

**APPENDIX 4**

**Priority:** Poverty  
**Sub-Priority:** Welfare Reform  
**Impact:** Protecting people from poverty

***What we will do in 2014/15:***

**1. Place a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness**

Progress Status	Progress RAG	A	Outcome RAG	A
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***What we did in 2014/15:-***

- Delivered a reasonable steps pilot to identify the resources/processes required to deliver an effective homeless prevention service to assist any household approaching FCC who is at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days.
- Continued the proactive response to FCC tenants impacted by the spare room subsidy ensuring they are supported to remain in, or move from their property, and lessen the negative impact on the Housing Revenue Account.

***What went well:-***

***Effective***

- The homeless prevention pilot has developed the foundation for an effective housing solutions model to be implemented to assist the authority to fulfil its new statutory homelessness prevention duties in a person centred manner and as cost effectively as possible during 2015/16.
- Effective work with internal and external partners has contributed to (i) the increase in homelessness prevented from at least 6 months despite the increase in number of applicants approaching the authority as homeless and (ii) the reduction of the average length of stay for all homeless households in B&B.
- The introduction of the Housing Access Team to triage an individuals housing need ensuring the most appropriate housing solution/s is identified and the completion of the preparation work that was required to pave the way for the implementation of a common housing register within Flintshire wef April 2015.

**What did not go so well:-**

- Introduction of sufficient levels of suitable accommodation to remove the need to homeless households (especially those with children) to be temporarily housed, albeit in an emergency, within Bed and Breakfast accommodation

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months
- Number of tenants helped to move to more affordable accommodation (because of the spare room subsidy)

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	2014/15 Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
HHA/013 - The percentage of all potentially homeless households for whom homelessness was prevented for at least 6 months.	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	84.89%	90%	90%	85.17%	A	A
Number of tenants helped to move to more affordable accommodation because of the spare room subsidy		50	65	TBC	83	G	G

Risks to Manage - Meeting the growing costs of homelessness prevention

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)			(L)	(I)	(LxI)		
H	H	R	<p>1. The partnership working with Shelter Cymru, which has been the mainstay of the 'reasonable step pilot', will be maintained during 2015/16 ensuring effective and legally compliant homeless prevention services are provided. (1)</p> <p>2. Neighbourhood Housing Service working closely with HB Service to identify tenants where an award of a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) was based upon the tenant wishing to move. This approach has helped to increase the number of tenants transferring, as a refusal to</p>	M	M	A	<p>1. Lead the development and implementation of a regional approach to promote good practice across N/Wales LA's and ensure consistency of homeless decision making in regard to the new statutory duties. (1)</p> <p>2. Provide the corporate lead to ensure that all relevant FCC departments are co-ordinated in the preparation and implementation of homelessness planning which</p>	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↓	M	M	A	March 2016



**2. Provide advice and support services to help people protect their income**

<b>Progress Status</b>	<b>Progress RAG</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>Outcome RAG</b>	<b>G</b>
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**What we did in 2014/15:-**

- Provided specialist benefit and money advice to residents helping to maximise household income enabling households to meet their housing costs, lifting households out of poverty and boosting spending power within the local economy.
- Effective management of Discretionary Housing Payment budget to target support to households, primarily impacted by the welfare reforms.
- Increased residents' access to timely, low-level social welfare advice and support through training and supporting of front line staff based in the community.

**What went well:-**

- 1,622 Flintshire residents received advice and support from the Welfare Rights Team to deal with 2,328 welfare benefit and tax credit problems. The successful interventions generated welfare benefit and tax credit payments totalling £3.1 million (£2,551,172pa ongoing payments and £568,000 one-off payments).
- Awarded Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP's) totalling £259,000 to households impacted by welfare reforms, easing pressures upon these households and supporting the homelessness prevention agenda. Developed a new approach for assessing/awarding DHP to empower applicants to help themselves to attain a stable and manageable financial position.
- FCC's approach of targeted early intervention of help and support to households generated positive results.
- Initiatives to manage the growing increase in demand for social welfare advice upon traditional advice providers. For example, the Advice and Support Gateway ensuring people are triaged and referred to appropriate services and the training of front line staff ensuring low-level problems are resolved without the requirement for a referral to be made to a traditional advice provider.

