on each citizen's needs and ability to self manage, and the more systematic referral to other forms of non-commissioned support (e.g. from national helplines or support from the voluntary sector) where appropriate; and
  - supporting the more systematic identification of problems linked to (i.e. causing and/or arising from) financial difficulty and referral to complementary support.
- Staged transfer of funds from more reactive advice and support to allow the creation of a fund for the trial and evaluation of initiatives aimed at preventing the escalation of financial difficulty (to commence in October 15/16) before problems worsen and become more difficulty to resolve.
- Changes to responsibilities for advice providers, including:
  - increased support for non-commissioned voluntary sector services (e.g. food banks) to increase capacity / effectiveness in the provision of basic advice for people in financial difficulty and supporting referrals to advice services;
  - the requirement to work with citizens (and with services offering employment support) to promote readiness for employment and to support citizens to access opportunities for employment.

More detail on the model and associated rationale can be found in appendix 1.

2.7 Nottingham City Council is under significant pressure to reduce expenditure on its services in order to manage budgetary pressures arising from shrinking funding from central government and increased demand for statutory provision. The FVAA SCR has therefore sought to identify opportunities to maximise the benefits to citizens from available resources. Savings made through the implementation of the recommendations put forward in this paper have been limited to approximately 10% of the Council's current commitment of funds owing to the priority given by the Council to helping citizens to avoid financial hardship, and owing to the factors identified in 2.3 and associated risk of increasing demand for crisis and/or statutory areas of support.

- 2.8 A number of activities intended to complement the changes to advice services are to be progressed via the Council's Employment and Welfare Support Programme. These activities include:
- developing communications to support the introduction of new access arrangements for citizens and professionals, and to encourage resilience to financial difficulty among vulnerable citizens;
  - working to engage partner organisations (e.g. health, landlords, etc) and other services provided by the Council (e.g. social care) to explore opportunities for them to support citizens in financial difficulty (e.g. by working to identify people in difficulty sooner and providing support or supporting referrals to advice services) and to identify benefits for each organisation;
  - encouraging services offering employment support to work more closely with advice services.
- 2.9 Nottingham City Council has been awarded a non-reoccurring fund of £0.3m by the Department of Communities and Local Government through the Transformation Challenge Award to help transform advice services in Nottingham and to support more citizens seeking advice to access employment. This fund will be used to build on the proposals put forward in this paper by supporting the transition to the new model of advice and assistance and by increasing the opportunity to pilot initiatives designed to help stop citizens from experiencing financial difficulty.

### **3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To retain the current arrangement of advice and support for citizens in financial difficulty and seek efficiencies through retendering or negotiation with existing providers. Opportunities have been highlighted through the FVAA SCR for the Council and its partners to better utilise resources to better assist citizens in or at risk of financial difficulty. Analysis from the FVAA SCR also suggests that maintaining the existing arrangements for the provision of advice would not enable services to effectively manage the demand pressures identified. For these reasons, this option was rejected.
- 3.2 To allow contracts (detailed in exempt appendix 4) to expire on 31 March 2015. The tender for new advice services will not have been completed in order for new services to be in place from 1 April 2015. This option would therefore result in a significant gap in the provision of advice services at a period of high demand, likely to result in significant adverse impact to citizens experiencing financial difficulty, and the consequent risk of an increase in demand for crisis and/or statutory provision. For these reasons, this option was rejected.
- 3.3 To extend contracts (detailed in exempt appendix 4) at their current values until 30 September 2015 prior to the introduction of new services. Pressure on the Council's budgets requires savings to be delivered from the start of the 2015/16 financial year. For this reason, this option was rejected.
- 3.4 To further reduce the budget for the provision of advice and assistance for citizens in financial difficulty to contribute additional savings to the Council's budget. This would pose an unacceptable risk of undermining an important area of support for Nottingham's citizens (see 2.3) and risk of placing additional pressure on (and the cost of providing) crisis and/or statutory areas of support funded by the Council. For these reasons, this option was rejected.

