

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL15 June 2016Report by Deputy Chief ExecutiveWelfare Reform Contingency Fund & Update on Welfare Reform**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To seek Council approval to mainstream key posts to support East Renfrewshire's most vulnerable residents through the ongoing and significant changes brought about through welfare reform.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that Council:
- (a) notes the continued progress which has been made in mitigating and preparing for the impacts of Welfare Reform, including the commencement of Universal Credit in East Renfrewshire in February 2016;
 - (b) notes the improved and increasing uptake levels of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) for 2015/16;
 - (c) approves the mainstreaming of up to £303,327 of Welfare Reform contingency provision from 2017/18 for key posts required to maintain the Scottish Welfare Fund; and continue supporting our most vulnerable customers with the challenges of welfare reform via Customer First/Money Advice & Rights Team and Housing;
 - (d) approves the proposal to use resources from the Welfare Reform contingency provision to extend the funding for the Flexible Support Project to September 2017;
 - (e) agrees to continue provision of additional grant funding of £40,000 in 2017/18 to support East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in its work towards mitigating the impacts of Welfare Reform.

BACKGROUND

3. Members were invited to attend a Welfare Reform Briefing on 23 March 2016 where an update was given on the progress made with welfare reform over the last three years, including implementation of the first phase of Universal Credit in East Renfrewshire from February 2016 (slides attached as Annex 1). It was noted that the Council's main areas of support for Universal Credit were around personal budgeting; housing; digital assistance and benefit processing and information, with employability also an important underpinning theme.

4. It was noted that there was a complex landscape of changes still to emerge nationally with creation of a new Scottish benefits agency to work alongside the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), but that this was unlikely to be in place before 2020. In the

meantime, the Scottish Government intends to bring forward a Social Security Bill in the 2016/17 parliamentary session giving Scotland additional powers and flexibilities around Universal Credit. We expect consultation on this to emerge in the summer.

Welfare Reform Contingency Provision

5. The 2013/14 Revenue Estimates recognised the potential for significant implications for council services as a result of welfare reform legislative changes, but that the detail of these changes would be clarified in the longer term. Contingency provision was therefore made in the budget (£800,000 for 2013/14 and £900,000 for 2014/15) to allow the Council to take forward the necessary investment to enable the changes and to progress measures to mitigate the impact on the public. It was acknowledged at the Council meeting in February 2013 that “following clarification of the financial impact of the changes, the contingency provision [would] be allocated to appropriate service areas”.

6. In setting the Council’s revenue budget for 2016/17 the Welfare Contingency was reduced from £900,000 to £703,000. This reflected the mainstreaming of two elements of funding. Following a change in the Government’s treatment of Council Tax Reduction grant, £100,000 held in the contingency budget as a provision for such additional pressures was transferred to the Housing and Council Tax Benefit budget. In addition, £97,000 was transferred from the contingency budget to the Other Housing budget to reflect ongoing pressures on the homeless unit at Connor Road.

7. Due to the significant degree of uncertainty and delays in national implementation of welfare reform changes, actual spend from the welfare reform contingency fund has always been lower than budget:

	Contingency provision	Actual spend
2013/14	£800,000	£245,000
2014/15	£900,000	£295,000
2015/16	£900,000	£297,900

8. Annex 2 gives more detail on spend in 2015/16.

Use of the Welfare Reform Contingency Provision

Scottish Welfare Fund

9. The Council received funding from the Scottish Government to work towards mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform on East Renfrewshire’s most vulnerable residents and to administer the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF). This comprises of Community Care Grants, which help people to live independently, and Crisis Grants, which provide a safety net in a disaster or emergency.

10. For 2015/16 this totalled to a sum of £258,000 for SWF grants. As with most councils, this grant has proved insufficient to meet the requirements and consequently the contingency sum approved by Council has been used since 2013/14 to ‘top up’ these resources.

Money Advice & Rights

11. In September 2015, Cabinet received an update on the use of the contingency provision and approved the extension of temporary funding for administration of the Scottish

Welfare Fund and temporary posts, mainly located in Customer First/Money Advice & Rights Team, until March 2017. At that time, it was noted that it was necessary to consider the onward funding of these temporary posts as the Council mainstreams its arrangements to support vulnerable residents with the challenges of welfare reform.

