

## 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

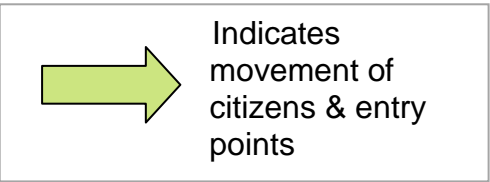
- Providers will also be asked to show how they will help to work with citizens (and other services offering employment support) to promote readiness for employment and to help citizens to access opportunities for work
- The individual offer of support to reflect circumstances each person seeking support, 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

**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.

**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.

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

**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

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