
Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Date	15 November 2018
Present	Councillor Runciman

5. **Declarations of Interest**

The Executive Member confirmed that she had no personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, nor any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests, to declare in the business on the agenda.

6. **Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 14 June 2018 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

7. **Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

8. **Welfare Benefits and Financial Inclusion Update**

The Executive Member considered a report which provided an update on the report to the last meeting regarding the roll-out of Universal Credit (UC) and its effect on York residents, the current position of the York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS), and the effectiveness of the Financial Inclusion projects in addressing financial inequality in the city. The report also drew attention to a motion on Food Poverty agreed by Council on 19 July 2018. Officers reported at the meeting that the Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee had recently agreed to consider this.

A total of 4,200 people were now receiving UC in York. Between May and August 714 new claims had been made, with only 74 claimants requesting assisted digital support and 18 personal budgeting support. The council had updated its publicity regarding this support and would continue to review its services to ensure they met customer needs, including working

to increase the take-up of Discretionary Council Tax Reduction (DCTR). The YFAS scheme was currently under review in the light of the UC rollout. Figures for the first 6 months of 2018/19 were provided in paragraph 25 of the report; 601 households had been helped by the scheme during this time. Projects funded by the Financial Inclusion Steering Group (FISG) in 2017/18 had supported over 800 residents, with £58k increased income recorded. The 2018/19 bidding round had generated the highest interest to date and 9 of the 15 bids had been successful, as detailed in paragraph 35.

The report highlighted the collaborative and partnership approach being taken to work in this area. The Chief Executive Officer of Citizens Advice York (CAY) was in attendance at the session, as well as council officers, and the following additional information was provided in response to the Executive Member's questions:

- The move to UC had not increased the total number of CAY clients but it was one of their main issues of concern.
- FISG funding had enabled CAY to look at new ways of supporting clients locally within their own communities, which improved clients' experience and reduced their travel costs.
- Over the next 3 years CAY would work more closely with wards and parishes, improving accessibility and devoting more resources to telephone advice lines and webchats.
- There was a system in place to deal with times of excess demand for CAY at West Offices, but the service was stretched as it relied mostly on volunteers; nevertheless, unmet demand had been halved to 11% in the past year.
- CAY enjoyed good relationships with City of York Council (CYC) and other organisations in the city and worked closely with CYC's customer services to ensure clients received the best advice.
- The new FISG grants awarded in 2018/19 covered various periods of time, funding some projects beyond April 2019.

Resolved: (i) That the impact of Universal Credit (UC) to date on York citizens, and the actions being taken by the council and its partners to mitigate any negative financial and social effects caused by its roll-out, be noted, and that further updates to be received in due course.

Reason To confirm that the Executive Member is aware of the impact of UC and the welfare support available to residents.

(ii) That the progress made by projects sponsored through the Financial Inclusion Steering Group funding to work proactively with third sector partners on a wide range of support, early intervention and advice projects be approved.

Reason: To ensure that residents and groups are aware of financial inclusion activity.

(iii) That the position of the York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS) at the end of September, including the duration of the project grants awarded, be noted.

Reason: To confirm that the Executive Member is aware of the YFAS support funded to date in 2018/19.

(iv) That it be noted with thanks that the Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (CCSSMC) has agreed to consider the council motion on food poverty, as set out in paragraph 26 of the report, within their review of welfare benefit and financial inclusion.

Reason: In order to help mitigate food poverty in the city.

Cllr C Runciman, Chair

[The meeting started at 12.02 pm and finished at 12.28 pm].