
Date: 23 April 2015

Agenda item number: 3

Title: Snap shots - work in progress

Content: This section of the meeting is to provide an opportunity to hear about some of the PLP's work. There will be verbal, 2-3 minute updates on each of the following:

- **All In for Parkhead**
- **Springburn sanctions leaflet** – distribution list and leaflet attached
- **Asylum seekers service improvements** – paper attached
- **Mutual mentoring**
- **Wee Panel development**

This report is for: Information

Recommendation: The Panel notes the progress of this work.

Poverty Leadership Panel: Springburn Sanctions Pilot

The Poverty Leadership Panel identified a need to raise awareness of the mandatory reconsideration process amongst people who've been sanctioned by the DWP. Springburn was highlighted as an area which experiences above average sanctions in Glasgow.

The following table outlines the partners involved in the project, including the amount of sanctions leaflets they received. All partners will distribute the leaflets to people they engage with, hopefully increasing the number of sanctions that are overturned through the mandatory reconsideration process and on appeal.

A total of **3236 fliers** were distributed amongst 24 agencies.

Organisation	Remit	Number of Fliers
Balomock Primary School	School	105
Barmulloch Primary School	School	33
Royston Primary School	School	62
St Catherines Primary School	School	141
St Marthas Primary School	School	77
St Rochs Primary School	School	149
St Stephens Primary School	School	47
Wallacewell Primary School	School	172
The Alliance Springburn	Health/welfare reform/outreach	150
The Alliance City Centre	Health/welfare reform/outreach	50
North Glasgow Community Food Initiative	Sustainable food	100
NG Homes	Housing/food/welfare reform	200
NE Sector Voluntary Organisation	Housing/welfare reform/food	100
Springburn Alive and Kicking Project	Community engagement	200
Barmulloch Community Centre	Community engagement	200
BCDC	Welfare Rights	150
Addaction	Addictions/substance abuse	100
Balomock East Residents Association	Housing/welfare reform	150
Beatroute Arts	Arts/crafts/sports	100
Bridges Programme	Refugees and asylum seekers	150
Brunswick Youth Centre	Youth engagement	100
West of Scotland Housing Association	Housing/welfare reform	200
Neighbourhood Networks	Community engagement	400
St Rollox Church	Asylum seekers/refugees	100

Hello friends and neighbours in Springburn.

You're receiving this flyer today because you live in Springburn.

We're a group of people from across Glasgow who are worried about the number of people being sanctioned and because people aren't challenging their sanction. We're worried about Springburn because it has the highest number of people being sanctioned in Glasgow.

If you know anyone who might find this flyer useful, please pass it to family, friends, colleagues, neighbours

Thank you for your help.

[Type text]

BENEFITS STOPPED?

Money while you appeal

Scottish Welfare Fund . 0141 276 1177
DWP Hardship payments . 0345 608 8545

Most people who **challenge a benefits sanction will win.**

Why should you challenge?

A future sanction will stop your benefits for even longer.

Complete the letter on the back and send it for free to the DWP.

Free Advice

GAIN (Glasgow's Advice & Information Network) Helpline: 0808 801 1011

www.gain4u.org.uk

NOTE: This letter will make the DWP reconsider their decision to sanction you. Fill in the blanks then re-write the address (first line is 'Freepost') onto an envelope – or hand this letter into the Jobcentre.

Request for reconsideration of a sanctions decision

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Date:

National Insurance
Number:

FREEPOST RTGH-KHLR-XAGH
Glasgow Northgate/Clyde & Fife BDC
Mail handling Suite A
Wolverhampton
WV98 1DD

Dear Manager

MANDATORY RECONSIDERATION REQUEST

Please accept this letter as a request for a reconsideration of your decision dated / /
to impose a sanction in respect of my claim for Jobseekers Allowance or Employment and Support
Allowance or Income Support.

My grounds for asking for a reconsideration are that

- I complied with the requirements of my claimant commitment
- I was available for and actively seeking work/work-related activity
- I did not fail to comply with any direction
- Other [see below]

Additional reasons

I do not accept that the decision maker has properly considered my circumstances or applied the law correctly in making the decision.

If my review request is late, please accept that this is due to the reasons above. My representatives are Welfare Rights Section, Social Work Services, Glasgow City Council, Granite House, 31 . 33 Stockwell Street, Glasgow G1 4RZ. Please ensure they receive a copy of the decision.

I require an interpreter, my first language is:

Yours Faithfully

Signature:

At the start of 2015, the PLP received the feedback below from Scottish Refugee Council. The Council is making some improvements to services for asylum seekers; these are also outlined below.

Key issues in relation to access to clothing grants and free school meals for asylum seekers

1) Awareness of the grants

One of the main issues is that people are simply not aware of the grants and/or their entitlement to it and therefore don't apply for them.

The only point of contact which everyone has is the schools themselves and so, the best way to address this would be to ensure that people are provided with clear information about the grants, preferably verbally, during school enrolment. It appears that many schools do not explicitly mention or explain entitlement to the grant which results in many people being unaware that they can apply. It would also be helpful if schools could offer assistance with filling in the form at the same time as enrolment, in order to avoid any unnecessary delays.

Action – Education Services, Customer Business Services and Social Work Services plan to do some targeted communication for women asylum seekers around this. They also intend to carry out some data-matching to identify those who are entitled, but not taking up. This work will be in partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council.

2) Accessing the money

Currently the grant is paid by cheque which can cause difficulties for the majority of asylum seekers. SRC Family project estimates that 90% of their clients don't have a bank account. The cheque can only be cashed at Royal Bank of Scotland or Clydesdale banks with proof of council tax or a gas, electricity or phone bill. Asylum seekers do not have this identification and what identification they do have . Application Registration Card (ARC) which is photographic ID issued by the Home Office and/or other Home Office documents - is not accepted. SRC has provided a covering letter to some clients to take to the bank with their cheque explaining that they do not have the required ID and asking the bank to accept the ID that they have. Cheques have been cashed in some, but not all, circumstances.

It is also our understanding that some clients have been issued their grant by cash at the finance office in John Street after being requested to do so by Citizen's Advice Bureau at Scot Cash.

It is our opinion that for asylum seekers, the best option would be if they could all be issued cash rather than cheque, thereby minimising any issues with accessing the money itself.

Action – Customer Business Services (GCC) have confirmed that the Service Desk at 45 John Street will now cash clothing grant cheques for asylum seekers and will accept the ARC as proof of identity.