Housing Advice

12. Separately, following an initial report in January 2014, in August 2015 the Environment Department sought Cabinet approval to use resources from the welfare reform contingency provision to extend funding of a temporary staff member until September 2016 to provide housing advice in order to mitigate the impact of welfare reform and prevent homelessness.

Flexible Support Project

13. In September 2014, approval was granted to develop a project that would mitigate the impact of welfare reform and increase the employability of local people in East Renfrewshire Council. The project was funded by Economic Development and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

14. The Flexible Support Project was developed in June 2015 led by the Education Department's Adult Learning Service building on their expertise in engaging with a wide range of people about learning and personal development.

15. The Flexible Support Project offers advice, and referral to specialist advisers on issues related to housing, financial inclusion, benefit sanctions, further education and employment opportunities.

Citizens Advice Bureau

16. An allocation of £40,000 has also been made to the East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau in recent years to assist them with the workload associated with welfare reform.

REPORT

Scottish Welfare Fund

17. In the three years since the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) was set up in April 2013 964 households in East Renfrewshire have received a total of £672,239 in awards for Community Care Grants, averaging around £700 per award. The awards were typically for white goods, furnishings and floor coverings. During the same period, 840 claimants received a total of £58,410 in Crisis Grants, averaging around £70 per award. These awards were typically for food, essential heating costs and other immediate living expenses. In 2015/16 alone there were 682 Community Care and Crisis Grants – the highest number yet.

18. In April 2016, councils were given a statutory duty to provide the SWF. From April, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) also became responsible for dealing with 2nd tier appeals.

19. In light of this new statutory duty, a review of the SWF has recently been completed within the Council looking at all aspects of systems, processing grants, the administration

and accessibility of these grants. A number of changes have been made to the process for accessing grants and a publicity campaign put in place to get news of the Fund to the most vulnerable in our communities. These steps have seen a marked increase in take-up of the Fund, with all 2015/16 resources being fully utilised.

20. This review has confirmed the required staffing resources to administer the Fund going forward. Until now, the welfare reform contingency provision has been used to meet the shortfall in the administrative grant provided by the Scottish Government. Now that the SWF has become a statutory duty it is proposed to mainstream this funding to allow us to meet this obligation on a permanent basis, rather than via temporary arrangements as in previous years.

21. Annex 2 shows the detail of this proposal. This takes into account the administrative grant provided by the Government against the costs of actually running the fund. At this point we are aware that there may be some small increases in the national administrative grant for SWF in future years. To a limited degree this reflects CoSLA lobbying regarding increasing caseload vs underfunding of this central initiative. Any increases in this grant will be taken into account as budgets are prepared for 2018/19 and beyond.

Update on Universal Credit and Money Advice & Rights Team

22. The first tranche of Universal Credit was launched in East Renfrewshire on 15 February 2016. Between launch and mid-May 2016, there had been 120 applicants. These were 'simple claims' (i.e. new claims from single people without children). This is approximately 74% beyond initial Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) estimates for East Renfrewshire (i.e. initial estimates of 23 claims a month). DWP also anticipate that there could be an increased impact from applications from school/college/university leavers over the summer months. This will place further strain on Council resources to cope with this new demand and will also impact partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

23. The Council's Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) was formed by bringing together the three services of Money Advice, Income Maximisation and Welfare Rights. All services now use the 'Advice Pro system which allows for a better customer experience and robust data collection on service usage. MART continues to look at the structure and processes to ensure best value and excellent customer service.

24. MART are heavily involved in supporting the implementation of Universal Credit. Even with the limited group affected by the first stage of roll-out, MART has seen an increase in the number of referrals for personal budgeting support from Job Centres. In the last year there has been a 161% increase in demand for the services provided with 86% of income maximisation cases being successful.

25. The next stage of Universal Credit will be the full digital service roll out by the DWP. This is anticipated to impact in East Renfrewshire in early-mid 2017. For residents this means that anyone on an existing legacy benefit (e.g. Employability and Support Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance, Housing Benefits, Tax Credits, Income Support) who reports a change of circumstances will then be paid Universal Credit, which in many cases will be at a lower amount than the legacy benefit. There is no transitional protection for this group. Claimants will be expected to maintain their benefit claim online and conform to strict conditionality. This will place a burden upon the Council to provide further ICT access and digital support. MART will need to support residents in this situation by completing an income maximisation review, assisting with large volumes of online claims, providing conditionality advice and providing appropriate money advice.

