

Annex C1

YFAS Customer Survey Outcomes

Using funding provided by the DWP, an external market research company conducted a telephone survey of YFAS applicants asking a range of questions to find out about direct customer experience of claiming help under the scheme. The sample size was 244 which, when the survey was conducted over a four week period in September 2013, represented nearly 25% of all applicants.

Feedback from those surveyed was mainly very positive although there are some areas of improvement.

The key findings were:

- Most customers (192 / 78.7%) did not need help to apply and around the same proportion (182 / 74.7%) said that the information available on eligibility was clear.
- Of the 52 (21.3% of the sample) that needed help 21 (40%) were helped by CYC staff whilst 17 (33%) were assisted by their 'key' or support worker.
- The overwhelming majority found the application process easy (80.3%) whilst only 4.1% found it difficult or very difficult.
- Speed of processing was found to be good with only 6.6% expressing any dissatisfaction whilst 71.7% were satisfied. (We aim to deal with emergency situations on the same day whilst non-emergency within a time frame aligned to customer needs).
- Some 84.6% said that the grant provided met their needs but a minority (15.4%) felt it was not sufficient. There was no particular common reason given for this beyond comments that it simply wasn't enough for their situation at that time.
- Of the 92 customers surveyed that applied for help to pay for goods (rather than daily living expenses) a clear 80% preferred the current arrangement of fulfilment by cash card rather than direct provision of goods. The other 20% would prefer goods for a number of reasons including making the process easier as the council would choose and arrange delivery (the recipient would not have to shop around to keep within the amount of grant awarded)

and some made comments about ensuring the money was spent on the correct items.

- When asked about what changes they might want to see in the scheme 70.5% thought that loans would be preferable if it meant that more people got help. Depending on repayment levels more money would go back into the scheme to help more people. Another comment asked 'if you couldn't get grant it would be good to be able to get a loan'.
- Just less than 30% of the whole sample thought that the direct provision of goods would be preferable to cash cards and an overwhelming 92.2% felt that the inclusion of 'money and benefits advice' as part of the YFAS service would be welcome.
- Despite the overall satisfaction levels with the current service being generally positive, 52.5% thought that the service should be provided through an organisation other than the council. This seems to contradict the positive responses to other questions asked and would need further research to find out the specific reasons why.
- Some of the areas for improvement include providing more information and fuller explanations as to why applications were unsuccessful with 42% (26) of those surveyed who were unsuccessful saying they did not understand the reasons why their claim was turned down.
- Several customers thought that the material on eligibility could be made clearer by simplifying the information available. Some thought less repetition and plainer phrasing would help.
- Of the 16 people who felt that it took too long several said that it took up to three days for their emergency to be dealt with.

(Our real time daily monitoring shows that we turn around emergencies on the day or within 24 hours, if the customer applies late in the day. Some applications require proof or further information, for e.g. a police crime number for stolen cash or no contact details have been given. In August 2013 we had a software problem for 1 week which would have caused a longer delay.)