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)**

- 4.1 The value of the contracts included in this report, including the extension periods is £6.467m, further detail of the profile of this spend is included in exempt appendix 4.
- 4.2 Savings generated from this process are £0.200m per annum which aligns to the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 4.3 Dispensation from financial regulations is required for the contracts set out in exempt appendix 4.
- 4.4 Commissioning of the contracts in this report will ensure value for money is being achieved for services and the requirements of the MTFP are achieved. Before the contracts are awarded a review will need to be undertaken by Commissioning to ensure that the final award value aligns with the values in exempt appendix 4.
- 4.5 Chief Finance Officers Observations on Dispensation: Dispensation from financial regulations 3.29 and contract procedure rule 5.1.2 is supported for this service.

#### **5 RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)**

- 5.1 The introduction of changes to the provision of advice and assistance necessitates some risk in the continuity of support and in the ongoing ability of services to respond to the needs of financially vulnerable citizens. Whilst presenting some risk, the changes proposed have been developed in collaboration with stakeholders with the aim of using resources more effectively to respond to the need for assistance and prioritising support for citizens with the greatest need.
- 5.2 The recommendations in this report set out to protect funds allocated by the Council to assist citizens in or at risk of financial difficulty (see section 3.2). Whilst this is the case, the reduction in funding (see section 2.7) through the implementation of the recommendations put forward in this report incurs some risk of reducing the availability or efficacy of support to help people avoid or manage difficulty. The links between financial hardship and other problems faced by citizens (including risk of homelessness, poor health, etc) means that there is a consequent risk of increasing demand for other statutory and/or crisis support also funded by the Council and its partners. The proposed changes to the delivery of advice and assistance also recommended seek to use available resources more effectively in order to mitigate this risk.
- 5.3 Legal observations: Please see exempt appendix 3.

#### **6 SOCIAL VALUE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The recommended changes to advice services put forward by this report specifically seek to improve the economic well-being of citizens in Nottingham. By virtue of the type of services being commissioned, social improvements are expected to be delivered, particularly for citizens receiving services. Economic improvement is also expected with regard to the terms under which service providers employ their staff. Such consideration will support compliance with the



Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, and this will be embedded into any procurement process.

## **7 REGARD TO THE NHS CONSTITUTION**

7.1 Not applicable.

## **8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)**

8.1 See appendix 2.

## **9 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN WRITING THIS REPORT (NOT INCLUDING PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS OR CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION)**

9.1 None.

## **10 PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT**

10.1 2014/15 Strategic Commissioning Intention” – Report to Executive Board Commissioning Sub-Committee 12 March 2014.

10.2 Financial Vulnerability Advice and Assistance Strategic Commissioning Review Progress Update – Report to Executive Board Commissioning Sub-Committee 16 July 2014.

## **11 OTHER COLLEAGUES WHO HAVE PROVIDED INPUT**

11.1 Ceri Walters, Finance Business Partner, Strategic Finance

11.2 Andrew James, Team Leader Contracts and Commercial, Legal Services

11.3 Julie Herrod, Procurement Lead Officer, Strategic Procurement

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## Overview of proposed model for provision of advice services

Please see page 3 for a diagram of the proposed changes.

### 1. Helping people to avoid financial difficulty / worsening difficulty

#### Proposed changes / way forward:

#### 1. Stagger shift of funds from reactive forms of advice and support into prevention.

- No transfer in year one to allow for other changes and for the introduction of a triage function (see *improving access to and co-ordination of support*, below).
- Funding to move from reactive support to test preventative work in years two and three.

#### 2. Pilot and trial preventative approaches.

- A range of different approaches (e.g. advocates in Job Centre +, budgeting / financial inclusion courses, outreach in health services, etc) have been suggested to help us to detect and offer support to people before their financial problems get worse. We propose to bring together a panel to take the most promising ideas to set these up as pilot projects (to be funded from the above transfer) so that we can learn more about whether these work before deciding whether these should continue.

