



# Evaluation of Financial Capability Project Sheffield

## Final Report

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# **Evaluation of Financial Capability Project Sheffield**

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The views expressed in this report are the authors' own.

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## Summary

This report contains the findings of an evaluation of the Sheffield Financial Capability project being implemented by Financial Inclusion Services (Yorkshire) Ltd (FISY). The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University was contracted by FISY December 2009 to evaluate the programme in the period January 2010 to March 2011. In March 2011 it was agreed to extend the period of evaluation by a further two months to allow additional evidence to be collected.

## Context

In the UK, overall strategic responsibility for financial capability rests with the Financial Services Authority (FSA), part of its statutory obligation is to promote public understanding of the financial system.

In Sheffield, the need for access to advice and information about financial products and services has been identified as a key requirement in the local strategy to address financial exclusion, as is the need for agencies to work together strategically to provide comprehensive support services to those in need of financial information, advice and products.

The Sheffield Financial Capability project is part of a wider suite of interventions which aim to address financial exclusion across South Yorkshire. The project is managed by Financial Inclusion Services (Yorkshire) Ltd (FISY), which also works with Voluntary Action Rotherham to manage the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) financial inclusion project. Alongside the Sheffield project, financial capability projects have also operated in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.

## About the Financial Capability Project

The Sheffield Financial Capability project was launched in May 2008 and is funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation (formerly HBOS Foundation). The project runs until September 2011. It is managed and implemented by FISY from its offices in Sheffield city centre and is overseen by a steering group which comprises representatives of Lloyds TSB Foundation, Sheffield Homes, the Debt Support Unit and FISY.

The Project's main aim is to increase the financial capability of individuals, with a particular emphasis on working with those who are financially excluded.

Funding (£200k over three years) has provided for financial capability Development Workers (1 worker in year one, and 2 workers in years two and three).

## Project Delivery

In its early stages the project experienced a number of perhaps unanticipated challenges that meant that early delivery targets were not met. However, overall performance improved over time and in most instances targets for each quarter were met or exceeded.

A number of factors contributed to successful delivery:

- the recruitment of an additional development worker in August 2009 provided **extra resources**

- continued efforts on the part of project workers to **engage with local agencies** meant awareness of the project and what it was offering grew amongst local agencies and projects
- **materials and resources were revised** and improved according to participant feedback and the needs of particular groups
- development workers improved their **knowledge of successful recruitment strategies** and were able to put this into practice: working with established groups worked well, public advertising did not
- engagement with practitioners in other areas in South Yorkshire and with sub-regional structures enabled the **sharing of experience and best practice** and raised the profile of the financial capability project

By September 2011 the project has **exceeded end of project targets** for the delivery of financial capability sessions, the numbers of new groups worked with, the number of participants who expressed a desire to open a basic bank account and the numbers of participants starting a relationship with Sheffield Credit Union. It has fallen slightly short on one target for the numbers of participants referred for debt and money advice.

## Financial Capability Sessions

Financial capability education takes place primarily in group settings in the community. The courses range from one off sessions covering the most basic money management information to longer courses over a few weeks, looking in more detail at different aspects of personal finance. All the courses are delivered free of charge at various venues and tailored to the needs of the client group.

The successful delivery of the financial capability sessions is facilitated by a number of factors:

- flexibility to adapt sessions and resources to meet the needs of particular groups and in response to participant feedback is helpful in keeping sessions relevant and engaging
- aligning the financial capability sessions with sessions on other topics helps to attract the interest of participants
- a mix of one-to-one and group sessions is essential to meet the needs of different individuals and groups.

But there have also been some challenges, particularly in relation to attracting and maintaining participants.

The support of frontline staff is critical in 'selling' financial capability to clients and in encouraging attendance. **Interaction between financial capability development workers and frontline staff in agencies is crucial in ensuring that frontline workers understand and buy into the project.**

**Attendance at sessions is most consistent where groups were programmes involve an element of compulsion.**

**Feedback from those participating in financial capability sessions has been positive.**

**Observations from staff working in agencies for which financial capability sessions were delivered were also positive.**

However, there is no evidence on the longer term impact of the sessions on the financial attitudes or behaviour of participants. Longitudinal tracking of participants would be required to measure longer term behavioural and attitudinal change.

## Working with Partners

The financial capability project has worked with a range of organisations to deliver financial capability sessions. Attending a range of different community events aimed at particular groups and areas of Sheffield has proved important for the project's networking. The project has also developed strategic relationships with agencies working in a number of key policy areas with a view to embedding financial capability in the ongoing delivery of frontline services. This chapter discusses:

- building networks
- housing (registered social landlords)
- worklessness and employability
- debt and money advice services.

**Feedback received from frontline workers has been very positive.**

**Building on the Financial Capability Project a new Sheffield Homes Money Management Project will provide financial capability help for its clients across the city signposting those with debt problems to the Debt Support Unit.**

**A Financial Capability Pilot Project led by Sheffield Debt Support Unit was developed in partnership with FISY using the Financial Capability project resources.**

**The pilot project offered benefits to clients and debt support services.**

**Partnership working led by the Debt Support Unit with the Financial Capability project and Sheffield Homes has delivered money management sessions to 350 entry level students at Hillsborough College.**

Practitioners have valued the work of the financial capability project and perceive considerable benefits to their clients. In the case of the debt and money advice pilot project, the integration of financial capability and debt advice has been demonstrated to be beneficial to clients and organisations and the pilot has provided a model for the ongoing delivery of these services across the city.

