

Financial Capability in Dorset 2015

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2015

Research report and recommendations
Financial Capability in Dorset 2015
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1 Research rationale

The Connecting Advice in Dorset Project Advisory Board believe that there is an unmet need for support and help with financial capability, which advice organisations may be able to fulfil, thus providing a new way of generating income and strengthening their resilience. This need may become more apparent as Universal Credit is implemented in the local area – claimants will receive their benefits in monthly payments and will need to be able to manage their finances over that period.

This research aims to identify whether there is an unmet need, the nature and size of that need, and whether advice organisations can meet that need in a way that generates income and strengthens their resilience.

1.1 Defining the components of financial capability

The concept of financial capability is relatively recent and seen as a phrase that is potentially transient. Citizens Advice say *“Financial capability, financial literacy and financial education. Does it matter what it’s called? In our view, not much. ‘Financial capability’ is top of the pops at the moment because it emphasises encouraging people to act on their knowledge; ‘financial literacy’ is sliding down because to some people it sounds a bit patronising and/or technical; ‘financial education’ is holding steady – it does what it says on the tin……. All the above names are a big turn off for the people you want to reach”*.

Here are some alternatives that have been used; Making the most of your finances, Credit Crunch Lunch, Money Matters. However, what it relates to can be vital to people well-being.

According to the Money Advice Service, *“financially capable individuals make informed choices about how to use their money taking actions that reflect their aims and successfully balance both risk with reward and the short-term with the long-term”*.

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) say a financially capable person would be able to: keep track, make ends meet, choose appropriate products, plan ahead and stay informed.

Citizens Advice say financial capability is about people having the skills, knowledge and confidence to make the financial choices that are right for them and avoiding crises.

1.2 Attributes and determinants of financial capability

According to the Money Advice Service¹ attributes of financial capability are broken down into five determinants – Skills, Knowledge, Opportunity, Attitude and Motivation.

For people with significant income and assets there are an array of people and services to help them be financially capable. Financial advisors, banking services, accountants, pension advisors and many more provide the services that people need to be financially capable if they lack the attributes. However these supporting products and services are not available to people with very limited income. Further, these capabilities do not take into account people's vision and emotional well-being. Nor do they note the importance of how much money people have and the political, social and economic environment they live in.

Therefore I will suggest adding two determinants to the definition of financial capability and what it might mean for people. Good financial capability is;

The capability of individuals to make informed and effective decisions about their finances that enables them to live decent lives without accruing unmanageable debt. This has many determinants including; an individual's skills, knowledge, opportunity, attitude including vision and emotional well-being, motivation and income and their political, social and economic environment.

1.3 How products and services have developed and are delivered to meet this need

The Citizens Advice Financial Capability Starter Pack (2012) states: *'Financial capability work aims to be proactive and preventative. Usually it involves sessions on money management, understanding credit, banking, savings and how to deal with debt. Depending on the group, bureaux often cover finding good deals and bargains, customer rights, value in contracts for mobiles and utilities, prioritising bills, or pensions and insurance'*.

Local research shows debt and budgeting advice and some financial literacy work is provided but it is not consistent. Also there is a growing recognition that a holistic approach, recognising mental and emotional health, education and environment are also important.

Money education in schools and developing financial awareness and good financial habits when young have also been tried, but these initiatives are patchy and inconsistent.

'The Financial Capability of the UK' report shows how millions of people are adapting to deal with tough economic times, and working hard to manage their money. People have become more

¹ Financial Capability in the UK, Money Advice Service, November 2013

diligent or vigilant about their money matters and suspicious of financial scams. Savings habits are improving and organisations like Money Saving Expert have become significant in helping people make better financial choices. They go on to say;

“There is a need for us all to work together. Government, the third sector, industry, educators, advice providers and individuals all have our roles to play. New approaches, including behavioural economics, offer innovative solutions. We need to harness these emerging opportunities and make sure they are used to address, not exacerbate, the financial capability needs of the UK”.

As we will see from the survey and Dorset data, this remains a need.