26. The final stage will involve the DWP-initiated transfer of any remaining legacy cases. This group will receive the same amount of money they got from the legacy benefits (transitional protection) until they have a change of circumstances. Residents will be required to make and maintain their claim online and many will require support in making their applications. This is likely to take place in 2018.

27. Each of the next stages of Universal Credit will see working people enter the benefit system for the first time as the transfer of Tax Credits to Universal Credit creates a new client group. People who are working will be subject to conditionality for the first time and expected to increase their wage and or hours with a view to moving them off Universal Credit. There are approximately 4,200 recipients of Child and Working Tax Credits in East Renfrewshire – we can predict that a proportion of these residents will be new users of MART services.

28. In addition to Universal Credit, other reform measures are providing a more immediate impact and will continue to have a profound effect on residents and the capacity of MART. Welfare Reform has brought the migration of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Allowance (PIP). There are approximately 4000 applicants in East Renfrewshire who will be subject to this migration process. The latest figures for reassessment show that 27% have lost all entitlement to disability benefit. Of the 73% who have secured an award there is no guarantee that it is at a similar level to the DLA which means in many cases there is still substantial loss to the individual. MART work to get involved as soon as possible as there is a greater chance of success for applications where an Income Maximisation Officer is involved at the early stages. Challenges to PIP decisions made by DWP are already the biggest appeal jurisdiction for the Ministry of Justice at 38%.

29. Further pressures will come with changes to child related payments from April 2017. From that date payment for new claims will be restricted to two children only and there is a cut in payment for those receiving Tax credits, Universal Credit or Housing benefit. The lower level benefit cap will also have an adverse effect on the Council. Changes to Housing Benefit between 2017–2018 will see a greater number of shortfalls between benefit paid and the rental charge. This will create substantial problems for rent collection and create an increase in demand for MART services for income maximisation.

30. Another major challenge is the ongoing devolution of some social security benefits to the Scottish Parliament. This will impact on the Council and local residents. We will contribute to the consultation later in the summer on this issue and will be responsible for training council staff and partners on all benefits as reform happens.

31. As with the Scottish Welfare Fund, to date the Customer First/MART team has been operating with a range of temporary staffing arrangements funded through welfare reform contingency monies. The MART team have strong links and working relationships across other Council services in particular Customer First, Housing, HSCP and Revenues. This allows for informed signposting for customers and ensures customers maximise the services and benefits available.

32. Given the critical support being provided to our communities and the increasing caseload described above, it is now proposed to mainstream funding for these commitments to put the Customer First/MART service on a more sustainable footing. This will allow us to retain and recruit excellent team members who will be able to provide this valuable support to our more vulnerable residents and seek to assist them with challenging financial situations. This very much fits with the Council's goals towards prevention and digital enablement. Annex 2 contains detail of the proposal. It should be noted that the Council is

currently developing a bid to Macmillan Cancer Support for a match-funded Welfare Rights Officer post – if successful, this would reduce the amount required to be mainstreamed and the Annex 2 figures will be updated.

Welfare Reform Housing Officer

33. The predicted shortfall in income arising as an impact of Universal Credit presents a high risk to rent collection. In addition, key services such as housing support in temporary accommodation and the young person's support service at Connor Road will be at significant risk. The wider impact on residents is expected to increase the need for housing advice for the number of families presenting to the council as homeless.

34. The Welfare Reform Housing Officer post is required to ensure that all issues are assessed and mitigated where possible. This includes early engagement with tenants, waiting list applicants and homeless households to ensure they are aware of the changes and how they will affect them. Continuous training with staff is essential to ensure they are aware of the changes and can provide accurate and effective advice. In addition, engagement with other housing providers via Welfare Reform Forums and Rents Forums, as well as our continuing programme of good practice visits to other councils is required in order that we can benefit from the experiences of other housing providers in rolling-out Universal Credit.

35. Given the delays in implementation of Universal Credit nationally and ongoing shift in the welfare reform agenda, it is now proposed to mainstream the post of Welfare Reform Housing Officer.