***What did not go do well:-***

- The decision by the DWP to suspend their Flexible Support Fund in January 2015 prevented the Flintshire Tackling Poverty Partnership from accessing funding to deliver a project aimed at improving financial and digital inclusion.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- Number of Flintshire residents assisted by Flintshire County Council to maximise their income
- Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions
- Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by Flintshire County Council
- Amount of monthly debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Money Advice Service
- Amount of monthly discretionary housing payment (DHP) paid to support peoples housing needs including changes due to Welfare Reform

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	2014/15 Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
Amount of additional Social Security and Tax Credits paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by FCC (WEL/001)	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	£2.3 million	£2 million	£2.6 million	£3.1 million	G	G
<b>The following indicators are provided for information and monitoring only and are not suitable for setting targets against</b>							
Number of Flintshire residents assisted by FCC to claim Additional Social Security and Tax Credits	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	1,680	N/A	N/A	1,622	N/A	N/A
Number of residents supported to successfully challenge adverse benefit decisions		180	N/A	N/A	189	N/A	N/A
Amount of monthly debt managed as a result of advice provided by the Money Advice Service <i>It has been decided this year to exclude the housing costs (i.e., total amount of outstanding mortgage) from the debt managed</i>		N/A – new measure	N/A	N/A	£1.2 million	N/A	N/A
Amount of monthly discretionary housing payment (DHP) paid to support people to adjust to Welfare Reform changes		N/A – new measure	N/A	N/A	£259,000	N/A	N/A

**Risks to Manage - Advice and support services sufficient to be able to meet demand**

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	<p>1. FCC continues to work collaboratively with five N/Wales local authorities &amp; DWP to develop joint approach to assisting households throughout the longer-term transformation of the social security system. <b>(2)</b></p> <p>2. FCC has been involved in the development of a DHP framework to promote a fair and consistent approach to decision making across all Welsh LA's. <b>(1&amp;2)</b></p> <p>3. A comprehensive social welfare training and development programme being delivered to front line staff within Supporting</p>	M	M	A	<p>1. Representative from FCC on WG National Advice Board and able to influence WG policy/processes in the development and delivery of a strategic approach to the provision of social welfare advice services in Wales. <b>(2)</b></p> <p>2. DWP will announce further 'Test &amp; Learn' activity, linked to UC Alternative Payment Arrangements; Housing Verification; &amp; Personal Budgeting</p>	Chief Officer – Community & Enterprise	↓	M	M	A	March 2016



			<p>People providers operating within Flintshire. (2)</p> <p>4. The Advice Gateway to manage referrals for welfare benefit/money advice, which is being delivered through Flintshire CAB, will continue during 2015. The Flintshire Tackling Poverty Partnership will oversee the work to develop a single access pathway to the CAB Advice &amp; Supporting People Support Gateways. (2)</p>			<p>Support in the summer of 2015. (1&amp;3)</p>					
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**Risk Progress Summary for 2014/15**

The current level of risk is Amber reflecting the work undertaken to date. The risk trend arrow shows the actions currently being undertaken are reducing the level of risk and it is expected that this will continue.

The continued focus on targeting advice and support at vulnerable households is assisting these households to manage any loss of social security income through the impacts generated by the Welfare Reforms Act 2012 and to access new income through taking up their correct entitlement to social security and tax credits. The training and development of front line workers, to increase their knowledge and skills, will help to manage the increase in demand from residents for help with social welfare issues.