1.4 Components of Financial Capability products and services

Using our current definition of financial capability, products and services include accessible;

- Education – from child to adulthood
- Money and debt advice
- Affordable and fair financial products and services
- Good financial deals information
- Manageable income
- Confidence, vision and adequate emotional well-being support

2 The need for improved financial capability in Britain

2.1 Some striking numbers from August 2015²

- **£53,961** was the average household debt (including mortgages) in June
- **£147 million** was the daily amount of interest paid on personal debt in June
- **6,323** debt problems were dealt with by the CAB each working day over the year to March
- **1,311** people were made redundant every day between March and May
- **206** people a day are declared insolvent or bankrupt in the UK
- Every **29 minutes 42 seconds** a property is repossessed
- **£1.7 billion** was the daily value of all purchases made using plastic cards in May

2.2 In November 2013 the Guardian³ reported that;

- 26,030 people in England and Wales were made insolvent in the third quarter of this year.
- IVAs accounted for half of this total – 13,394 cases
- Bankruptcies and debt relief orders were both down on the previous quarter and year on year.

2.3 The Money Advice Service - national work on Financial Capability 2013

- 17 million UK adults who run out of money before payday (29%)
- Around a third of those who earn over £30,000 say they find it tough to live within their means.
- 48% of adults are concerned about their finances and struggle to keep up with their bills and credit commitments.
- 16% of the population can't read a bank statement
- 33% of us don't understand the impact of inflation on savings
- 16% of us continue to spend even when we know they can't afford it

² <http://themoneycharity.org.uk/media/Debt-Stats-Full-May-2014.pdf>

³ <http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/nov/01/iva-soar-struggling-borrowers-bankruptcy-lite>

2.4 Breadline Britain: The Rise of Mass Poverty

In a recent research book **Breadline Britain: The Rise of Mass Poverty**⁴, Stewart Lansley and Joanna Mack record that;

- More than twice as many people today report skipping meals as did in the early 1980s
- 33 per cent of households don't meet minimum living standards. Since the 1990s, the number of households without adequate heating, or enough bedrooms, has tripled.
- Fewer people can pay for healthy food, rid their homes of damp, or put away regular savings.
- Further, the prospect of Universal Credit and a reduction in Tax Credits has led many to conclude that in the short term, these issues are likely to get worse.

⁴ 'Breadline Britain: The Rise of Mass Poverty', Stewart Lansley and Joanna Mack, 2015

3 The need for improved financial capability in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole

There is one County Council (with 6 district councils) and 2 Unitary Authorities in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, with an area of 1,025 square miles and a population of 745,300. It has a working population of 304,700 and 5,075 people claiming unemployment benefit⁵.

However, while the unemployment figure is low, there are many working poor, many receiving benefits other than unemployment benefit and many self-employed.

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010⁶ tell us that:

- 11 areas in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole fall into the top 10% most deprived nationally for income deprivation. 8 of these are in Bournemouth, 2 in Poole and 1 in Weymouth & Portland.
- 18 areas in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole fall into the top 10% most deprived nationally for employment deprivation. 8 of these are in Bournemouth, 1 in Christchurch, 1 in Poole and 8 in Weymouth.

Data from the End Child Poverty⁷ campaign show that:

- 25% of children in Bournemouth and Weymouth live below the poverty line (after housing costs)
- 21% of Children in Christchurch, Poole, Purbeck and West Dorset live below the poverty line (after housing costs)

The Annual Population Survey, Apr 2013 - Mar 2014⁸, tells us that 10.4% of the working population in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole are classified as in elementary occupations (Standard Occupational Classification 9). Further research⁹ shows that the average wage in the South West for an elementary occupation is £7.93 per week, just above the proposed living wage¹⁰ at £7.85 per week.

⁵ Dorset LEP Local Economic Assessment 2013 - <http://www.dorsetlep.co.uk/assets/About-Us/Publications/Draft-Economic-Plan/Local-Economic-Assessment/2013-08-22-Dorset-LEA-Report-POLICY-VERSION-FINAL-CE.pdf>

⁶ Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation>

⁷ End Child Poverty Campaign - <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/>

⁸ <https://www.dorsetforyou.com/article/407110/Labour-market-structure>

⁹ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-337425>

¹⁰ <http://www.livingwage.org.uk/calculation>

Figures from the Insolvency Service¹¹ show that, in 2012 and 2013, a number of individuals found themselves in severe financial difficulty:

	Debt Relief Orders		Individual Voluntary Arrangements		Bankruptcy orders	
	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013
Bournemouth	90	83	119	159	114	88
Poole	61	54	112	131	98	65
Dorset	216	209	334	322	239	203
Christchurch	19	22	30	29	15	26
East Dorset	19	22	66	69	60	41
North Dorset	20	14	61	51	48	30
Purbeck	16	9	24	42	24	20
West Dorset	96	95	76	64	51	60
Weymouth and Portland	46	47	77	67	41	26

In addition, it is likely that the national statistic of 29% of people running out of money before payday is likely to be higher in Dorset, as average wages are lower than the national average.