Flexible Support Project

36. The Flexible Support Project provides a tailored, person centred approach, taking into account all aspects of people's lives that impact on their employability. Time is dedicated to building a trusting relationship between project staff and participants, and exploring the assets and development needs of the person. A jointly developed plan is agreed with the participant that can include receiving advice on benefits, housing and money management from local providers but also on accessing volunteering and other experiences that are tailored to their work ambitions and aspirations.

37. The Flexible Support Project has been very successful in engaging adults in its first six months of operation. An interim evaluation was undertaken in January 2016 which evidenced that the project was exceeding its anticipated targets and highlighted the very successful engagement with people who had previously struggled to build sufficient proof of their experience and confidence in their chosen employment field.

38. Funding for the Flexible Support Project will enable East Renfrewshire Council residents to continue to take advantage of tailored support, guidance, development opportunities and programmes that lead to future employment.

39. As opportunities for local employment come on-stream, there is a growing need for local people to be well prepared for a competitive market place. It is therefore proposed that the project be extended until September 2017.

40. The total cost to extend the project is £85,000. The DWP has invited an application for funding up to £40,000 and it is proposed that the Council match-fund the extension of the project at a sum of £45,000. Although the previous funding was provided by Economic

Development, given the client group for this project, it is proposed that these resources are found from the welfare reform contingency provision. The costs are outlined in Annex 2.

Citizens Advice Bureau

41. As detailed in the presentation at Annex 1, alongside MART, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is a key partner in the provision of local support to mitigate the impacts of welfare reform and assist local residents to navigate the requirements and build the necessary digital skills. CAB is impacted in similar ways to MART as described above regarding increasing caseload and demand for services. In September 2015, Cabinet approved £40,000 of additional funding to CAB, from the welfare contingency fund, to support this work.

42. To enable the onward preparation of budgets for 2017/18, the figures at Annex 2 include a further £40,000 of funding to CAB for that financial year, if Council chooses to continue to support CAB's work in this area.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

43. Council approved a contingency sum from 2013/14 to 'top up' government funding for welfare reform and administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund. It had always been the intention to allocate these resources to service areas once more information on welfare changes was known. This report seeks to put the arrangements for the Scottish Welfare Fund, Customer First/MART and Housing on a firmer footing going forward now that the impact of welfare reform changes is better understood.

44. Annex 2 details the proposals for mainstreaming and temporary funding.

45. The Head of Accountancy has confirmed that these proposals can be built into budgets for 2017/18 and beyond, as can the grant to CAB in 2017/18 and the continuation of the temporary Flexible Support Project should Council agree to continue this funding.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

46. In devising these proposals, consultation has taken place with appropriate Council services and the Citizens Advice Bureau and DWP continue to be involved in strategic planning for welfare reform. In addition, the SPSO ran a national consultation on the Scottish Welfare Fund reviews in 2015/16.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

47. Council departments and partner agencies continue to make good progress in mitigating the effects of Welfare reforms which are currently being experienced. The introduction of Universal Credit in East Renfrewshire in February 2016 went smoothly and there is good partnership working, particularly between the Council, DWP and CAB in this area, however the numbers migrating onto Universal Credit are much higher (74%) than initial DWP predictions.

48. The full extent of the impact of welfare reform and further tranches of Universal Credit will not be known for some time. Indeed, Universal Credit is not expected to be fully operational until 2021. Recent reports from the Scottish Directors of Public Health raise concerns that welfare reforms still to happen will have a significant impact on child poverty and inequality in the next four years. The Council's Money Advice and Rights Team can evidence large increases in caseload as a result of the challenges faced by local residents, and the increased take-up of the Scottish Welfare Fund in East Renfrewshire also suggests serious hardship being faced by vulnerable individuals. The proposals made in this paper are aimed at strengthening the Council's approach to supporting those most affected by the welfare reform changes and mitigating the impacts wherever possible.

49. There are no implications in relation to IT, legal, property or sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

50. The next few years will see the phased transition of powers to a new Scottish benefits agency. In addition the introduction of a Social Security Bill in the 2016/17 Scottish parliamentary session will also see Scotland assume powers over 11 existing disability and caring benefits; the power to top up and create new benefits and several flexibilities to alter the way Universal Credit payments are made by DWP.