## Conclusions

The evaluation has revealed a number of conclusions:

- **the importance of working in partnership:** collaborative work has been key to success of project and has enabled sessions to be delivered to a large client base. The project has also benefited greatly from the support and resources of the Financial Inclusion Champions and from opportunities to work with other financial inclusion practitioners in the sub-region
- **financial capability is central to the remit of many organisations:** as a result of the project's activities financial capability has moved up the priority list of many agencies. The project is reaching a wider range of groups and also getting more requests to train front-line workers. Agencies are also making use of learning resources and materials developed by the project and have been able to build on the experience of working with



the financial capability project to begin to address wider issues around financial inclusion

- **flexibility in terms of delivery is needed to meet the requirements of different groups:** sessions have been tailored to meet the needs of different clients and have worked well for groups with learning disabilities, those with problems with literacy and numeracy and other groups with special needs such as the deaf
- **the project has received positive feedback from participants and agencies:** sessions are widely regarded as 'helpful' and 'useful' and are generally enjoyed by participants
- however, it can be **difficult to evidence tangible outcomes from the project:** there is evidence that participants are gaining new knowledge and skills but longer term tracking of participants is needed to assess longer term outcomes.

It is recommended that any future financial capability project:

- **builds on the successful partnerships** which have been established through the South Yorkshire-wide financial inclusion projects
- considers carefully the costs and opportunities associated with models which concentrate on the delivery of financial capability education in **group or individual settings**
- ensures that financial capability is **integrated into other services which affect the financial inclusion of vulnerable clients:** housing, employment, debt and money advice
- **considers the need for longer term tracking of participants** in order to establish outcomes associated with financial capability; this may require the need for incentives to maintain the commitment of participants and the benchmarking of outcomes for recipients of financial capability sessions against those who have not received equivalent services.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report contains the findings of an evaluation of the Sheffield Financial Capability project being implemented by Financial Inclusion Services (Yorkshire) Ltd (FISY). The Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University was contracted by FISY December 2009 to evaluate the programme in the period January 2010 to March 2011. In March 2011 it was agreed to extend the period of evaluation by a further two months to allow additional evidence to be collected.
- 1.2. The evaluation was conducted in two stages:
- Phase One ran from January to March 2010
  - Phase Two took place between January and May 2011.

### Aims of evaluation

- 1.3. At each phase a number of research activities were undertaken:
- interviews with project workers to discuss development, implementation and progress of the project and to inform the development of research tools (particularly topic guides for interviews with participants)
  - review and analysis of project documentation and data - including quarterly reports and monitoring data (prepared for the project funder), course evaluation sheets, and additional data on referrals
  - interviews with workers in partner agencies - to discuss joint working and the transfer of learning from the Financial Capability Project
  - observation of delivery of financial capability sessions
  - interviews with project participants.
- 1.4. In the main these activities were unproblematic. However, it proved difficult to identify sessions for observation, and thus to access participants for interview. This was particularly apparent in the second stage of the evaluation. The project experienced some staffing changes (redundancy and maternity leave) in the later stages of implementation which meant that capacity was reduced and thus fewer sessions were delivered in this period than might otherwise have been the case. Many sessions delivered at this time were also on a 'one to one' basis which limited the options for different observation settings. In addition, frequent cancellation or postponement of financial capability sessions (by project partners) meant that repeated attempts by the evaluators to secure arrangements to observe the delivery of sessions and to gain access to participants were unsuccessful.
- 1.5. Further discussion of the research methods, along with details of interviewees; the observation of sessions; the feedback data analysed and numbers of participants spoken to are contained at Appendix One to this report.

1.6. The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- section 2 outlines the context for the delivery of financial capability services
- section 3 describes the Sheffield Financial Capability project and its development over time
- section 4 looks at the delivery of Financial Capability sessions and reviews evidence of their impact on participants
- section 5 discusses the project's approach to working with partner agencies and the degree to which financial capability is embedded within frontline service organisations
- section 6 contains the conclusions to the evaluation.

## 2. Context

2.1. In the UK, overall strategic responsibility for financial capability rests with the Financial Services Authority (FSA), part of its statutory obligation is to promote public understanding of the financial system. The baseline study undertaken by the FSA in 2006 to inform the development of a national financial inclusion strategy<sup>1</sup> identified five dimensions of financial capability:

- being able to manage your money
- keeping track of your finances
- planning ahead
- making informed decisions about financial products
- staying up to date about financial matters.

2.2. The baseline study, and associated policy document<sup>2</sup>, highlights the need for financial capability support in a context in which people are increasingly required to take individual responsibility for their financial affairs. Key themes to emerge from the study are that:

- many people are failing to plan ahead adequately for retirement or an unexpected drop in income
- a small proportion of the population is experiencing problems with debt, but they are often severely affected
- many people do not take adequate steps to choose products to meet their needs
- the under 40s are less financially capable, on average, than older people.

2.3. The Financial Capability Strategy is being delivered by the FSA, in partnership with Government, the financial services industry and the voluntary and community sector. The strategy recognises that improvements to financial capability offer benefits not only to individuals, but through enabling people to exert stronger influence over retail markets (which include those for financial services) will create more efficient and effective markets, thus reducing the need for regulatory intervention<sup>3</sup>. However, it is acknowledged that improvements in financial capability require long-term changes in attitudes.