We can see that there are a significant number of individuals and families living on low incomes in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. As stated above, it is more difficult for people on low incomes to access the products and services available to people who have larger incomes and so it is more likely that they find it difficult to manage their money.

¹¹ The Insolvency Service - <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/insolvency-statistics-individual-insolvencies-by-region-2013>

4 What are the likely trends in need and provision?

According to 'This is Money'¹² in 2014 the three main causes of growing levels of debt have been;

- **Mortgage debt rising**; now representing 89 per cent of total household debt, up from 85 per cent in 1990.
- **Wages and benefit rises below household expenditure inflation**, making it more difficult to repay debt and committed expenditure (Mortgages, Utility bills, HP agreements, loan repayments, commuting and food costs etc.).
- **Easy access to excessively high interest loans** with no affordability checks (payday lenders, credit cards etc.)

In addition there is also widespread concern that continued reduction in government expenditure and the introduction of monthly benefit payments (Universal Credit) will put further people into debt through poor financial capability and reduced disposable income.

Social Housing providers and others are gearing up to deal with this as they expect tenants to default on their rent more than they are at present. *“They (Housing Providers) need to get their tenant data in order, and start using it now to reach the residents at greatest risk of missing rent payments”*¹³.

Government’s income, investment and expenditure strategies

Breadline Britain by Stewart Lansley and Joanna Mack show that *“Poverty in Britain is at post-war highs and - even with economic growth -is set to increase yet further”*.

Based on exclusive access to the largest ever survey of poverty in the UK, and its predecessor surveys in the 1980s and 1990s, Stewart Lansley and Joanna Mack track changes in deprivation and paint a picture of the reality of poverty today and its causes.

The indication from this evidence is that there is no likely short term let up in demand for the broad range of services that surround financial capability and financial well-being.

¹² <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-2724894/Families-red-pose-threat-UK-recovery-household-debt-quadruples-1990.html#ixzz3Zpnv4YOC>

¹³ <http://www.housingpartners.co.uk/2015/01/2015-will-vital-year-preparing-universal-credit>

In summary the trends are that:

- Personal debt is increasing
- The number of people likely to see a lower income rise than their expenditure rise is increasing
- The number of people moving onto Universal Credit and monthly payments is increasing
- The proportion of tenants' income spent on housing costs is rising¹⁴

In addition to the increase in demand for financial capability services, the funding available for such services is diminishing.

Grants provided to Innovative projects nationally from Money Advice Service have reduced from 10 to 4 from 2012 – 2014¹⁵.

Local Authority Funding to local Citizens Advice and other Financial Capability Services has reduced over the past 5 years, however, service agreements have increased. Because the data is not held in the same place, it is difficult to assess whether service agreements have replaced Grant Funding.

¹⁴ <http://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/bns/BN161.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.moneyadvicetrust.org/grants/projectsfunded/Pages/projectsfunded.aspx>

5 Financial Capability in Dorset Survey Summary

To supplement our desktop research, we undertook a survey of organisations in Bournemouth Dorset and Poole, believed to be providing goods or services that helped address financial capability needs, this included the Connecting Advice in Dorset mailing list and some others.

Survey questions, responses and analysis

The Survey was sent to 141 financial capability contacts across Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole. 18 responded and 3 of those only partially completed the survey.

10% responses to surveys are about average, and we think the breadth of organisations that responded does give a real indication of the issues around financial capability. We must note, actual provision is greater than evidenced in the survey, but the evidence of gaps indicates that even with everyone responding, there would still be unmet need.

I will summarise the survey under the following categories;

- Where do you provide financial capability products and services?
- What products and services do you provide and how do you deliver these?
- What works and what doesn't (and why)?
Including the view of determinants in poor financial capability
- What gaps can you see?
- What do you think are the main barriers for individuals to improving financial capability?
- Would you like to be involved with Forums, consortia bids and collective working in future?

