

Leeds Financial Fitness Project – June 2014 Update

Community courses

- To date, 1,314 South East Leeds residents have engaged with the Financial Fitness Leeds project, taking part in a range of events, pop-up workshops, carousels and full courses.
- **1,427 hours of community engagement have been achieved by the project so far.**
- Out of 17 full five week courses to be delivered over the course of the year, 20 courses have already started engaging 285 participants in more than 1,193 hours of learning.
- For 15% of our learners in Leeds the Financial Fitness course is the first experience of any kind of education since leaving school.

Sessions to date have been delivered at the following community venues:

City & Holbeck Children's Centre	Inner South
Cottingley Children's Centre	Inner South
ASHA Project	Inner South
Community Links Financial Inclusion event	Inner South
Middleton Library	Inner South
Hunslet Children's Centre	Inner South
Two Willows Children's Centre	Inner South
BITMO	Inner South
Tunstall Road Community Men's Group	Inner South
South Leeds Community Radio	Inner South
IGEN	Inner South
Greenmount Primary School	Inner South
St Matthews Community Centre	Inner South
Specialist Autism Services	Inner South
Community Alternatives Team	Inner South
Holbeck Elderly Aid	Inner South
Sharpe Lane Community Centre	Inner South
Middleton Primary	Inner South
Community Alternatives at The Vale (Hunslet)	Inner South
Church of Nazarene, Hunslet	Inner South

South Leeds Community Radio / Tenants Hall	Inner South
BITMO	Inner South
Kippax Children's Centre	Outer East
Garforth Library	Outer East
Rose Lund Children's Centre	Outer South
Rothwell Library	Outer South
Ardsley and Tingley Library	Outer South
John O'Gaunts Community Centre	Outer South
Morley Library	Outer South
Thorpe Community Centre	Outer South
Kippax Children's Centre	Outer East
Garforth Library	Outer East
Seacroft Library	Outer East
Crossgates Library	Outer East
Meadowfield Children's Centre	Outer East
Garforth Academy	Outer East

Financial Fitness workshops, combining interactive resources with hands on, practical information for residents, are based around a flexible approach to informally educating local residents in a trusted local setting, giving them the skills they need to better protect themselves as well as support and advise their neighbours and relatives. Whilst developing key life skills in a community setting, residents are encouraged to interact socially, enhancing cohesion and ultimately reducing feelings of isolation while developing transferable skills which can be utilised when looking for work, ultimately improving the quality of life within the local neighbourhood.

Courses have positioned themselves as an initial introduction to engaging with support available for residents, who are reluctant to access provision such as back to work schemes and job clubs. Our pilot project taught us that encouraging learners to engage with the Financial Fitness course provides an initial "hook" for engagement, leading to confidence building over five weeks and eventual progression on to working with other agencies in the locality, such as JCP advisors, back to work clubs and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Officers from the JCP Social Justice team have attended sessions to talk to learners about progression routes available and CAB workers have been invited to meet with residents during Welfare Reform workshops, to book one on one income maximisation appointments where appropriate.

Workshops have been scheduled for future delivery at the following community hubs:

South Leeds Community Radio	Inner South
BITMO	Inner South
Lofthouse Children's Centre	Outer South
Sevenhills Children's Centre	Outer South
Gildersome Children's Centre	Outer South
Morley South Children's Centre	Outer South
Morley Library	Outer South
Oulton Institute	Outer East

Front line staff training

As part of the Financial Fitness Leeds project, West Yorkshire Trading Standards (WYTS) education team has developed a pioneering front line training package designed to enable and empower colleagues across the district to support client groups in money management, budgeting and other related issues, within the backdrop of the impending welfare reforms. An overview of the welfare reforms and catch up on the latest developments has proved invaluable in allowing front line workers to share their own experiences and seek the answers to some of the commonly asked questions, busting myths and clarifying misconceptions. Being on the front line, staff members have a unique role and relationship with members of the public and are often best placed to give initial support, spot clients in need and signpost to relevant agencies for support. Intervening early can make the difference between a brief struggle and an unmanageable spiralling debt.

Front line worker briefings have been delivered at 5 community hubs, engaging with 61 members of staff working in the inner South wedge of the city, including housing officers, Council staff and those from voluntary and community organisations. Community courses have been promoted via front line staff who have links with community groups and hard to reach local residents.

Staff briefing Inner South	Beeston Community Village Centre
Staff briefing Inner South	Navigation House – AVH
Staff briefing Inner South	Middleton Health Centre
Staff briefing Outer South	Dewsbury Road One Stop Centre
Staff briefing Outer South	Osmanthorpe One Stop Centre
Staff briefing Outer East	Blackburn Hall

Output against targets:

Area	Target courses	Actual to date	Projected total
Community Courses	19	20	24
Inner South	12	12	14
Outer South	4	4	8
Outer East	3	4	5
Front Line Worker	6	5	6
Inner South	3	3	
Outer South	2	1	2
Outer East	1	1	1

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