#### 3. Support partners to identify and work with people in financial difficulty

- We are keen to follow up on a number of opportunities for internal / external partners (e.g. in health, housing / landlords, social care, family support, the DWP, etc) to work with us to stop people getting into difficulty, and also to set out how we can use better communication / publicity to support this. This will be taken forward through the Council's Employment and Welfare Support Programme.

#### Why?

- By investing more in preventative forms of support, we aim to help more people to avoid getting into difficulty or from experiencing worse or more complicated problems. In doing this, we hope to improve experiences for people in difficulty, and also to manage pressure on budgets by reducing demand for work to resolve more advanced difficulties.
- We are proposing to move funding slowly owing to other proposed changes to advice (see below) and in light of overall savings needed, so as to avoid undermining important advice and support for people already in difficulty.
- Piloting / trialling preventative approaches will help us to better understand the impact this has before we commit further funding.

### 2. Improving access to and co-ordination of support

#### 1. Introduction of a triage and appointment management system

- Triage (shared approach to assessment) to be introduced for access to all advice and support
- Shared system for appointments and case management across all advice services – to be available for access at any advice service (including in localities)
- Streamlined or single / shared phone number, email and web access – separate channels of access for citizens and for professionals (e.g. in health, social care, etc)
- Basic advice and emergency support still to be offered at all services without appointment

#### 2. Advice provision in localities and community specific services to be retained

- Advice to be commissioned so as to promote access to support across areas of city where the need is greatest
- Specialist support for deaf people and for refugees and asylum seekers to continue to be provided
- Links to be developed for other citizens at particular risk of financial difficulty (e.g. people with mental health difficulties, single parent families, etc)

#### 3. Support and training for the voluntary sector

- Advice services are to be commissioned to include responsibilities to provide training and to build links with the voluntary sector
- Basic advice only – improved links with advice services to support referrals of more complex cases

#### Why?

- The main aims of the triage and appointment system are to help to offer a more consistent response across advice services, and to give citizens (and professionals making referrals) access to appointments across all advice provision in the City from one contact. The aim is for this to help target resources (e.g. staff time) more efficiently and improve citizen experience by offering a clearer pathway of support, reducing duplication (e.g. repeat assessments) and by better prioritising access to support in accordance with need.
- Triage should also allow for other problems linked to financial difficulty (e.g. health or housing) to be picked up and appropriate support arranged more systematically.
- We also aim to make better use of other support available both offered locally by the voluntary sector and by national support providers.

### 3. Reducing further difficulty

#### 1. All advice services are to be contracted to deliver advice to reduce repeat use

- Prospective providers of advice services are to be required to show how underlying problems are to be identified as part of tender to deliver service
- Similarly, use of guides, tools and links to other forms of support to help guard citizens against further difficulty will be expected – to be used across advice services

#### 2. All advice services to be contracted to promote access to employment

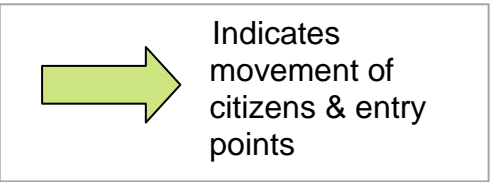
- Providers will also be asked to show how they will help to work with citizens (and other services offering employment support) to promote readiness for employment and to help citizens to access opportunities for work
- The individual offer of support to reflect circumstances each person seeking support, but overall activity (e.g. people linking in with employment support following an advice session) is to be monitored
- Closer links between advice services and services offering support with employment are to be encouraged through the Council's Employment and Welfare Support Programme
- Addressing immediate difficulties to remain initial priority

#### Why?

- We aim to improve the experiences of citizens over the longer term by placing more emphasis on support to help people to tackle underlying causes or to better protect themselves against or self-manage further difficulty.
- This is also needed to manage demand on staff time and to ensure that advisers are able to continue to support people who have not received advice previously and those who are less able (or have no access to other support) to manage their difficulties.
- We also aim to help people to access work (or work on better terms – more secure, better pay and/or hours) and to stay in work where this can help to improve prospects for them / their families.