51. It is clear that there are many significant changes and developments to come. The welfare reform contingency provision agreed by Council goes some way to mitigating the impact. It is important to recognise the critical contribution of various council service areas in continuing to support our most vulnerable local residents through these changes. Council is asked to mainstream financial commitments towards these teams to ensure ongoing support for local residents in the years ahead as the welfare/social security landscape develops with potentially more complex arrangements given delivery mechanisms both north and south of the border.

RECOMMENDATIONS

52. It is recommended that Council:

- (a) notes the continued progress which has been made in mitigating and preparing for the impacts of Welfare Reform, including the commencement of Universal Credit in East Renfrewshire in February 2016;
- (b) notes the improved and increasing uptake levels of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) for 2015/16;
- (c) approves the mainstreaming of up to £303,327 of Welfare Reform contingency provision from 2017/18 for key posts required to maintain the Scottish Welfare Fund; and continue supporting our most vulnerable customers with the challenges of welfare reform via Customer First/Money Advice & Rights Team and Housing;
- (d) approves the proposal to use resources from the Welfare Reform contingency provision to extend the funding for the Flexible Support Project to September 2017;

- (e) agrees to continue provision of additional grant funding of £40,000 in 2017/18 to support East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in its work towards mitigating the impacts of Welfare Reform.

Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive

1 June 2016

Report author: Louise Pringle, Head of Customer & Business Change Services, 0141 577 3136 with contributions from Sharon Beattie, Head of HR, Customer & Communications; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy; Suzanne Conlin, Senior Housing Officer & Eric Whitfield, Adult Learning Manager.

Councillor Ian McAlpine Convener for Corporate Services 0141 638 3860 (Home)
07890 592671 (Mobile)

KEY WORDS

Welfare reform, Scottish Welfare Fund, Universal Credit, Money Advice and Rights Team, Housing Advice, Flexible Support Project; Citizens Advice Bureau; employability; DWP

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Welfare Reform Members' Briefing, 23 March 2016
- Welfare Reform Contingency Fund & Update, 17 September 2015
- Welfare Reform Housing Advice Post, Cabinet 20 August 201
- Discretionary Housing Payments, Cabinet 25 June 2015
- Single Fraud Investigation Service, Cabinet 4 June 2015
- Welfare Reform, Cabinet 29 January 2015
- Welfare Reform Housing Advice Post, Cabinet 16 January 2014
- Welfare Reform, Cabinet 4 September 2014
- Welfare Reform Act 2012 – Impact on Local Benefit Recipients & Local Service Agencies, published by Economic Development February 2014 and updated February 2015.
- Revenue Estimates 2013/14 and 2014/15, Council 13 February 2013

BLANK PAGE

Welfare Reform

Information & Consultation Session

23 March 2016

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

- Council vision:

*“To be a modern, ambitious council
creating a fairer future with all”*

- Overall aim to support residents through changes with welfare reform and ensure needs are met
- Recent structural/leadership changes in Council
- Revised planning framework
 - Welfare Reform Strategy Group
 - Universal Credit Preparations Group (with subgroups/projects)
 - FAIRER (Forum for Advice, Information & Rights East Renfrewshire)
- Importance of partnership approach

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Impacts on a wide range of Council services, including:

159

Money
Advice &
Rights Team
(MART)

Housing

Adult
Learning

Revenues

Employability

Libraries

Customer
First

Health &
social work

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**

*East
Renfrewshire*
COUNCIL

www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Welfare Reform - Why was it needed?

160

- Govt. wanted welfare system where work always pays
- Welfare budgets have seen huge increases in cost
- Previous system was too complicated
- “Digital by default” encouraging digital upskilling and enhancing employability
- To increase fairness, employment levels, social justice and reduce budget deficit

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Welfare Reform changes in last 3 years

161

- Council Tax Benefit replaced by scheme of Council tax reduction
- Discretionary Social Fund devolved to Scotland - administered by councils as Crisis & Community Support Grants
- Housing Benefit size restrictions for social sector tenants
- Changes to child benefit entitlement for higher earners
- Disability Living Allowance now Personal Independence Payments
- Single Fraud Investigation Service established through DWP
- Benefits cap to be administered through Housing Benefit
- Universal Credit implemented

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Key changes with ¹⁶²UC Universal Credit