2.4. The habits and behaviour towards money and the measurement of changes in these factors is inherently difficult, creating particular challenges for the evaluation of financial capability initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Financial Capability in the UK: Establishing a Baseline, 2006

[http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/other/fincap\\_baseline.pdf](http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/other/fincap_baseline.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Financial Capability in the UK: Delivering Change, 2006

[http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/other/fincap\\_delivering.pdf](http://www.fsa.gov.uk/pubs/other/fincap_delivering.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> FSA Consumer Research 68 Evidence of impact: An overview of financial education evaluations (2008), prepared for the FSA by the Personal Finance Research Centre, University of Bristol

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/geography/research/pfrc/themes/fincap/pfrc0810.pdf>

- 2.5. Financial capability is not the same as financial inclusion, although there is considerable overlap between (the absence of) both. In Sheffield, the need for access to advice and information about financial products and services has been identified as a key requirement in the local strategy to address financial exclusion<sup>4</sup>, as is the need for agencies to work together strategically to provide comprehensive support services to those in need of financial information, advice and products.
- 2.6. The Sheffield Financial Capability project is part of a wider suite of interventions which aim to address financial exclusion across South Yorkshire. The project is managed by Financial Inclusion Services (Yorkshire) Ltd (FISY), which also works with Voluntary Action Rotherham to manage the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) financial inclusion project. Alongside the Sheffield project, financial capability projects have also operated in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham.
- 2.7. The RIEP project, which has been evaluated separately<sup>5</sup>, focused on:
- increasing efficiency and sustainability of financial capability
  - increasing capacity within the advice sector through innovation, partnership working and sharing best practice; and
  - improving delivery of financial inclusion services to offenders, ex offenders and their families.
- 2.8. The South Yorkshire-wide evaluation highlights the positive impacts associated with the RIEP programme, which include increased capacity and changed attitudes amongst members of the public, and within agencies. It also identifies the central importance of partnership working, and of embedding financial capability within a wider framework of debt support and money advice services. These themes also emerged from the evaluation of the Sheffield Financial Capability project, and are explored more fully in the following chapters.

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<sup>4</sup> A financially inclusive Sheffield: A strategy to address financial exclusion in Sheffield. Sheffield Financial Inclusion Steering Group, October 2008.

<http://www.fisy1.co.uk/FISY%20pages/FISY%20pages/A%20Financially%20Inclusive%20Sheffield%20-%20Final%20Full%20Strategy%20Document.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Financial Capability Project Evaluation: A final report to Financial Inclusion Services Yorkshire , Ecotec, June 2010

## 3. About the Financial Capability Project

- 3.1. This chapter provides a brief overview of the structure and activities associated with the Sheffield Financial Capability Project.
- 3.2. The Sheffield Financial Capability project was launched in May 2008 and is funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation (formerly HBOS Foundation). The project was developed by Financial Inclusion Services (Yorkshire) Limited (FISY) in response to an approach by the HBOS Foundation to deliver a financial capability project based on FISY's experience of working with partners to deliver financial capability sessions (focused on supermarket shopping) in deprived communities in the south of Sheffield. The project runs until September 2011. It is managed and implemented by FISY from its offices in Sheffield city centre. The Project has a city-wide focus. The Financial Capability Project is overseen by a steering group which comprises representatives of Lloyds TSB Foundation, Sheffield Homes, the Debt Support Unit and FISY.
- 3.3. The Project's main aim is to increase the financial capability of individuals, with a particular emphasis on working with those who are financially excluded.
- 3.4. Funding (£200k over three years) has provided for financial capability Development Workers (one worker in year one, and two workers in years two and three) who have undertaken a range of activities:
  - the delivery of free Financial Capability sessions on a range of subjects including how to open and manage a bank account, accessing affordable credit, managing your debts, budgeting, saving, shopping skills, credit reports, utility bills and insurance
  - attendance at events and meetings (including Tenants and Residents Association events, housing association events, community fun days and open days) speaking about financial capability topics, signposting people to Sheffield Debt Support Unit and handing out budgeting information
  - working with Sheffield Debt Support Unit to embed financial capability within wider structures for financial advice and support
  - delivering training to front-line workers in organisations working with groups that are vulnerable to financial exclusion including social housing providers, Probation Service South Yorkshire, Jobcentre Plus, Sheffield College, Sheffield City Council, Trading Standards and Debt Support Unit
  - delivering a short programme of financial capability sessions to prisoners due for release from Doncaster prison
  - the development of resources to support training and financial capability, available via FISY's website
  - signposting and referring participants to Sheffield Credit Union and to debt support and money advice services within the city
  - engaging in sub-regional forums and networks to share experience and best practice.