5.1 Where do you provide financial capability products and services and how is it paid for?

Most respondents had specific client groups – Council or Social Housing provider's tenants, parents of a sure start centre, a district authority area and so forth. This work was usually paid for as part of their core service, though it may be supplemented with funds from successful self-generated or joint funding applications. This includes charities, such as Christians Against Poverty (CAP), Faithworks (Wessex) and others, whose charitable purpose includes the alleviation of debt and poverty. Wessex Water offer help to their customers and engage with the wider money advice services and indeed, all Utility providers have some programmes to support people who find paying their bills a problem

Of those who responded the only organisations that offer financial capability products and services offered to people across the whole of Bournemouth, Poole and Dorset were the Credit

Unions and Life and Money Skills. We know some local Citizens Advice offer services as part of their debt advice service but there is no co-ordinated service across the three Authorities. The Credit Unions are a cooperative enterprise and people must join to access their products and services.

Credit Unions can receive money from Grants but are designed to provide their core services through self-generated income. Life and Money Skills is a Social Enterprise, becoming a Charity, which relies on Grants and Service Agreements to operate, and Citizens Advice organisations are charities similarly relying on Grants, Service Agreements and donations.

What this suggests is that service providers are localised and often reliant on grant funding. Service Agreements for local Citizens Advice, the development of Credit Unions and the Housing and local authority provision offer something, but a sustainable, comprehensive and joined up financial capability product and service offer does not exist across Dorset.

5.2 What products and services do you provide and how are they delivered?

The range of products and services provided in the area is extensive and the method of engagement is broad.

The most common service is **money and debt advice**, though the level of service and waiting time varied across the county and one method of delivering this is on-line and with leaflets. There were geographical areas in which there were overlapping providers particularly areas of multiple deprivation. Some outreach work is undertaken to deliver this as well.

Signposting is the second most common service and offered through various channels, from leaflets, to web based services, to leaflets to representatives of organisations who are office based. Credit Unions provide **safe savings and affordable financial services** alongside basic money advice (though debt advice and more thorough budgeting advice may be provided if it is funded).

Debt advice, with trained advisors, and consequential support is offered by a number of services with help to prioritise income and expenditure, letters and phone calls to organisations to help manage bills and repayments, or recommendations for I.V.A.'s, DRO.s etc. are provided on a one to one basis, usually at the organisation's offices.

Self-Confidence, Empowerment and personal development support are offered with a focus on financial well-being by Life and Money Skills. We are aware of a growing recognition of this need but currently this has not become embedded in the panoply of financial capability services.

Some funding is available from Wessex Water for this service and Housing Associations sometimes commission financial capability work.

Consumer advice is given by some organisations and ‘good buys’ (and being warned of ‘bad buys’) can be very helpful to strengthen people’s financial capability for the future.

The answers to these questions suggest that there is not a clear identity to ‘financial capability services’ and that many providers offer some part of this and through different channels. For a member of the public looking for financial capability support, there is not a strategically thought through response from providers. I would note the lack of financial service and statutory service providers (Banks, DWP, etc.) involved with this process is indicative of the need for collaborative working between sectors in Dorset.

5.3 What works and what doesn’t (and why)? (Including the view of determinants in poor financial capability)

There was widespread acceptance that personal vision for the future, financial literacy, prioritisation values, emotional well-being and mental health issues were common presenting issues and determined the likelihood of people’s need for financial capability support.

It was agreed by some that issues, such as language, isolation, income, family and work pressures and exploitative interest, banking charges and fees, and the social political and economic environment were also a significant issue. In summary, all agreed the individual had to make changes to their life and financial habits, but most also thought that other organisations and conditions brought to bear the pressures and conditions of their lives that led to them needing not only financial capability support but often, financial support as well.

There were three key issues that became very clear from the respondents replies.

First that most organisations’ representatives thought their services are effective. On a measure of 1 – 5, with 5 being very effective, only six respondents scored any of their services less than 4. This was from over 50 services and service provider responses.

