



Adult Social Care Select Committee
26 June 2014

**Welfare Benefits Advice Information and Support
“getWIS£”**

Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services and Budgets.

Elected members and officers have made it a priority to scrutinise services funded by the Council that relate to Welfare Benefits. This report details activity in respect of the first year of delivery of the Welfare Benefits Advice Information and Support grant.

Executive summary

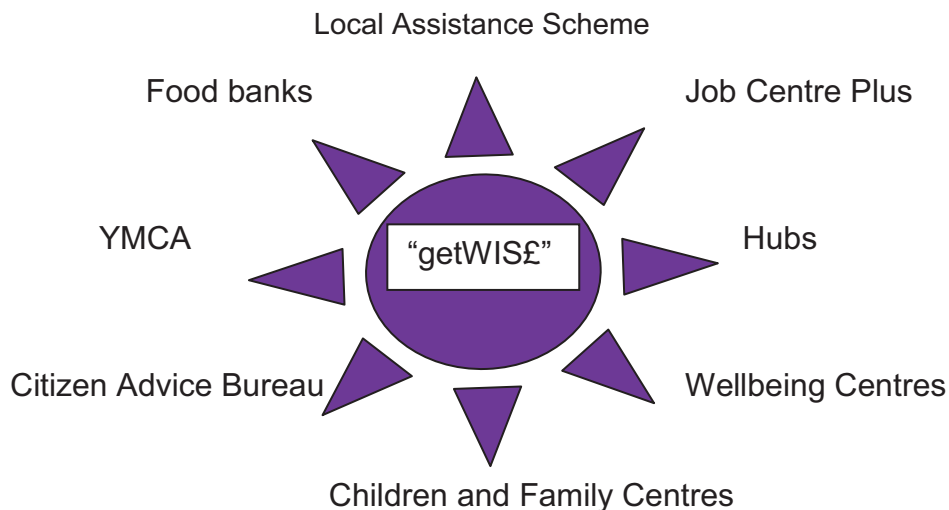
1. In response to the Welfare Reform Act the Council agreed funding of £500,000 per annum from the Adult Social Care, Commissioning budget (Whole Systems) for a grant that would support people directly affected by the Act. During 2012 co-design with a wide range of Surrey residents, voluntary organisations and staff was entered into which informed the specification. The tender was won by a consortium of voluntary organisations led by Surrey Disabled People’s Partnership (SDPP) in conjunction with Age UK Surrey, The Youth Consortium (TYC), Guildford Action for Families (GAFs), Sight for Surrey and Deaf Positives. It was available from 01/04/13 and formally launched in June 2013 as “getWIS£”. Cabinet agreed on 25th February 2014 that the grant should be extended for 2014/15 and 2015/16 to SDPP as the lead provider at the current value of £500,000 per annum.
2. Summary of annual results are demonstrated in the table below:

Data	From 01/04/13 to 31/03/14
No. of new people referred	2,296
No. of people supported to secure welfare benefits	2,287
No. of individual benefit categories people were supported to access/secure	4,918
Ratio of benefit categories secured per individual	2.15
Value of benefits secured for individuals supported	£1,660,698
Average value of benefits secured per person	£3,362
Unit cost to support an individual	£217.77
Unit cost per benefit secured	£101.29

3. The above data demonstrates that most people are appropriately referred. A total of 2,287 people received a service, 57.41% received a benefits check while 58.60% received support with Employment Related benefits. On average people were assisted to secure two benefits and the total amount secured for this year is £1,660,698 with an average value per benefit of £3,362 for the year. The cost per benefit secured is £101.29
4. While the above demonstrates that the grant is efficient and effective in its objective of securing benefits, case studies demonstrate the overall improvement this has made to their lives; see “A selection of Case Studies”. Compliments like the one below show the difference having the correct level of benefits has for people:

Advisor was extremely helpful and persistent in his quest to help me get what he felt I was entitled too. The final outcome was very pleasing and a little unexpected but most needed to maintain a basic life

5. “getWIS£” is consciously working in partnership with organisations outside of the consortium which has benefits for the people using the service:



6. Risks associated with this service are perversely as a result of its success:
 - ✓ Additional staff and volunteers will be in place by June 2014; even with this added capacity there will come a point when a waiting list for services will be unavoidable as demand for the service continues to grow
 - ✓ Delays in welfare reform delivery indicate that Universal Credit is likely to reach Surrey in 2015/16; with the most complex cases unlikely to be assessed until 2017/18. As this grant ends on 31/03/16 there will be a gap in provision if it is not extended at this critical time
7. Further details can be found in Appendix 1 attached.

Recommendations

8. The Committee is asked to recommend the following:

- Notes the report, including the progress made by “getWIS£” in their first year of operation and the programme of activities planned by SDPP to enhance this universal offer.

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