3.5. The next chapter explores evidence on project delivery, and the degree to which the project has met its targets.

## 4. Project Delivery

- 4.1. This chapter discusses the implementation of the Sheffield Financial Capability project. It explores issues associated with the setting up of the project and the degree to which the project has met its targets over time.
- 4.2. The project experienced a slow start. It took some time to recruit the development worker (there was one worker in year one) and in its early stages the project experienced a number of perhaps unanticipated challenges that meant that early delivery targets were not met. Issues included:
- it took **time for development workers to establish relationships with agencies** and develop a market for the delivery of financial capability sessions; although sessions were offered free of charge there was still a need to secure buy-in from agencies in order to access groups and develop opportunities for effective delivery; this took longer than expected and as a result less groups were accessed in the early stages of the project than originally envisaged
  - there were some **early difficulties in attracting participants** to the financial capability sessions, particularly when the development workers were reliant on frontline workers in agencies for the recruitment of participants. These issues have eased over time as financial capability has become more embedded in delivery organisations, and the project has garnered increased support from front-line workers as well as management staff in agencies
  - **practical problems** such as the availability of suitably sized or located premises and the capacity of staff within other organisations have sometimes slowed delivery
  - the project has been working within a **challenging local context**: the advice sector in Sheffield has been fractured in nature and parts of it are poorly resourced. This has limited capacity for advice services to address financial capability issues with their clients, although the project ran a successful pilot with two local advice agencies (discussed further in Chapter 6). In addition uncertainties within the advice sector around funding and future sustainability have not been conducive to effective collaboration.
- 4.3. As a result of these issues the development worker concentrated in the early stages of the project on the development of teaching resources and modules. These were based on examples used successfully by the development workers in previous roles and on resources available via financial capability projects operating elsewhere in the country. The resources developed by the Sheffield Financial Capability project can be adapted to meet the needs of particular groups and are made available to agencies and individuals via FISY's website.
- 4.4. Early efforts also concentrated on building relationships with agencies and engaging with wider sub-regional activities and networks in order to establish support for the Financial Capability project. One successful strategy for securing initial access to groups was to 'piggyback' on to existing courses: courses run by South East Sheffield Citizens' Advice Bureau and the probation service (at HMP Marshgate in Doncaster) provided early opportunities to deliver financial capability sessions. Over time, as relationships with agencies have become more established, and a wider



group of agencies have been engaged, demand for financial capability sessions has increased. The project's approach to working with partners is discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

- 4.5. In light of the slower delivery rate during the initial stages of the project, performance targets for the project were adjusted at the end of 2009. However, overall performance improved over the lifetime of the project and in most instances targets for each quarter have been met or exceeded.
- 4.6. A number of factors contributed to successful delivery:
- the recruitment of an additional development worker in August 2009 provided **extra resources**
  - continued efforts on the part of project workers to **engage with local agencies** meant awareness of the project and what it was offering grew amongst local agencies and projects
  - **materials and resources were revised and improved** according to participant feedback and the needs of particular groups
  - development workers improved their **knowledge of successful recruitment strategies** and were able to put this into practice: working with established groups worked well, public advertising did not
  - engagement with practitioners in other areas in South Yorkshire and with sub-regional structures enabled the **sharing of experience and best practice** and raised the profile of the Financial Capability project; in particular, working with the DWP Financial Inclusion Champions (2008-11) and the RIEP projects across South Yorkshire has enabled links with partner agencies operating at this spatial scale to be developed and strengthened
  - attendance at **financial capability project workers meetings** and forums facilitated the sharing of good practice and resources amongst project workers in South Yorkshire and regionally, and provided a mechanism for the development of joint activities at the sub-regional level.
- 4.7. In the later stages of the project delivery concentrated on consolidating relationships with existing groups and agencies. One of the Financial Capability project workers started her maternity leave in February and for the remainder of the project there will be only one development worker. An unfortunate and unanticipated event was that several of the organisations that the financial capability project provided sessions for lost funding or ceased operation at the end of March 2011. However, it has meant that the remaining worker has been able to cover all the available work with only minor loss of frequency for some provision.
- 4.8. Table 4.1 shows the project's performance against key targets to the end of the project in September 2011. It demonstrates that the project has **exceeded end of project targets** for the delivery of financial capability sessions, the numbers of new groups worked with, the number of participants who expressed a desire to open a basic bank account and the numbers of participants starting a relationship with Sheffield Credit Union. It has fallen slightly short on one target for the numbers of participants referred for debt and money advice.

**Table 4.1: Key Milestones and Targets Monitored**

	<b>Total as of Last Quarter</b>	<b>Total as of This Quarter</b>	<b>End of Project Target</b>
Total Sessions	2336	2683	2022
New Groups	745	933	801
Open a Basic Bank Account	990	1101	800
Start a relationship with the Credit Union	1793	2018	2000
Referred for Advice	716	735	800

4.9. The project has worked with a **wide range of groups** and many organisations have received on going delivery. These include:

- The Probation Service
- Financial capability pilot project run by the Debt Support Unit
- Sheffield Homes
- Sheffield Springs Academy
- Sheffield Wildlife Trust 'cook and eat' project
- Autism Plus
- Best Training
- HMP Marshgate, Doncaster
- Youth Association South Yorkshire (YASY)
- Star House – Future Proof 16-18 year olds project
- Together Women’s Project
- Heeley City Farm
- Woodthorpe Primary School
- Cherry Tree Housing
- Emmaus (homeless organisation).

4.10. The wide range of different organisations worked with demonstrates that overall the project has succeeded in reaching groups who are the **most vulnerable to financial exclusion**. The project has collated data on the characteristics of those attending financial capability sessions. These show that as at February 2011 almost 40 per cent of those who attended sessions were aged 25 or under and almost 20 per cent were from a mixed or none white ethnic group. In addition, around 20 per cent of attendees who stated whether or not they were disabled said they had a disability. Of those attendees who stated their tenure 41 per cent were social renters, 20 per cent were home owners and 15 per cent were private renters.

4.11. This chapter has demonstrated that overall the project has been successfully implemented and has met or exceeded most of its targets for delivery. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss in more detail two key aspects of the project: the delivery of financial capability sessions, and working with partner agencies.