The services scoring less than 4 were:

- **Open invitation group sessions** (2) These sessions are advertised to potential clients by posters, word of mouth, on the internet, through partner organisations etc. They are likely to

offer sessions to 10 – 20 people at a time, covering budgeting and money advice, financial literacy, benefits and income maximisation advice, personal planning. Occasionally life skills and a more holistic approach is used with these group sessions

- **Open invitation one to one sessions (2)** These sessions are advertised for people to book a time with an individual advisor. Perhaps with the title – Do you have money problems? Or Get help with you money or similar
- **Web based information (1)**
- **Leaflets (1)**

Second, it was notable that **‘one to one’ services are the most successful, especially when delivered as part of a group session**. One reason for this is that debt advice is a common service and that is often personal, so one to one sessions are effective. Also issue of poor attendance was the most common reason for individual and group sessions being regarded as less effective than the organisations wished. **I would conclude from this that focussed group sessions with at least some one to one time, and spending time on recruitment to the sessions would be very beneficial when measuring outcomes**. This was backed up by respondents with whom this question was discussed. Further, when this was part of an holistic approach programme to the person’s needs, the take up was better and outcomes were very positive. (See good practice examples below).

Third, that web and internet based, leaflet based and other impersonal services were regarded as less effective and by inference, supported self-help will produce better outcomes than unsupported self-help.

In summary, the research responses suggested that there are multiple determinants of poor financial capability and that as much appropriate empowering one to one work across the spectrum of need as is possible is undertaken, for the best outcomes. NB Group work had some supporters and detractors, though if it included one to one sessions and recruitment was undertaken referral agencies or pre-session one to one talks, it did offer some additional benefits to one to one work on its own.

5.4 What gaps can you see?

The most significant gaps exposed by individual organisations were;

- That there are few wrap around services addressing all the needs of the client
- That there is no formal joined up way of providing products and services – and statutory services are now hardly engaged in any Financial Capability work

- That preventative work, including early education, income maximisation and the benefits of Credit Union financial services were not given as much prominence as they should have.
- That the awareness of and access to services by clients is not, for them, a simple pathway.

In overview there are also geographical gaps which are hard to map, due to the number of returns and the different basis on which a service operates (e.g. tenants, residents, client group for another service, local authority area, etc.).

The summary conclusion from this evidence is that work needs to be put into co-ordinating products and services and making access easy. Finding ways of meeting all needs (person centered including life skills, not just money problem centered) and raising the profile and provision of preventative work.

5.5 What do you think are the main barriers for individuals to improving financial capability?

Summarising the responses to this question draws on various answers throughout the survey, and it was not asked as a direct question. However, I think it is reasonable to conclude that there are some common themes that are worth noting.

- 1) Ideally, people need to learn about saving, spending priorities and about money management from a young age from significant adults
- 2) People need to understand about interest charges, fees and the cost of money – and be aware of the financial products and services they could get
- 3) People need to be able to see light at the end of tunnel and be confident they can get to the end of tunnel.
- 4) People need to be able to get help, know where it is and not feel stigmatised

In conclusion a financial education and health service which people could access whenever they were concerned and taught in schools and by parents would be a great addition to people's well-being and probably the economy as a whole.

5.6 Would you like to be involved with Forums, consortia bids and collective working in future?

There was widespread agreement that these options would be supported, although a few respondents wanted to remain independent in terms of funding. It was believed by some that a Forum does exist but no respondent was able to provide more details.

Further investigation discovered the existence of the Wessex Financial Capability Forum run in turn by Bristol Citizens Advice and Talking Money (funded by Citizens Advice). The forum meets 3

or 4 times a year with a quarterly newsletter. The chair of the forum was unable to identify organisations who attend from Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

5.7 Some examples of best practice and areas of weakness (Financial Capability deserts)

Noting the 7 determinants of financial capability, which include an individual's skills, knowledge, opportunity, attitude including vision and emotional well-being, motivation and income and their political, social and economic environment there were two key examples of good practice were evident; an holistic approach and joined up working.

An holistic approach;

Life and Money Skills were the organisation that offered means to address the largest number of determinants and so is an exemplar of the holistic approach. Seeing clients difficulties as not 'just about money', has led them to develop a programme of recruitment, support and aftercare which involves visioning, identifying emotional and learning blocks, considering learning styles, working with a group and on a one to one basis, being available outside the group work, referring people to open a credit unions account as a matter of course and signposting to debt advisors and other specialists if the need was identified. They do not offer debt advice and are relatively quiet on the political and economic environment, but as a potential charity, this is an area of activity known to be precarious.

