

Financial Fitness Case Study - Newsome Ward

Working with tenants, residents and front line workers across Kirklees, the Financial Fitness project aims to provide participants with a better understanding of the potential impacts of the Welfare Reforms, increasing knowledge, skills and understanding of banking, budgeting and money management, empowering them to make more informed financial choices.

Practical, hands on, engaging workshops enable participants to become more confident consumers, using preventative concepts to avoid potential financial difficulties. There has been overwhelming evidence from the start of the Financial Fitness pilot, that in the current economic climate this project has been considered incredibly timely and an appropriate method of support, relevant for Kirklees residents across the district.

Workshops include:

Banking and Budgeting

Exploring the financial situations of different characters all at key life stages, some facing challenges which could affect their likelihood of slipping in to unmanageable debt. Comparing methods of saving and borrowing money, participants explored the various APRs of high street, doorstep and high cost lenders, discussing loan sharks and typical behaviour of illegal lenders. As an ice breaker, participants wrote down everything that they could recall spending money on in the past seven days, most of the group were surprised when they added up the total spend for the week and as a result top tips from the session included:

“If I take one thing away with me today it will be looking more closely at my spending habits to save cash!”

“Be wise when spending money, check bank statements to see where savings can be made and shred it afterwards!”

After the session 72% of participants said that they would be checking their bank statements more closely over the coming week to identify potential savings. Anita, one of the group participants, highlighted the importance of checking bank statements when she told the group of how she was being charged twice for her satellite TV contract due to an error. Natasha agreed and reinforced this message with her recent experience of identity fraud. Two of the learners realised that they were spending £15 per month on the same magazine subscriptions and agreed that they would pay half each and share the magazines, a simple way of saving £7.50 each per month!

Scams and Fraud

The scams and fraud session explored practical examples of real life common scams, identity fraud, phishing scams and bogus prize draws, how to spot them and stop them, enabling participants to increase their knowledge and awareness, look out for others and say no to common scams.

Participants took part in an exercise which involved writing down scams they had come across in the past, either themselves or via friends and family members, as a group 17 different scams were identified. Amongst them the following were identified:

- Text messages advising the recipient that they had been awarded money
- Rogue tarmac and roof repairers (possible bogus traders)
- International lottery wins, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Spain and Netherlands
- Car insurance claims offering huge sums of money for bogus accidents
- Royal mail scam, note from postman unable to deliver my parcel

One of our participants was becoming increasingly concerned about doorstep callers and as a result of the session was interested in exploring Cold Calling Control Zones as a preventative measure.

“Give me my Money Back!” - Consumer Rights

Learners examined a range of counterfeit goods, seized by Trading Standards Officers. Participants at the session said admitted that in the past they had purchased counterfeit goods such as earrings and handbags from local markets, learners were shocked to discover that counterfeit operations were often linked to serious organised crime and were encouraged to think about where they might draw the line when it comes to buying fake merchandise. GHD estimate that 7% of goods online are counterfeit, this came as a surprise to participants and the group agreed that the risks involved in buying counterfeit electrical items are not worth the chance. Top tips from the session included: *“Be careful on the web and if it seems too good to be true check it!”* Participants also said: *“Check returns policies and always keep receipts!”*

One of the younger mums in the group, surprised herself when getting most of the answers right on the consumer rights quiz and said;

“Look how well I did on that [quiz], I could work in a shop!”

One of the ladies in the group, Carole, had recently had her car serviced, this had lead on to numerous repairs and problems which were still unresolved. Following the session Carole said that she would be seeking advice from the CAB Consumer Helpline, the number given to her during the session, and stated that she would definitely act differently in the future if car repairs were not effective.



Participants inspecting GHD hair straightening irons, comparing the counterfeit to the real deal

Healthy lifestyle and shopping on a budget

The final workshop on the course coincided with the annual Scout Hut Christmas party and participants celebrated with a visit from Santa and a Christmas themed Taste Test Challenge! Branded and non branded versions of the same product were testes in a blind taste test with some surprising results (see appendix 1).



66% of participants preferred own brand cereal bars and 100% preferred non branded Christmas cake!