## 5. Financial Capability Sessions

- 5.1. This chapter discusses the project's approach to the delivery of financial capability sessions and highlights the aspects that have contributed to successful delivery. It also reviews evidence on participants' and agencies' views of the sessions and the impact of the project on the financial capabilities of beneficiaries.
- 5.2. Financial capability education takes place primarily in **group settings** in the community. The sessions are generally marketed as 'money management workshops'. Sessions are suitable for those with low literacy and numeracy skills and development workers have worked with organisations to deliver sessions to vulnerable groups, and those with specialist needs such as people with physical and mental health problems, ex-offenders, young people not in education, employment or training, teenage mothers, care leavers, long term job seekers, people recovering from substance misuse, and the homeless. The courses range from one off sessions covering the most basic money management information to longer courses over a few weeks, looking in more detail at different aspects of personal finance. All the courses are delivered free of charge at various venues and tailored to the needs of the client group.
- 5.3. Examples of courses delivered include:
- **2 Hour Mini Course**
    - Bank Accounts
    - Shopping Skills (including a taste test)
    - Affordable Credit
    - Managing Debt
    - Budgeting Techniques.
  - **3 Week Course (1½ hour sessions)**
    - **Week1**  
Bank Accounts  
Shopping  
Utilities and Insurance
    - **Week 2**  
Credit and Debt
    - **Week 3**  
Budgeting and saving.
- 5.4. The length and duration of programmes is often determined by the **frequency of agencies' contact with new client groups**. For instance, a Jobsteps employment programme run in conjunction with Autism Plus is delivered on a ten week rolling programme and the financial capability workers deliver three sessions during each ten week period. Similarly Youth Association South Yorkshire (YASY) engages a new group of young people every two months, providing ongoing opportunities to deliver financial capability to new groups of young people. In contrast, development workers have visited the Emmaus hostel for homeless people in Sheffield only twice during the course of the project. This was to allow a sufficient period of time between visits for turnover of people living in the hostel and thus for the delivery of sessions to new clients.

5.5. The successful delivery of the financial capability sessions is facilitated by a number of factors:

- **flexibility to adapt sessions and resources to meet the needs of particular groups and in response to participant feedback is helpful in keeping sessions relevant and engaging:** for instance a budgeting game that was tested out with one group of participants (on an A4E return to work programme) was not repeated because participants found it 'patronising' and on another occasion a budgeting session with an employability group of 16-18 year old males looked at the costs of travelling to work using a motorbike or scooter. This enabled the group to think not only about the purchase price but also the need to budget for ongoing expenses such as fuel, maintenance and insurance (which is often very high for people in this category). Development workers commented that using 'real life' examples that appeal to a particular group helps to increase interaction by providing the group with an opportunity to talk about things they know about
- **aligning the financial capability sessions with sessions on other topics helps to attract the interest of participants:** development workers recognised that money management is not a theme that is universally appealing and therefore sought opportunities to embed financial capability within other areas of interest. A successful example was the 'cook and eat' sessions hosted by Sheffield Wildlife Trust (SWT): after the cook and eat sessions development workers delivered a financial capability session focused on shopping. This incorporated a taste test of branded versus 'value' goods that could be directly related to the 'cook and eat' session. The interactive nature of these sessions was particularly valued by the development workers, as was the fact that the support of SWT enabled them to access groups that might not have otherwise engaged with financial capability education
- **a mix of one-to-one and group sessions is essential to meet the needs of different individuals and groups:** the financial capability project was designed to deliver financial capability education in a group setting and in the main this has been the model that has been adhered to. However, it became apparent over the course of the project that there was also a need for delivery on a one to one basis, particularly when working with vulnerable groups, and in instances where it proved difficult to attract or maintain enough participants to deliver in a group setting. One to one delivery has also been developed in a pilot project to integrate financial capability in debt advice services, discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.6. But there have also been some challenges, particularly in relation to attracting and maintaining participants. Project staff have noted that the content of advertising materials is critical, particularly in the use of clear language which conveys to potential participants what financial capability sessions are about, and what they can expect to happen if they attend. Similarly, project workers have learned that it is important to have appropriate venues, which make participants feel welcome and comfortable and with refreshments and catering facilities available.

5.7. The support of frontline staff is critical in 'selling' financial capability to clients and in encouraging attendance. However, the development workers were often reliant on organisations cascading information to frontline workers. There were frequent examples where development workers had engaged with staff in a management capacity in agencies and received a positive reaction to the project but this did not always translate into opportunities for effective delivery because frontline staff were not adequately informed about the aims and objectives of the project or did not understand how financial capability could help them meet their clients' needs. **Interaction between financial capability development workers and frontline**

**staff in agencies is therefore crucial in ensuring that frontline workers understand and buy into the project.**

- 5.8. The project has tried to encourage attendance by offering incentives. This was trialled at two interim housing projects where attendance had been especially low and included the offer of a £10 supermarket voucher in return for attendance at a session and entering attendees into a prize raffle to win a bag of shopping. As a result attendance at one of the projects increased. Nevertheless development workers commented that, perhaps inevitably, **attendance at sessions is most consistent where groups were programmes involve an element of compulsion.** An example is back to work programmes for the long-term unemployed where attendance is a necessary condition of benefit entitlement. Sessions have been run in collaboration with Best Training and A4E and have focused specifically on budgeting issues associated with return to work.
- 5.9. Despite some problems with attendance, **feedback from those participating in financial capability sessions has been positive.** The evaluators interviewed four participants attending financial capability sessions for clients of South Yorkshire Probation Service. All said that they found the sessions useful and helpful. Individual comments included:
- "useful information"
  - "it will help with bank accounts and keeping stuff in order and that"
  - "I would advise others to come on the course"
  - "I keep an eye out for offers now"
  - "I think it will help me save money and stop me spending as much"
  - "The session on shopping was particularly useful"
  - "I came to find out a bit more about money management. I knew a lot of it but it was excellent I enjoyed it. I learnt a bit more about things"
  - "Some bits of the course were very useful".
- 5.10. Another example of how the Financial Capability project provided help for participants is illustrated by the case of a woman who attended a Money Management 1-2-1 Drop in session at one of Sheffield Homes Interim Housing Sites (see below).