- Aim to simplify benefits system & improve work incentives
- Means-tested for working age people who are unable to work, unemployed or in low paid work
- Replaces 6 working age benefits
- Paid as single monthly household payment
- Timescale from application to receipt of first payment
- Expectation that claims will be made online
- Requires acceptance of a Claimant Commitment – actions/activities set by client in consultation with work coach
- Roll-out started with 'simple' claims (i.e. new claims from single people without children) – East Renfrewshire started February 2016

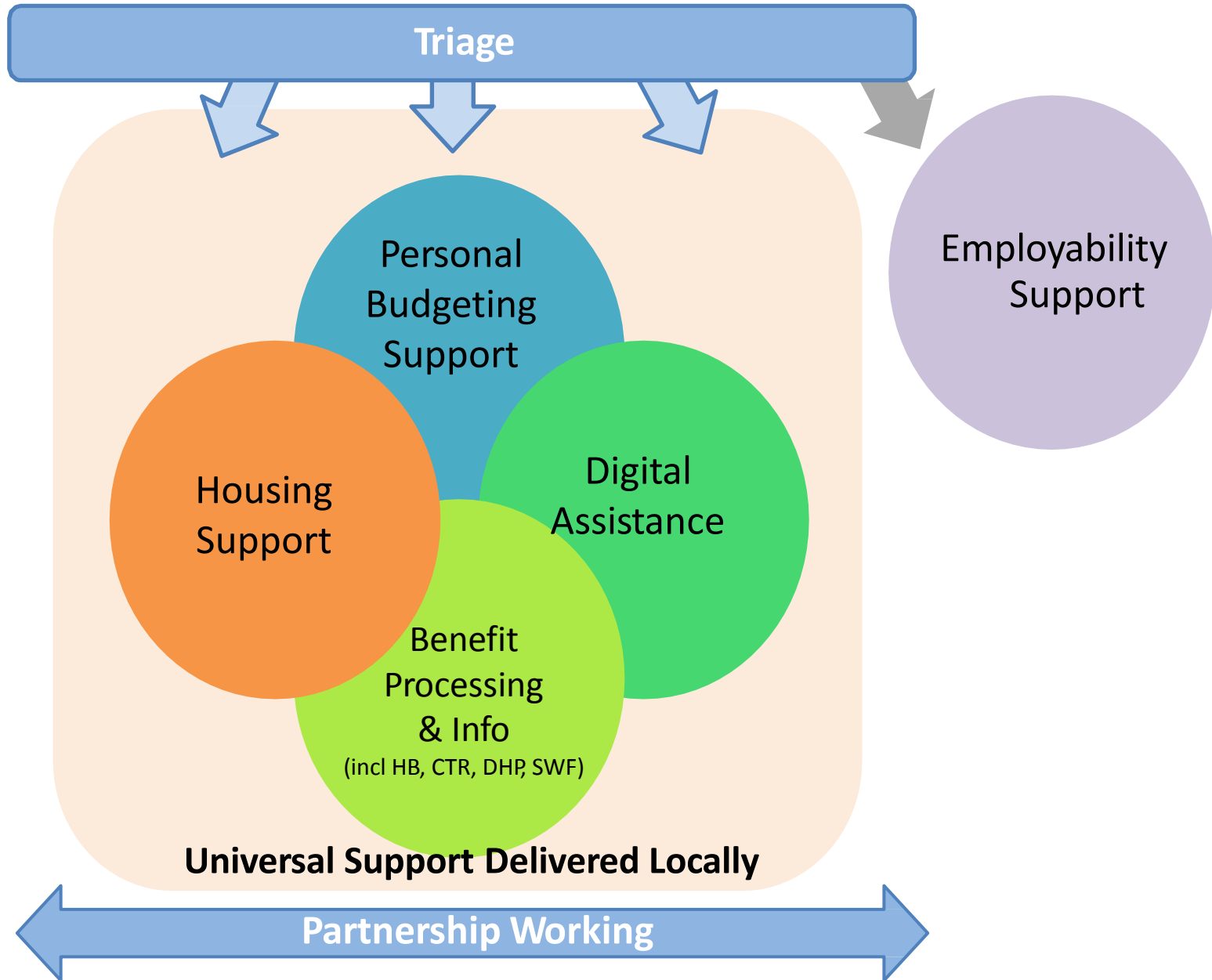
**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Universal Credit – Generic Customer Pathway

163



Housing issues

164

- Partnership working with DWP and across Council
- Aim to mitigate possibility of rent arrears & risk to rental income
- Impact of benefit cap on homeless and supported accommodation
- Impact of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap restriction

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Support & Advice ¹⁶⁵

Money Advice



& Rights Team

Help with making an online claim, challenging a decision, personal budgeting or general advice about UC can be provided by MART
Tel: 0800 052 1023



Citizens Advice East Renfrewshire can also offer assistance.

