

**Date:** 23 April 2015

**Agenda item number:** 7

**Title:** Welfare reform messages

**Summary:** Last year, the PLP produced postcards and leaflets to communicate key messages for claimants about welfare reform. These will be disseminated across the city through partner organisations (like Glasgow Life and PLP members), third sector organisations and community based groups.

Attachment A is a draft refresh of these messages for the Panel's consideration.

The Wee Panel and others have suggested that the PLP should look to communicate additional messages to tackle the stigma of claiming benefit. These messages would challenge assumptions about benefit claimants and would be aimed at the public. By starting to address the stigma of claiming benefits, this will in part tackle one reason why people don't always claim the benefits to which they are entitled.

Attachment B is an example of what the core messages could include.

A communications strategy would be developed with the Challenging Negative Attitudes to Poverty workstream and other partners, and would be presented to the Panel at its August meeting. This work would use the existing PLP brand 'People Make Glasgow Fairer'.

**This report is for:** Discussion and agreement.

**Recommendation:** The Panel agrees:

- (i) the key messages as suggested;
- (ii) that work begin to develop a communication strategy incorporating additional messages about the reform agenda.

## Attachment A

### Key Messages (Benefit Changes)

Summer 2015

**Claimant Commitment** – For **Jobseeker's Allowance** and **Universal Credit** you agree a "claimant commitment" with the **DWP**. It's important that this includes any reasons you can't look for work or you could be **sanctioned**. Seek advice if you're unhappy with your claimant commitment.

**Benefit Sanctions** – You should appeal all Benefit sanctions. You can get money from **DWP hardship payments** on 0345 608 8545 and **Scottish Welfare Fund crisis grants** on 0141 276 1177. If the DWP phone you remember you're entitled to **challenge** and you will probably be successful.

**Lone Parent's Jobseeker's Allowance** – There are special rules about being available for work. This means sometimes you will be treated differently to others claiming JSA. Call the free **lone parent helpline** on 0808 801 0323 for advice.

This information is available in alternative formats and languages. Please let us know what you need: Phone (0141) 287 0411 or email [equality@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:equality@glasgow.gov.uk)



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### Key Messages (Benefit Changes)

Summer 2015

**Universal Credit** – Will be introduced in Glasgow in June 2015 for new, single claimants. It replaces **Income Support**, **Jobseeker's Allowance** and **Housing Benefit**. You won't be paid until after a month long assessment. Request an **advance payment** from the DWP if you need it.

**Personal Independence Payment (PIP)** – People are being moved from **Disability Living Allowance (DLA)** to PIP in Glasgow. You will get a letter from the DWP asking if you want to **transfer to PIP**. Your **DLA will be stopped** if you don't reply to this letter within 8 weeks.

**Bedroom Tax** – The Bedroom Tax doesn't apply if you're old enough to receive Pension Credit. If it is applied to you, you should get advice about appealing. You should also apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).

**Debts** – If you're struggling to pay your bills you can ring Glasgow Advice and Information Network for free advice on 0808 801 1011.

Contact Glasgow's Advice and Information Network (GAIN) for free and confidential advice on 0808 801 1011. Mon-Fri 10-8pm, Sat 10-2pm. Some mobiles may charge.

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## **Attachment B**

### **Challenging stigma messages**

Here are some examples of draft additional messages that could be used to challenge the stigma associated with benefits:

- Only 3% of the welfare budget goes on Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Only £1 in every £12.50 spent on welfare supports people of working age.
- Only 8 percent of benefit claimants have three or more children.
- Twice as much benefit is overpaid due to error than lost due to fraud.
- Around two-thirds of the total financial loss from welfare reform falls on households with dependent children.
- Almost half of the financial loss falls on in-work households.
- Nationally 6 out of 10 Employment and Support Allowance claimants sanctioned have a mental health condition or learning difficulty.
- One third of people affected by homelessness who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance have been sanctioned.
- Last year £1.2bn (or 0.7%) of the UK welfare budget was lost due to benefit fraud. Around £119bn was lost due to unpaid tax.
- Families that haven't worked for generations are few and far between. Less than 1% of workless households have two generations that have never worked.
- The UK's welfare spending is around the average for developed countries and the whole of Europe.