#### Proposed model

A diagram showing these developments brought together is available overleaf.



**Increasing resilience**

Trial of support to increase resilience (e.g. education) through pilot

Seek to identify and link with existing activity

**Piloting preventative work**

Trial projects to test different ideas / initiatives designed to help to reduce likelihood of development (or advancement of) problems with finances.

- Funding to be taken from main advice provision
- Investment to commence in 2016/17 and increase in 2017/18.

**Detection & early support**

Advise partners likely to be in contact with people at risk of financial difficulty, including:

- Health (GPs, mental health services, etc)
- DWP and Job Centre +
- Landlords
- Social care (to link around Care Act responsibilities)
- Family support

Encourage preventative practice within other areas of support and build clearer links to advice services via promoted points of access to support referral and joint work.

**Increased use of voluntary sector and national advice and support**

Increase in systematic use of other (non-NCC commissioned) advice and support where appropriate:

- Prioritisation of commissioned support for people in greatest need / where alternative support is unavailable
- VCS to provide basic support only and to support referrals into commissioned advice for more complicated issues

Support with communications via EWSP:

- Reduce 'failure' demand – unclear decisions, correspondence, etc
- Publicise advice on avoiding difficulty and how / when to access advice services
- Target at risk groups

Support with training for voluntary sector:

- Advice services to be commissioned with responsibility for delivering training and support to VCS partners (e.g. food banks)
- Advice to recognise difficulty, provide basic support and to refer to main services where needed
- Scope to extend to peer support scheme

Streamlined access:

- Single point of access for professionals via range of media (e.g. phone, email, web, etc)
- Promoted point of access outside of localities for citizens (as above)
- Opportunity for direct approach to services still maintained
- Phone access to operate from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday as minimum
- Contacts via phone / other remote contacts to be managed across network members and to be at no cost to citizens

**Shared assessment and appointment system – 'advice network'**

- Streamlined **points of access** (see left)
- Immediate basic advice and emergency appointments to be available on contact with any service
- Shared / consistent assessment at all services for access to case work appointments across network
- Shared appointment management and client record system used across network for improved case management
- Wider circumstances to be checked to support referral to assistance with associated difficulty (e.g. health)

**Links to Independent Living Support**

Citizens with more complex needs / less able to manage own support and at risk of losing their accommodation

**Citywide support**

Services in City Centre / specialised support to include:

- Housing (linked to financial) support
- Legal support
- Debt and benefit advice

**Support in localities**

General support delivered in areas of the City with higher rates of deprivation / need for advice and support

**Links to employment and skills**

Services to be commissioned with extra emphasis around reducing repeat difficulty and need for further support from advice services – includes links into alternative / ongoing support (e.g. for underlying difficulties) where appropriate

Services to be commissioned to provide support to prepare / encourage citizens to access employment or training (according to circumstances) – immediate difficulties to remain initial priority

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## Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment Form (Page 1 of 2)

**Title of EIA / DDM: Changes to advice for financially vulnerable citizens**  
**Department: Early Intervention**  
**Service Area: Commissioning and Insight**  
**Author (assigned to Covalent): Alan Lowen**

**Name of Author: Alan Lowen**  
**Director: Candida Brudenell**  
**Strategic Budget EIA**

### **Brief description of proposal / policy / service being assessed:**

A number of changes to advice services commissioned or provided by the Council are proposed in order to make better use of resources to assist citizens at risk or experiencing financial difficulty. These include:

- introducing a shared assessment and appointment / case management system to improve arrangements for access to support and to offer a more consistent response for citizens and professionals;
- increasing the proportion of funding invested in advice and support designed to reach citizens experiencing (or at risk of) financial difficulty sooner to prevent the escalation of financial difficulties (to the point where they become more problematic and difficult / costly to resolve);
- changes to responsibilities for advice services, including the requirement to offer additional support for non-commissioned voluntary sector services (e.g. food banks), and also the requirement to work with citizens (and services offering employment support) to promote readiness for employment and access to employment opportunities.

