

# Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network

## Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 9.30am, MVA Offices.

### Present:

Sue Peart	Penicuik CAB (Chair)
Lesley Kelly	MVA (Treasurer)
Susan Bowes	Dalkeith CAB (Secretary)
Penny Stafford	MFIN
Kirsten Cook	Changeworks
Tracy McLeod	NHS Lothian
Alan Cunningham	Consultant for Midlothian Council
Neil Nemeć	RNIB Scotland
Nicole Bethune	Welfare Rights, Midlothian Council
Pamela Grant	VOCAL
Jim Boyle	Bridges Project
Cath Davidson	DWP
Neville Suttie	Penicuik Community Alliance

### Apologies:

Sharon Hill	MAEDT
Kaz Langlands	Deaf Action
Janice Burns	Midlothian Foodbank
Roisin Fitzsimmons	Volunteer Midlothian
Finton Kavanagh	EHAP
Joyce McLean	CAPS
Ben Forsyth	Welfare Rights, Midlothian Council
Jim Bryant	Local Councillor

		<i>Action</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies:</b>	
	As noted above.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes / Matters Arising</b>	
	<p>The minutes from the last meeting were agreed as accurate.</p> <p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>Dalkeith CAB now have a supply of (day) bus tickets – any organisation requiring bus tickets should contact Susan Bowes or Julie Podet at Dalkeith CAB. SB will e-mail details to LK for circulation to members.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the stream of funding which funded the ‘travel facilitation fund’ (for hardship cases) is not being continued, so once the current supply of tickets runs out, there will be no continuation funding for more – MFIN perhaps need to look at alternative sources of funding to enable this to continue.</p>	<b>SB/LK</b>

	<p>Fareshare Food Cloud– no take up (JB advised that it is not really suitable for them.</p> <p>TMcL reminded those present that the ‘bite size’ workshops mentioned at the last meeting are open to everyone to attend (not just NHS staff)</p>	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Presentation: Midlothian Council’s Review of Advice Services, Alan Cunningham</b></p> <p>Alan introduced himself and explained his role in the above. Alan’s background is in welfare rights and he has completed a similar exercise in East Lothian in 2014.</p> <p>The council are seeking to review all ‘anti-poverty’ advice services currently funded by the council, to assess their effectiveness and value for money. They are keen to see a ‘joined up’ service, with organisations working in partnership.</p> <p>AC will compile a report, with recommendations, for how the council might fund/deliver services from April 2018.</p> <p>The report and recommendations will look at outputs/outcomes and will also look at the priorities of the Community Planning Partnership - the council will consider the findings but do not have to implement all the recommendations.</p> <p>AC will be arranging meetings with the relevant organisations – staff, volunteers and service users and hopes to have his report compiled by Christmas – this will then be shared with the relevant organisations and further meetings/talks arranged to discuss how these organisations can be involved in delivering services from 1 April 2018.</p> <p>The issue of the possibility of seeing the report which was compiled for East Lothian Council was raised – this is up to East Lothian Council but we can request a copy.</p>	<p><i>AC</i></p> <p><i>LK</i></p>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Power of Attorney, Penny Stafford</b></p> <p>PS circulated copies of Power of Attorney Up-date – Working Group is due to meet at the end of September and November is going to be ‘Power of Attorney Awareness Month’ – PS has contacted 30 firms of solicitors so far and to date has received 12 responses confirming that they provide advice on PoA – of those 12, 7 are registered to do PoA work under legal aid. Others have offered a discount during November.</p> <p>PS is also liaising with VOCAL who also offer advice and assistance to Carer’s re PoA – agreed need to raise awareness of the possibility of assistance via legal aid (which also covers the fee to register the PoA with the Office of the Public Guardian – many older people will be eligible.)</p> <p>PS is also arranging visits to care homes and sheltered housing to give talks to residents and carers and will also contact other groups for older people, such as ‘Ageing Well.’</p>	

	PS hopes to have an information pack ready by the end of October, in preparation for the awareness raising during November and this will be publicised via Newsletters, the local press and on local community radio.	<i>PS</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>Fuel Bank Pilot</b>	
	<p>Jonny had been working on this prior to leaving MFIN and the original idea had been to use funds available (£1,400) to enable emergency payments to be made via 'All Pay' or a similar system. Unfortunately, Midlothian Council do not use All Pay and the cost of setting this up is too high (at around £5,000)</p> <p>After some discussion around the difficulties of handing out cash and the fact that this should be 'supervised spend' and also that we needed a simple and quick and easy system (as a small amount of funding to be used by end of March 2017) it was agreed that the best option would be to make the funds available via Midlothian Council Welfare Rights team who could then distribute small amounts to clients they are already dealing with who are in crisis. Nicole will look into this, with regard to holding the cash, making payments, etc.</p>	<i>NB</i>
<b>6</b>	<b>Consultation on Social Security in Scotland</b>	
	<p>LK advised that the consultation was live and asked whether, given the short time-scale to respond, MFIN could put in their own response to the consultation or whether we should just feed into the response from Midlothian Council.</p> <p>It was agreed that MFIN did not really have the resources to provide a separate response and therefore we could look at obtaining a copy of the council's response, which could then be circulated for comments.</p> <p>SB advised that the CABx will be feeding into the response (and work) that Citizens Advice Scotland are carrying out in this regard, including running focus groups, involving both staff and service users.</p>	<i>LK</i>
<b>7</b>	<b>SIMD</b>	
	<p>Copies of the latest SIMD tables were circulated which show that Midlothian has fairly high levels of 'middling deprivation' but does not have areas falling into the top 20% where funding tends to be targeted, but overall levels of deprivation in Midlothian have become worse.</p> <p>JB advised those present to look at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation report 'Overcoming Deprivation and Disconnection in UK Cities' which gives an insight into how/why areas move in and out of the SIMD. LK will send out link to full report. It was also suggested that an information session/event on this issue would be useful.</p>	<i>LK</i>
<b>8</b>	<b>Information Exchange</b>	
	Cath Davidson introduced herself as the new Partnership Manager at DWP, having taken over from Morag Gemmill – she asked if anyone had attended the recent MEAN Conference and referred to a report by Alex McTear	

	<p>(Midlothian Council) looking at employment Opportunities and salaries in Midlothian (which are lower than elsewhere.)</p> <p>CD also mentioned concern regarding the number of people in Midlothian likely to be affected by the benefit cap (128 families) and her concern at their lack of engagement with the Job Centre Plus. They will be sending out letters to those affected in September and are looking at holding an event at the JCP sometime in October when they hope other agencies, such as CABx, Midlothian Council Housing Team, Welfare Rights Team, etc. might attend to offer support and advice.</p> <p>NS handed out leaflets and information about the Storehouse in Penicuik. The project is being run by Penicuik Community Alliance and they are hoping to set up a Community Larder (to recycle surplus food) as well as a bakery, café, indoor market and community space.</p> <p>They are looking to recruit 2 members of staff initially to set up and run the community larder and ‘hub’ and NS circulated copies of draft job ads. LK and SP advised seeking ‘professional support’ on HR and recruitment, highlighting how important it was to ‘get it right.’ CD suggested that John Anzani (Midlothian Council) may be able to assist and they can also help with registration for Universal Job Match.</p>	<p><i>CD</i></p> <p><i>CD</i></p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
	None	
<b>10</b>	<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
	TBA – AGM + ‘SIMD Event’?	<i>LK</i>