

Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network

Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network Minutes of Meeting

Wednesday 27 April 2015 at 9.30am – Melville Housing Corn Exchange.

Apologies:

Nicole Bethune	Welfare Rights, Midlothian Council
Susan Bowes	Dalkeith CAB (Secretary)
Sue Peart	Penicuik CAB
Jonathan Coward	MFIN
Morag Gemmell	Department of Work & Pensions
Kaz Langlands	Deaf Action
Jacque Mather	Welfare Right Officer, Melville Housing Association
David Gardner	CHAI
Ben Forsyth	Welfare Rights, Midlothian Council

Lesley Kelly (Treasurer) welcomed everyone to the meeting

		<i>Action</i>
1	Apologies:	
	As noted above.	
2	Presentation: Fareshare FoodCloud, Rachel Mclean Programme Coordinator, Fareshare Scotland	
	<p>The project has 4 Scottish depots (/regional centres). Charities and not-for-profits can tap into via an app that indicates when surplus food is available at local Tesco superstores.</p> <p>31% of all food produced is lost or wasted, and 9.6 million people in the UK are living in relative poverty.</p> <p>Project model comes from Neighbourly app, which distributed food from M&S, and other suppliers. Fareshare FoodCloud allows Tesco to donate 'best before' food to charities. Charities can say yes or no, then take as much or as little as they like. It could even be taken and frozen.</p> <p>Tesco Hardengreen is already doing this – one charity per evening – so maximum of 7 charities – totally free. Current uptake is from hostels, food banks, respite care, community cafes, pre-school and afterschool care.</p> <p>Fareshare make lots of checks to ensure food will be sagely delivered e.g. cool box with temperature check.</p> <p>Rachel can be contacted at rachelmclean@fareshare.org.uk, or via Twitter @rachaelmclean110, @fareshareUK.</p>	
3	Presentation: RNIB AdvicePlus Service Neil Nemece, RNIB	
	AdvicePlus offers welfare rights advice for people with sight conditions.	
	Blind and partially sighted people are very dependent on support through	

	<p>benefits. Welfare Reform is proving to be a challenging time, with RNIB experiencing a 60% increase in enquiries and waiting lists.</p> <p>The service allows visually impaired people to understand benefits and changes, helping them to navigate the system. It also provides accessible software and home visits as well as referrals to partnership agencies for people in hardship. AdvicePlus supports DLA -> PIP transfers.</p> <p>Severe Visual Impairments Regulations (visual acuity 360 or less) should automatically be entitled to higher rate of DLA.</p> <p>Blind Persons Tax Allowance – for people registered blind – definition in Scotland not very clear, as some partially sighted people qualify.</p> <p>Other support available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue badge applications • Road Tax Exemption • TV Licence Reduction • Travel Pass • Free Postage • Exemption from BT Directory Enquiries fees. <p>Note that restrictions on working age people have been lifted for all.</p> <p>Advice is provided at home, in centres, or at awareness sessions. AdvicePlus can help to launch appeals, prepare submissions and find alternative sources of income.</p> <p>Service can be accessed in Edinburgh, Mid&East Lothian, Forth Valley, and Ayrshire.</p> <p>Appointments at RNIB’s London Road Office.</p>	
4	Minutes/ Matters Arising	
	<p>Approved – Janice Burns</p> <p>4.1. MFIN Training Jonathan is currently in discussion with CPAG regarding a Welfare Reform update session in June 2016</p> <p>4.2 One Digital Training Lesley explained the One Digital training sessions delivered by MVA on behalf of SCVO. They will be held in Midlothian on the 26th and 31st of May, and may be useful for MFIN member organisations and their clients.</p>	
5	Travel Facilitation Fund	
	<p>The group were updated on the response from Lothian Buses regarding the phasing out of the prepaid single tickets. They will be updated at the next meeting with any further correspondence.</p> <p>Bus tickets will be administered by Dalkeith CAB for 2016/17. At present, Sharon at MAEDT has bus tickets, and members were urged to request tickets from her if required.</p>	
6	Castle Community Bank/ Banking	

	<p>Lesley explained to the group that Midlothian Council supported CCB with a European Social Fund bid to get up and running locally.</p> <p>The Action Group raised that RBS has been trying to sell packaged accounts to clients, and hasn't been offering basic bank accounts. Would be useful to distribute the MFIN Better Banking leaflet more widely locally.</p>	<i>JC</i>
7	Information Exchange	
	<p>Midlothian Foodbank – Will be taking over the Toot for Fruit van. Healthy Start vouchers (NHS) will be taken by the van. Penny has leaflet for early years/ link to MARCH website.</p> <p>MAEDT – Now have the Pavilion. The building requires work. Currently negotiating the lease/ licence to occupy. Aim is to group organisations together to work towards negotiating a new Town Centre, inc. Recovery Café, Food Futures.</p> <p>Changeworks/ CHAI – Heat Heroes project currently running only in Edinburgh. Scottish Power Energy People's Trust, Money Advice, and Energy Advice Worker.</p> <p>Changeworks' Big Lottery Canny Tenants in Borders and Midlothian (Melville and Midlothian Council). Working with RSLs – research and prevention, to see if it has an impact on people falling into unmanageable debt.</p> <p>NHS Lothian – Health and Social Care – Health and Homelessness Professional in June. Bitesize workshop on Health Inequalities. Baseline for what they are – part of ongoing programme.</p>	
8	Any Other Business	
	<p>Participatory Budget – Mayfield and Easthouses have received £30k – Projects in Mayfield and Easthouses can receive a maximum of £10k, although most people apply for less. Deadline 21 May.</p> <p>Food For Thought Work – what worked well is that it was collaborative, bringing all participating organisations together.</p>	
13	Date of Next Meeting	
	June. Exact date TBA once more members consulted.	