

Tackling Welfare Reform in the Round

Discussion Notes

Purpose: The purpose of the roundtable discussion was to find collaborative solutions to mitigate the impact of welfare reform.

Discussion 1

This discussion encouraged participants to identify the impact of welfare reform and discuss solutions to make welfare reform easier to deal with.

Why is welfare reform a problem? / What do we want to tackle?

Impact on Individuals

- Delays in benefits – financial strain
- Impact of sanctions and isolation
- DWP/ HMRC difficult to communicate with
→ individuals seek additional support
- Welfare Myths – deserving/ undeserving
- Cultural bias → Gender/ income inequality
- Media negative impact on perception of poverty
- Emotional impact- fear/anxiety/ stress

Impact on Services

- Increased demand for services
- Lack of Resources – budgets
- Cases more intensive – longer forms and appeal processes
- Strain on NHS

What would make welfare reform easier to deal with?

For Individuals

- Improve Communication – Easy Read
- Equality - remove barriers, stigma, and myths
- Consistency in Application and Assessment Process
- Person centred approach
- Updated list of all resources

For Services

- Sharing Information – online referral service
- Disability/Equalities Training for services
- Promotion of what is available
- Partnership working
- Hubs are more welcoming
- More localised working

Discussion 2

The results from the first discussion produced five themes to be discussed. Participants were then invited to choose a theme to discuss and create an action plan using the following questions as a guideline: What works already being done, what more can be done and who should be involved.

Theme	Ideas Discussed
1. Cultural Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change of welfare reform – social security language• Directory of groups based on individuals affected by WR• Disability History forum circulated• Compact Survey – gain demographics of impacts
2. (Online) Directory and Referral Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online presence important - Getinvolved.org• Citizens own their own data → Data protection, referrals and guidance• Information from Trussell Trust online directory• Learn from Dundee/ Fife online directory
3. Preventative Work and Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public awareness and knowledge of entitlement• Support to fill in forms correctly• Coordination of advice services and training session for staff• Localisations of services within neighbourhood model of the council
4. Localisation and Personalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attitude towards system – change personnel approach to more holistic• Look at issues in front of us to identify gaps and look at making changes to current service provisions• Neutral hubs that are flexible in practice
5. Information and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More easy read and bite size information available• Make information specific to local areas• Map different services – Online Directory