**3.Support the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) within the Shotton Jobcentre Plus area**

<b>Progress Status</b>	<b>Progress RAG</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>Outcome RAG</b>	<b>G</b>
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**What we did in 2014/15:-**

- Worked with the DWP to deliver, as far as practical, the safe and secure progressive implementation of Universal Credit (UC) within Flintshire, ensuring appropriate support services were in place to assist vulnerable claimants.
- Provided key stakeholders with timely access to information and support on UC enabling them to prepare for new challenges they would face and ensure they possess the knowledge to be able to support their service users.

**What went well:-**

- The 2014/15 UC Delivery Partnership Agreement ensured all UC claimants, in need of support to make and/or manage their UC claim, had timely and ease of access to appropriate internal/external services.
- Implemented an effective communication strategy to successfully dispel myths and mitigate some of the concerns around UC, particularly amongst landlords, and encouraged constructive debate amongst stakeholders of how UC is being implemented and fed constructive criticism into the national UC implementation team, resulting in DWP introducing positive changes to national UC policy.
- Excellent partnership working between FCC, local Jobcentreplus, and DWP to identify solutions to barriers impacting upon UC claimants accessing support.

**What did not go so well:-**

- Loss of control over processes linked to paying a claimant’s UC through alternative payment arrangements when request is within UC Service Centre.

**Achievement will be measured through:**

- Number of Universal Credit claimants referred to Citizens Advice Bureau for Personal Budgeting support
- Number of Universal Credit claimants assisted with on-line access
- Number of claims referred from Jobcentre Plus to Flintshire County Council Housing Benefit service

Improvement Plan Progress  
Year End 2014/15

Achievement Measures	Lead Officer	2013/14 Baseline Data	2014/15 Target	2016/17 Aspirational Target	2014/15 Outturn	Performance RAG	Outcome Performance Predictive RAG
<b>The following indicators are provided for information and monitoring only and are not suitable for setting targets against</b>							
Number of Universal Credit claimants referred to Citizens Advice Bureau for Personal Budgeting support	Chief Officer – Community and Enterprise	N/A – new measure	N/A	TBC	55	N/A	N/A
Number of Universal Credit claimants assisted with on-line access		N/A – new measure	N/A	TBC	2	N/A	N/A
Number of claims referred from Jobcentre Plus to Flintshire County Council Housing Benefit service		N/A – new measure	N/A	TBC	88	N/A	N/A

Risks to Manage - Eviction levels rising if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
H	H	R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DWP introduced data sharing regulations in Feb 2015 allowing DWP to inform social landlords when a tenant claims UC enabling timely interventions to be put in place to prevent vulnerable tenants accruing rent arrears. <b>(1 &amp; 3)</b></li> <li>FCC continuing to work with the DWP to ensure private landlords receive similar notification to that provided to social landlords when a tenant claims UC. <b>(1 &amp; 3)</b></li> <li>Proactive approach from social housing landlords in Flintshire to jointly</li> </ol>	M	M	A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FCC will apply for funding to deliver a test &amp; learn activity, linked to UC Alternative Payment Arrangements; Housing Verification; &amp; Personal Budgeting Support, when DWP introduce their additional pilots in the autumn of 2015. <b>(1 &amp; 3)</b></li> </ol>	Chief Officer Community & Enterprise	↓	M	M	A	Jan 2015

			developing measures to support tenants impacted by the ongoing reform of the social security system, including Universal Credit. (1 2 & 3)								
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**Risk Progress Summary for 2014/15**

The current level of risk is Amber reflecting the work undertaken to date. The risk trend arrow shows the actions currently being undertaken are reducing the level of risk and it is expected that this will continue.

As a social landlord, the Council is aware of the potential for rent arrears to increase as the roll out of Universal Credit progresses. The work to prepare social housing tenants in readiness for the changes and challenges that they will face as a Universal Credit claimant, will be advanced during 2015/16. Similar work will be undertaken with private sector tenants who received a Flintshire County Council deposit bond in order to secure their property.