Page 15 These changes have been developed with input from stakeholders and people who have experience of financial difficulty with the intention of:

- helping more citizens (particularly those who are most vulnerable / at greatest risk) to avoid financial difficulty or worsening difficulty;
- prioritising support for people who are most vulnerable and less able to resolve their difficulties independently;
- linking people in difficulty into other complementary forms of support (e.g. housing, healthcare, support for families, etc) for related issues;
- improving the co-ordination of advice and support so that more people are able to access the right support at the right time, and so that resources (e.g. advice workers' time) are put to the best use;
- improving the experiences of citizens in or at risk of financial difficulty, including their experience of accessing advice services;
- helping more people to avoid (or better manage) reoccurring difficulty and to improve their prospects for the future, including by helping more people into employment (or employment on better terms).

In order to help manage pressure on the Council's budgets, a saving of £0.2m per annum (approx 10%) against current spend on advice for citizens in financial difficulty is proposed. This saving is to be made from the commencement of the 2015/16 financial year. Efforts have been made to protect spending in this area in recognition of the priority given by the Council to helping citizens avoid financial hardship, and owing to the risks of increasing demand for statutory and/or crisis support provided by the Council or its partners.

An extension to the current agreements for the provision of advice services (due to expire at the end of March 2015) is to be issued in order allow existing services to continue until the new arrangements / services are ready to be delivered. These extensions are to be awarded at an amount lower than the existing contract values in order to contribute the savings needed to help balance the Council's budget.

**Information used to analyse the effects on equality:**

Click once and type. Note any relevant consultation and who took part; refer to or hyperlink to document(s) if needed.

	Could particularly benefit X	May adversely impact X	How different groups could be affected (Summary of impacts)	Details of actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact (or why action isn't possible)
People from different ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposals outlined are part of an overall response for making the best use of resources available to support citizens who are vulnerable to financial difficulty.</p> <p>Research completed to inform the Council's review of support for citizens in financial difficulty has identified that people with mental health difficulties (approx x2), people with physical and/or sensory disabilities (approx x1.5), single parents (approx x2.5) and citizens from the Black community (approx x2.5%) are more likely to access advice services (figure in bracket indicates occurrence compared with population figures for Nottingham). This research also identified over 60% of citizens seen by advice services as "in crisis" at the point of contact according to the point of view of their advisor.</p> <p>The changes to be made through the implementation of this decision seek to improve opportunities for earlier access to advice services by offering clearer access arrangements for citizens (e.g. by promoting a main telephone number for citizens to be staffed 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday; by offering access to all advice services from one contact) and by offering clearer referral arrangements for other professionals (e.g. working in health / mental health services, employment services, housing, social care, support for families, etc). The introduction of clearer (rather than multiple) referral routes into advice for professionals, supported by promotion of these arrangements, is expected to improve timely access to advice for citizens with mental health difficulties, single parents and citizens with disabilities in particular, and to encourage more</p>	<p>Communications to promote awareness of the use of new arrangements for access to advice services (by citizens and by providers) are to be delivered before these arrangements are established (by October 2015). This is specifically to include work to clarify referral arrangements for partner organisations (e.g. health, voluntary sector partners, etc) and other areas of service provided by NCC (e.g. social care, services for families, etc) to encourage access for citizens who are most at risk of / affected by financial difficulty (including single parents, citizens with mental health difficulties, etc).</p> <p>Communications designed to increase awareness of the risk of financial difficulty and to encourage resilience among at risk groups (e.g. through practical advice, cautions, guidance on when to seek advice, etc) are to be developed to support the changes to be made to advice services and to help to reduce financial difficulty in the City. These communications are to take account of the people who are most vulnerable to financial difficulty in the City, the particular issues they face, and the effectiveness of different forms of communication in reaching these groups.</p> <p>These areas are to be taken forward via the Communications workstream of the Council's Employment and Welfare Support Programme (by October 2015).</p> <p>Proposals to improve joint working between advice services (through the creation of shared access arrangements and case management – see left) are to be developed further (including through further open consultation with advice providers, citizens</p>
Men	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Trans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Disabled people or carers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Pregnancy / Maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
People of different faiths / beliefs and those with none	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Older	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Younger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vulnerable adults</li> <li>citizens with mental health difficulties</li> <li>single parents</li> </ul>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		