### **Interim Housing Project - Money Management 1-2-1 Drop in session**

Mary came to see the financial capability worker as she was confused about her mini statement and the different charges she was getting from her bank. She didn't understand why every time her benefits were paid into her account she had no money in her account. Mary had visited the bank but they had said to use the free phone and contact the call centre. She felt very confused and unhappy with the service she received and only wanted five minutes of someone's time to explain why she was getting so many charges and in to so much debt.

Together the financial capability worker and Mary looked at her budget to see what her income and out goings were. Mary mentioned high over draft charges. Mary had a packaged account which offered a variety of products she no longer needed or wanted. The account had been opened as it provided a service for Mary's partner who she had since split up from.

The financial capability worker and Mary discussed other kinds of bank accounts available and also the pros and cons of packaged accounts. Mary wanted to reduce and remove the overdraft facility from her account. She wanted to stay with the banking provider she had but change the account. The financial capability worker explained that the bank would want the overdraft paying back and three options were explained to Mary:

- If she felt confident enough she could go and speak to an account manager, offer a manageable weekly figure to pay off the overdraft and to request a basic bank account rather than her packaged account. (This would be easy to manage and she would be in control of her account without the worry of being over drawn or using the overdraft)
- She could contact her Citizens Advice Bureau and they could help her write letters and contact the bank to negotiate paying off the overdraft again at an affordable rate
- The financial capability worker offered to accompany Mary to the bank to support her while she spoke to the account manager

Mary decided to go herself; so the financial capability worker wrote up her budget and highlighted the different charges she was paying and how she could pay a small weekly fee to get rid of her over draft. The worker gave Mary her contact number in case she needed support and confirmed that she would be available the following week if Mary had any issues. On seeing her the following week Mary was happy that the bank had listened to her and had changed her account. They had agreed a weekly amount to reduce and remove her overdraft. Mary said she felt more in control of her account and finances.

- 5.11. Additional information has also been gathered by Feedback Evaluation Reports compiled by one of the DWP South Yorkshire Financial Inclusion Champions from A4E and Best Training clients who attended Money Management Sessions. 17 clients at A4E and 12 clients at Best Training completed an evaluation form. 88 per cent and 92 per cent of participants respectively indicated that they had found the session useful.

- 5.12. Positive comments about the content of the training at A4E included:
- "found the session with (the development worker) very informative and found out a lot on bank accounts and sorting out debt"
  - "the information about how to manage the gap between stopping benefits and when you start work, I thought was very useful"
  - "information on dealing with debt and informal Q&A on people's individual circumstances was good"
  - "very informative regarding my banking situation"
  - "went really well"
  - "interesting in how to clear debts"
  - "I thought it was very informative"
  - "good"
  - "I found it interesting"
  - "I found it very helpful."
- 5.13. Positive comments about the content of the training were also obtained from Best Training clients:
- "a better understanding of debt management and also what debts are a priority"
  - "helped me work out all about my money"
  - "it's helped me prioritise which things need to be paid for immediately and which things can wait until sustainable income becomes a reality"
  - "this has helped me think about my money before starting work"
  - "very good for budgeting when starting work".
- 5.14. There was only one negative comment from A4E participants which related to the nature of a budgeting exercise which was, as discussed above, subsequently not repeated. There were no negative comments from Best Training participants.
- 5.15. As outlined in Chapter Two, one of the shortcomings of evidence around the impact of financial capability sessions is that there is a dearth of research on the long-term effects of exposure to financial capability education on attitudes and behaviours to money management. It has not been possible within the confines of this evaluation to identify long-term behavioural change for participants. However, there were some (albeit small scale) indications that participants anticipated that they might make changes as a result of their involvement in the financial capability project. Three of the four participants interviewed by the evaluators thought that they would make changes and one said may be. Anticipated changes included:
- "budgeting and things like that"
  - "might think about getting some credit so that I can improve my credit rating" (this respondent had a fencing and timber company and wanted to buy the yard that he currently rented).
- 5.16. Three of the four participants spoken to by the evaluators also felt that they were likely to go on and get further help or advice and all four said they had (or would) pass on the information at the sessions to family and/or friends:



- "I have been talking about it to a couple of people about ways of saving money and things that help you not to get into debt"
  - "yep about shopping and comparing prices and looking around."
- 5.17. **Observations from staff working in agencies for which financial capability sessions were delivered were also positive.** Workers reported that their clients enjoyed the money management sessions and that the sessions were good at getting clients involved. However, they also commented that it was not always easy to know what the longer term impacts of financial capability sessions might be.
- 5.18. A representative of Jobsteps, which is an organisation that works with unemployed adults with autism and other learning difficulties, commented that it was important that the sessions did not patronise her clients and they also helped groups work together as a team which was an important objective for Jobsteps training. However, she could not say whether clients took anything away from the sessions or whether they acted on the information received. She commented that most clients lived at home and perhaps weren't faced with issues about budgeting (which may be more relevant to those who live independently). However, many of the participants were learning about things that they did not know about before and the worker's view was that even if clients took away just one thing from the programme then that is beneficial. This interviewee also appreciated the fact that training was free to organisations and felt that the FISY project had improved her awareness of debt advice and this may mean she could direct people towards local services if they needed this sort of help.
- 5.19. An interviewee representing the YASY Future Proof Employability Group at Youth Association South Yorkshire was similarly affirmative. The financial capability project delivered sessions to the Future Proof Employability group (young people not in employment, education or training), young mums 1 and 2 groups (pre- and post-birth), a construction group, a health and social care group, and a get into youth work group. The interviewee reported that her clients always enjoy the financial capability sessions and say that they learn something new about topics that they did not know about before (for instance bank accounts and credit cards). She gathers feedback from sessions and reported that the clients say things like they are not going to get into debt and that they did not realise about the cost of debt. She remarked that at the very least the course has an impact on her clients' views of dealing with money and opens their eyes to things that they did not know before.
- 5.20. She felt the course provided information that was needed if her clients were going to become employable and was part and parcel of what was needed to help move them forward. Although most 16-18 year olds she sees do not yet have to manage money the course helps open their eyes to what happens when they get a job and begin to live independently.
- 5.21. YASY are also looking at expanding the inclusion of financial capability sessions into the Vocational Skills Programme for year 10 and 11 young people. Currently YASY do an activity on setting up home and looking at income that this group of young people get from their parents. Money management course would work well with this group.
- 5.22. Finally, this interviewee also felt that if the course was not available in the future then YASY would have to get staff to deliver something on money management and would consider using FISY staff to train YASY staff. However, she said it would be a real loss if YASY were not able to continue the money management sessions. Having FISY come along to deliver the sessions with all the props and resources



definitely had a much greater impact on clients than if it the course had to be delivered in-house by YASY staff.

5.23. The Financial Capability project also provided examples of organisations using and adapting skills and resources gained through the financial capability project:

- Sheffield Wildlife Trust has developed a shopping course
- Emmaus Homeless Project has requested information from FISY about budgeting
- Sheffield Homes has taken on the shopping basket / taste test exercise. Sheffield Homes Income Management team and customer service staff use it as a way of getting tenants to talk about money and money management issues
- A member of staff at a community project has been mentored in the use of the money skills box which he has then been able to deliver locally
- Other financial capability providers in South Yorkshire have used materials developed by the Sheffield project
- Sheffield Mental Health CAB has been given copies of all financial capability resources.

5.24. This chapter has reviewed the delivery of financial capability sessions and has summarised the positive views of participants and agencies in relation to course delivery and impact. However, there is no evidence on the longer term impact of the sessions on the financial attitudes or behaviour of participants (although participants and interviewees from agencies anticipated positive impacts). Longitudinal tracking of participants would be required to measure longer term behavioural and attitudinal change and this has not been possible for this evaluation. However, the project has also recognised that long term change can only be achieved by embedding financial capability into mainstream service and advice delivery. This requires working in partnership with delivery agencies. The next chapter discusses the project's approach to partnership working.

## 6. Working with Partners

6.1. As outlined in previous chapters the Financial Capability project has worked with a range of organisations to deliver financial capability sessions. The project has also engaged in activities which have helped to build networks and encourage engagement with wider groups and audiences rather than restrict its activity to the financially excluded. In addition it has developed strategic relationships with agencies working particularly in **three key policy areas - housing (registered social landlords), worklessness and employability, debt and money advice services**- with a view to embedding financial capability in the ongoing delivery of frontline services. The key areas of work discussed in this chapter are:

- building networks
- housing (registered social landlords)
- worklessness and employability
- debt and money advice services.

6.2. Each is discussed in turn, below.

### Building Networks

6.3. Over the life of the Financial Capability project, project workers attended a wide variety of community events and fun days. These activities provided considerable networking opportunities for the project enabling it to promote itself and to advertise the Credit Union to wider audiences. Events, fun days and health days targeted to particular audiences and areas of Sheffield attended included: Sheffield Pride, Lower Manor and Darnall Men's Health day, Park Health day in Park Hill, Manor and Castle Fun days held by the Manor and Castle Development Trust, the Sharrow Festival and a number of Healthy, Wealthy and Warm events.

6.4. The project also engaged in activities for Sheffield Homes which helped to augment the work undertaken with this partner. In particular the project attended Sheffield Homes Customer Service Week and was involved in raising awareness of its joint work with Sheffield Homes, promoting its financial capability work and advertising Sheffield Credit Union. The project also attended an 18-25 young tenants' afternoon and held Question and Answer sessions with various members of Sheffield Homes staff including Rents, Income Management and Evictions Teams.

### Housing (Registered Social Landlords)

6.5. One of the aims of the project was to **target social renters**, as a group particularly vulnerable to financial exclusion. During the life of the project the development workers have put a considerable amount of effort into working with Registered Social Landlords to deliver sessions and to train staff to deliver financial capability sessions themselves. The project has worked with a number of Registered Social Landlords including:

- Sheffield Homes
  - Pennine Housing
  - ASIC Housing
  - South Yorkshire Housing
  - Work with Sheffield City Council to train Registered Social Landlords throughout the city. Eight different social housing providers from around the city and specialist housing staff from Sheffield City Council attended.
- 6.6. However providing training through Registered Social Landlords took time to develop. At times it was difficult to schedule training, or the uptake amongst tenants was low. During 2010 things improved as more Registered Social Landlords became keen to engage with Financial Capability and provide training. Initially training was delivered to a range of different staff from Registered Social Landlords and then in some cases rolled out to tenants. Response from staff has been positive and offering one to one sessions or incentives to participating tenants (as discussed in chapter 5) has helped attendance.
- 6.7. The Financial Capability project was seen as a complement to the work of the dedicated RSL Debt Adviser by social housing providers like Sheffield Homes and helped with signposting tenants to appropriate help.
- 6.8. Work with Sheffield Homes and the Debt Support Unit has helped to develop a Sheffield Homes Money Management Project which builds on the Financial Capability project. This new project will be working with Sheffield Homes clients across the city and will provide financial capability training to help them manage their money better. Any clients experiencing debt problems will be referred and sign posted to the Debt Support Unit for debt advice. As part of the project the Debt Support Unit will also refer clients who could benefit from financial capability advice and help to the Money Management team.