The HERO project will assist people who have difficulty using a computer
Tel: 0141 881 3360





support for residents

- MART supports residents in all aspects of Welfare Reform
- Working in partnership with DWP, based in local job centres
- Team working with ERC Rents Team, HSCP 'Request for Assistance Team', Revenues and Adult Social Work Services
- Continuous monthly increase in referrals for Money Advice, Benefits Advice and appeals work
- DLA to PIP transfers
- Generated financial gains for clients of £3,651,119 this year
- Tackling child poverty/ inequality - pilot with St Mark's Primary School



167

Support for Residents



HERO Project Funded by Scottish Legal Aid Board

Partners include: ERC / Voluntary Action / Barrhead & Arklet HA's

- Supporting those who cannot access / use computers i.e JSA / U.C claimants
- Supporting clients throughout the entire process, from initial claims to representation. Resulting in £0.5million Client Financial Gain
- Partnership working with Job Centre Plus which has resulted in a reduction in claimant sanctions
- Assisting clients with keeping to their Claimant Commitment
- Assistance with CVs / Job Searching / Application forms
- Drop in service available 5 days a week

Increase in demand on other bureau services including:

- Money Advice / Welfare Benefits / Housing / Armed Services / Employment
- Resulting in £3.2 million recorded Client Financial Gain & £0.2million external funding (exclusive to third sector for welfare reform)

Next phase....

168

- New Scottish benefits agency for social security
 - Phased transition of powers over next few years
 - Intro. of a Social Security Bill in the 2016/17 Scottish parliamentary session
 - Aim to give a 'rounded assessment of people's needs and streamline the process'
- Scotland Bill gives Scotland:
 - Powers over 11 existing disability and caring benefits inc. Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payments, Carers Allowance as well as control over funeral payments, Sure Start Maternity grants and cold weather and winter fuel payments.
 - Power to top up and create new benefits
 - Several flexibilities to alter way UC payments are made by DWP
- Scottish Govt. has confirmed it will use powers to:
 - Increase Carer's Allowance to same rate as Job Seeker's Allowance
 - Abolish the bedroom tax
 - Introduce flexibilities around how UC is paid, incl. giving choice to be paid twice monthly and direct to social landlords
 - Scrapping the 84 day rule which removes income from families of disabled children

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Remaining questions... ¹⁶⁹

- Ongoing changes to the welfare reform landscape with each budget?
- How will the new Scottish benefits agency be organised and what impact will it have for councils/partner agencies?
- How soon will it be implemented?
- Will there be differences in short term and long term solutions?
- What other changes will be recommended as part of the Social Security Bill?

Further details

<http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/universalcredit>

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>

**YOUR
COUNCIL
YOUR
FUTURE**



www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

Financial Support Services Increased costs.(Welfare Reform)

	<u>2015/16</u> <u>Actual</u> £000	<u>2016-17</u> <u>Projection</u> £000	<u>2017-18</u> <u>Estimate</u> £000
<u>COSTS TO BE MAINSTREAMED:</u>			
Scottish Welfare Fund Admin. Shortfall	68,000	71,100	90,900
Customer First/MART			
2 Money Advisers	61,502	65,126	65,345
1 x FTE officer (Income Maximisation)	0	27,800	28,096
2 x FTE Officers (Welfare Rights)	65,163	69,505	69,769
1.5 x FTE Officers (Customer First)	27,263	33,196	32,964
Housing			
1 x FTE Welfare Reform Housing Officer	35,900	36,600	38,100
Total ERC Costs (Full Year) to be Mainstreamed	257,828	303,327	325,174
<u>TEMPORARY FUNDING:</u>			
Flexible Support Project (matchfunding for project to continue to Sept 17)		26,000	19,000
East Renfrewshire CAB	40,000	40,000	40,000
<u>TOTAL COSTS</u>	297,828	369,327	384,174

BLANK PAGE