			<p>complementary / holistic support for citizens provided across services.</p> <p>The introduction of closer joint working between advice services (including the NCC Welfare Rights service) and shared access points (e.g. by phone, email) for access to advice services has the potential to offers number of direct advantages for citizens (more consistent response, increased availability of support, fewer repeat assessments, etc) and other benefits that should ultimately improve how resources are used to assist people in need. However, consultation with citizens and feedback gathered via consultation on draft proposals has highlighted a risk that some citizens (in particular citizens from some BME communities) may be deterred from accessing support affiliated with NCC (due to perceived conflicts of interest, etc). Proposals have already been adjusted in light of this issue, so as to maintain the option for citizens to access independent advice services, and additional steps (see right) are to be taken to further mitigate this risk.</p> <p>Citizens with disabilities (including mental health problems) and mental health problems in particular are identified by stakeholders as at risk of financial difficulties arising from benefit sanctions. The creation of a fund to trail preventative activity allows for the possibility of approaches (e.g. dedicated advocacy) to improve prospects for this group.</p> <p>The changes put forward in this report include a saving of £0.2m per annum against services more frequently accessed / required by certain groups (see above). This saving is necessary in order to manage budget pressures faced by the Council. The implementation of the changes put forward also seek (through a number of measures) to maximise the benefits for citizens from available resources. Nonetheless, there is a risk of decreased capacity and/or effectiveness of services as a consequence.</p>	<p>and other stakeholders) as detailed service specifications for advice services are prepared. This will include additional detail of how these arrangements can be set up to deliver the required benefits (see left) whilst managing / seeking to mitigate potential risks that might disadvantage some citizens (i.e. by discouraging them from accessing support). This work will take place in January 2015.</p> <p>Further work will also be completed in partnership with organisations selected to deliver services (and with the internal Welfare Rights service) following the award of contracts in order to develop detailed processes and procedures for shared working practices (e.g. assessment forms, arrangements for referrals, arrangements for sharing information, etc) prior to the delivery of services in October 2015. This work will consider mitigations for this risk identified to include offering choice for citizens over services they access (and organisation providing them), and consent (of citizens) and data protection arrangements for the sharing of client information.</p> <p>New advice services are to be provided by external organisations are to commissioned in accordance with a competitive tender that will seek to maximise the benefits for citizens whilst delivering the savings necessary to balance the Council's budgets. The tender for these services will require prospective providers to demonstrate how they will respond to the need for support among Nottingham's diverse population, and specifically how they will respond to the needs of citizens / groups most at risk of financial difficulty.</p>
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			These changes will also not be delivered until 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2015. As such, there will be a six month period where services will be operating with reduced resources awarded by the Council without the extra efficiencies the new arrangements are intended to create. There is therefore a likely consequence of decreased capacity or effectiveness of services during this period.	
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**Outcome(s) of equality impact assessment:**

- No major change needed
- Adjust the policy/proposal
- Adverse impact but continue
- Stop and remove the policy/proposal

**Arrangements for future monitoring of equality impact of this proposal / policy / service:**

The impact of changes described (including on citizens highlighted as particularly at risk or likely to be affected by this proposal) will be subject to a review by a multi-agency working group comprised of key stakeholders in the delivery of advice services.

**Approved by (manager signature):**

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19<sup>th</sup> December 2014

**Date sent to equality team for publishing:**

Send document or link to:  
equalityanddiversityteam@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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