Faithworks Wessex has a similar, though slightly less comprehensive approach and worked largely on a one to one basis, though some group work was undertaken as well. Faithworks Wessex though does offer other support services, so can refer internally to those.

Joined up working

From those who engaged with the research, Ansbury, Sovereign and Synergy Housing, Bournemouth Borough Council, the Credit Unions and Life and Money Skills were those that were most joined up. Indeed, while not identified as a determinant of financial capability, providing employability skills and getting people into work can be a useful addition to financial capability services and Ansbury do provide this. It must be noted the number of working poor people in Britain is increasing, so of itself, working is not a guarantee of improved financial well-being or financial capability.

Financial Capability Service Deserts

There were gaps in services with only local Citizens Advice and Credit Unions being readily available across Dorset (though waiting times are an issue). However, wrap around and joined up

services were generally much weaker in west and north Dorset. Perhaps understandably, the conurbations were the best served; however, of those, Weymouth has the fewest services, whilst having significant areas of deprivation.

6 Recommendations

In response to the proposal that there is an “unmet need for support and help with financial capability, which advice organisations may be able to fulfil, thus providing a new way of generating income and strengthening their resilience”, this report would conclude there is.

To meet the need, products and services available for all and free at the point of access, should be provided. These are;

- Education – from child to adulthood
- Money and debt advice
- Affordable and fair financial products and services
- Good financial deals information
- Manageable income
- Confidence, vision and adequate emotional well-being support

I would recommend the following short term actions to address this unmet need. Means of enabling Advice organisations to use this as a means of generating income will also be looked at;

- 1) **The Dorset Financial Capability Forum should be re-constituted.** Its remit should be to share information, help develop a wider strategy and facilitate consortia bids, service agreements and funding bids. It could also help create a steering group for the proposal below, of creating a Dorset financial education and health service
- 2) **Further work on mapping and developing contacts should be undertaken.** To include looking at all products and services and trying to engage utility providers, banks and others, perhaps with reference to the project for a Dorset financial education and health service
- 3) Advice organisations and others providing Financial Capability Products and Services should **continue to apply for funding their current services but work together to minimise overlapping services** and provide as broader provision as they can.
- 4) **An holistic approach to financial capability should be promoted**, recognising the need for wrap around services addressing all the needs of the client. Education providers, Life and Money Skills, Credit Unions, debt and consumer advisors, ‘good buy’ services for financial and other products and services all need to be provided and accessible.

- 5) A funding bid for determining the feasibility of creating a **Dorset financial education and health service** should be submitted with consultation with interested parties in pursuing this idea and get specialist cooperative and social enterprise business advice about how to set up and establish trading arms.

A Dorset financial education and health service would be a long term project and look to involve many more organisations than those contributing at present, i.e. the banks, the LEP, local authorities, DWP, Utility companies and even the health and education sectors. It could provide income through Service Agreements with welfare, health and education sectors, corporate social responsibility or contractual agreements with public utilities and banking services that recognise a problem with debt and financial capability.

The Money Saving Expert, not for profit pension and money advice organisations and other enterprises have shown that there are opportunities to self finance some work in this area. If government, social and cooperative enterprise and Charity engagement is encouraged in a consortium this could produce something of great value locally and even as a model more widely. Social Entrepreneurs could be ideal leaders in this type of project.

Advice providers and others could attract money from those additional organisations mentioned above, make service agreements with Local Authorities and Health Services. This could engage with the social prescribing agenda, pastoral services at schools, Social and Probation services, colleges and Universities, mental health professionals and others working with people who can be helped to recognise the need to become empowered to work towards (a positive) personal financial future.

I would suggest a feasibility study and initial project and to set up this service, build links, and provide these services through a consortium; this programme could seek funding form the Lottery, Comic Relief or the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation.

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Nathalie Sherring, Life and Money Skills

Mervyn Harris, Mid-Dorset Mencap Group

Ruth Berry, Home-Start, North Dorset

Pam Ansell, Christians Against Poverty

Derek Dayman, Faithworks Wessex

John Bament, Faithworks Wessex

Deb Geraghty, Bridport Children's Centre

Natasa Andrewes, Sovereign Housing

Sue Lindsay, Wessex Water

Keith Wilson, Lyme Regis Town Council