Risks to Manage - Local Economy may suffer as residents have less income to spend

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	M	A	<p>1. FCC continue to provide advice and support services to help Flintshire households maximise their income through accessing social security benefits &amp; managing their financial commitments. <b>(2 &amp; 3)</b></p> <p>2. Initiatives to be developed &amp; implemented to support working households, particularly containing children, who are now seeing their income fall because of the welfare reforms. <b>(2)</b></p> <p>3. FCC funding a personal</p>	M	M	A	<p>1. Project being planned to target advice and support to FCC tenants, who will be impacted by the reassessment of disability benefits that is due to commence in October 2015. <b>(1 &amp; 2)</b></p> <p>2. FCC to forecast the projected impacts of future changes to social security legislation, post May 2015, upon residents, service users, service providers, local businesses. <b>(1, 2 &amp; 3)</b></p>	Chief Officer Community & Enterprise	↔	M	M	A	March 2016

			budgeting support for UC claimants who experience problems managing their household budget. (1, 2 & 3)								
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**Risk Progress Summary for 2014/15**

The current level of risk is Amber reflecting the work undertaken to date. The risk trend arrow shows the actions currently being undertaken are maintaining the level of risk and it is expected that this will continue.

As all Flintshire households, losing welfare benefit income as a result of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 (average of £8 million per year) have not been able to replace their lost income with earned income there is less spending power within the local economy. Positive work is being progressed to increase social security income within Flintshire households who continue to fail to access their legal entitlements and this additional income (average of £5 million per year) is mitigating the full impact of the £8 million loss in benefit income from falling upon the local economy. However, the next phase of welfare reforms, expected to attain a £12 billion reduction in UK social security expenditure from 2016, will further reduce social security income that is paid to Flintshire households and increase the impact on spending power within the local economy.

Risk to Manage - Resources to meet the requirements of the Universal Credit roll-out

Gross Score (as if there are no measures in place to control the risk)			Current Actions / Arrangements in place to control the risk	Net Score (as it is now)			Future Actions and / or Arrangement to control the risk	Manager Responsible	Risk Trend	Target Score (when all actions are completed / satisfactory arrangements in place)			
Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score		Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score				Likelihood	Impact	Gross Score	Target Date
(L)	(I)	(LxI)		(L)	(I)	(LxI)				(L)	(I)	(LxI)	
M	M	A	<p>1. The DWP funded UC delivery partnership agreement ensured sufficient resources in place to support UC claimants in 2014/15. <b>(3)</b></p> <p>2. FCC &amp; DWP have enjoyed a positive &amp; productive working relationship throughout the year – this provided a firm foundation upon which the framework to safely implement UC was developed. Regular DWP/LA meetings held to discuss any arising issues. <b>(3)</b></p>	L	L	G	<p>1. The longer-term development of the 'Universal Support Delivered Locally Framework' will identify the advice &amp; support resources that are required to help residents to manage the impacts of longer-term transformation of the social security system, including the roll out of UC to more problematic client groups. <b>(1, 2 &amp; 3)</b></p>	Chief Officer Community & Environment	↔	L	L	G	March 2016



		<p>3. Dedicated UC liaison officer, based within HB Service, works proactively with staff within local Jobcentre and the UC Service Centres at Bangor and Bolton. <b>(3)</b></p> <p>4. FCC and the DWP are working to improve a claimant's access to a range of advice and support services that can help them address other social welfare problems which could impact upon their ability to meet the work seeking requirements within their UC claimant commitment &amp; face a benefit sanction. <b>(2 &amp; 3)</b></p>								
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**Risk Progress Summary for 2014/15**

The current level of risk is low (Green) reflecting the work undertaken to date. The risk trend arrow shows the actions currently being undertaken are maintaining the level of risk and it is expected that this will continue.

The Council has negotiated a Universal Credit Delivery Partnership Agreement, funded by the DWP for 2015/16, which will ensure that vulnerable residents will be able to access support to make their Universal Credit claim and manage their payments. FCC and the DWP will continue to work together to identify how appropriate support may be provided to those claimants with more complex needs, who will increasingly be claiming Universal Credit from 2016.