At the start of the session, participants were asked if they regularly checked the labels in the supermarket when filling their shopping trolleys. Only one member of the group said that she did regularly check labels, but that was only because of an allergy.

88% of the group said that they would be checking labelling more carefully in the future.

Top tips from the session include: *“Store brands can be just as tasty as own brands”* and: *“I’ll be looking at ingredients lists in the supermarket and trying cheaper brands because you can’t always tell the difference”*

By the end of the Financial Fitness Course at Newsome Scout Hut, 76% of learners said that they would be exploring volunteering opportunities to enhance their involvement in community life.

Loan Sharks - Mug Competition

To complement the workshops being delivered to parents of the local primary school, Hillside primary’s year five a six took part in a school assembly to learn about money lending, where money comes from and where people borrow from if they need some extra cash. In partnership with the Illegal Money Lending Team, the children were invited to take part in a design a mug competition, putting pencil to paper to create an eye catching design, featuring the Stop Loan Sharks reporting



STOP LOAN SHARKS CAMPAIGN - DESIGN A MUG COMPETITION

Pupils at Hillside Primary took part in a Design A Mug competition, the winning design will be printed in to 500 mugs and taken home to parents



hotline. The winning design chosen from the 60 submissions will be printed on to 500 mugs using the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) funding, the children will then be given a mug to take home to their parents or guardians, reinforcing the messages delivered in community workshops and spreading the Stop Loan Sharks number. The local children’s centre, who will be holding a course of workshops in May 2013, are interested in displaying posters featuring the winning and second place designs. The Huddersfield Examiner attended the school assembly presentation, delivered by WYTS, and featured the competition as part of their Neighbourhood News section.

Training sessions have been developed and delivered to front

line staff across the district to complement the Financial Fitness work being carried out in communities, in partnership with the Financial Inclusion Steering Group. Feedback includes:

“I have a much clearer understanding of welfare reforms impact now and how the changes will affect my clients. The hand-out book provided will be really helpful as I can keep it as a handy reference for any arising issues”

“It’s been very informative and eye opening”

“The information will help me in my role in terms of safeguarding, giving client’s information / warnings about scams in particular”

Tenant Reps – Consumer Champion Training

Working in partnership with Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing (KNH) and Citizens Advice Kirklees, tenant reps from local Tenant and Residents Associations were invited to attend training sessions, delivered over the course of a day, providing an overview of the Welfare Reforms, banking and budgeting advice and Scams and Fraud awareness, with an intention of creating Community Champions, the eyes and ears of the local community.



Ian collected an incredible number of newspaper clippings relating to scams and frauds

TRAs from Newsome, alongside Representatives from other Kirklees Wards, attended a session delivered at Dewsbury Town Hall. Ian, part of the group, was invited through Kirklees Federation of Tenants and residents (KFTRA) to attend. In preparation for the session, Ian spent two weeks researching scams and frauds through studying local and regional news papers. Ian collected an incredible number of newspaper clippings relating to scams and frauds, from articles about cloned bank cards to phishing and PPI scams, and brought these along to the session for facilitators and other participants to learn from. When asked about the reasons behind collection all of this evidence Ian said; *“I knew the workshop was coming and I*

knew the topic, so I thought I would do my homework... I was surprised by how much I was able to collect!”

“Creative Money Management and Make Do & Mend” at Edale Sheltered Housing Complex

An event planned in partnership with Newsome Timebanking and Kirklees Council for 8th May 2013, will give older residents at Edale Sheltered housing complex an opportunity to share their skills, pass on their knowledge and inspire others in the community to save money, make food go further and reuse, up cycle and refurbish every day objects. The event will incorporate practical, engaging workshops with reminiscence and skills sharing opportunities, which will give participants the opportunity to learn, develop skills and pass on their own knowledge and practical advice to others.

Appendix 1

Results: taste test challenge

Product	Preferred Branded	Preferred Smart Price
Strawberry cereal bars	4	6 - saving 17p per bar
Cheese Puffs	4	3 - saving 19p per bag
Salt vinegar sticks	3	3 - saving 19p per bag
Ginger Nut Biscuits	3	5 - saving 80p per pack
Christmas Cake	0	5 - saving £1.40 per cake
Mince Pies	4	5 - saving £1.20 per pack