### **Worklessness and employability**

- 6.9. The project has also developed work in the area of worklessness and employability and has been working with Job Centre Plus to provide training for their staff on basic bank accounts. The project has worked with Sheffield City Council which contracts with organisations that provide help for those experiencing worklessness. The contractors' front line workers have been provided with information on a variety of financial capability topics of particular relevance to those out of work. This training is delivered in conjunction with Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Debt Support Unit in Sheffield. The project has also offered training to the users of these services, especially those with additional needs such as homelessness, ex-offenders and recovering drug users.

### **Feedback from Frontline workers**

- 6.10. **Feedback received from frontline workers has been very positive.** A review of feedback from the Basic Bank Account training sessions delivered by the FISY Financial Capability project to front line workers between August 2010 and December 2010 showed that all the attendees (35) enjoyed the session and found it useful. The client groups supported by the attending organisations were tenants of RSLs and the long term unemployed. Overall the training was seen as relevant, informative and covered issues that staff felt they needed to know about. Comments

about how frontline workers intended to use the training when supporting clients included:

- “to be able to educate clients as to what services are available to make their lives easier”
- “make suggestions to clients who may benefit from a basic bank account”
- “to advise our clients about accounts and ID requirements”
- “advise for tenants/customers for using accounts to pay by Direct Debits/standing orders etc”
- “i’ll be able to advise a client that they could get a bank account even if they don’t have the most obvious ID”
- “will use during one-to-one interviews with customers”
- “to try and advise tenants about the importance of keeping ID up to date”
- “be able to advise and assist clients”
- “assist applicants who do not have accounts or who are having financial difficulties.”

## **Debt and Money Advice Services**

- 6.11. A Financial Capability Pilot project led by Sheffield Debt Support Unit was developed in partnership with FISY using the Financial Capability project resources and delivered at two sites: South East Sheffield CAB (at Mosborough) and Foxhill and Parson Cross Advice Centre. The project was about making financial capability advice integral to the debt advice process and involved a FISY worker acting as a money support worker providing clients with information on things like fuel usage and utility bills, insurance and bank accounts etc, as well as going through a series of preliminary exercises with clients and helping them complete financial statements to help /assist the debt worker. The project was particularly innovative as this sort of advice is not normally provided by Citizens' Advice Bureaux.
- 6.12. At South East Sheffield CAB, the financial capability worker acted as a money support worker working alongside a Debt adviser between 14 Dec 2009 and 1st Nov 2010. When clients came in to make an appointment with a Debt Adviser an appointment was made for them to see the financial capability worker first (appointments were usually made a week apart so clients did not have to wait long before they saw the debt adviser). The financial capability worker's role was to do necessary checks, get paperwork signed and photocopied and go through budgets and provide help and advice on possible ways to save money.
- 6.13. In total the financial capability worker saw 22 clients during this period. Table 6.1 outlines the nature of advice and signposting given to the clients.

**Table 6.1: Nature of advice and signposting, SE Sheffield CAB project**

Advice	No of clients (total = 22)
budgeting skills	22
payments methods	7
credit awareness including information on APRs	4
insurances	11
telephone bill saving advice for mobiles and landlines	11
basic bank accounts	16
methods of saving	9
mortgage advice	1
English/ maths	1
transport costs	1
credit reference agencies	7
utilities	17
Credit Union	3
charity support (St Vincent's)	1
pensions	2
social fund grants	2
other (shopping etc)	3

- 6.14. Table 6.1 demonstrates the breadth of issues covered by the financial capability worker, requiring wide ranging knowledge of issues, and of support services available locally.
- 6.15. **The pilot project offered benefits to clients and debt support services.**
- 6.16. From the clients' perspective the benefits relate directly to **saving money and increasing awareness** about their options and opportunities to manage their finances. There were considerable potential financial benefits to individuals associated with the advice delivered: figures provided by the Debt Adviser working with the financial capability worker estimated a total saving per month of £930.58 across all 22 clients.
- 6.17. Some clients were reluctant initially to attend two appointments but it was generally readily accepted when presented as part of the process of seeing a debt adviser. Appointments were booked as closely together as possible to minimise the time that clients have to wait. By seeing the financial capability worker first, time was saved in the longer run, as the debt adviser was able to directly address the debt problem.
- 6.18. The evaluators interviewed three beneficiaries at the SE Sheffield CAB pilot project. All said that they found the session helpful and useful. Comments about session with the money advisor included:
- [The session] "helped make us more relaxed before the next meeting [with the debt adviser]. It was good to have a check list of things to do and to find out about benefits. It helps do the groundwork for you"
  - "it was more helpful giving us information and really helps get the stuff you need together. It makes it less daunting before you see the debt adviser"
  - "the sessions were helpful and helped me as I got information about a HCI form and free glasses, benefits check and details about a basic bank account"
  - "helped me realise you have got to do something and money wise take responsibility. It is helping me to start to take control"
  - "it made me feel a lot better"
  - "it was friendly and I got very good information".

- 6.19. It was not possible for this evaluation to quantify the additional benefits for beneficiaries of the Financial Capability Pilot project, compared to those who had received only debt support services. It may be beneficial in future for relative benefits to be compared, in order that the value for money can be assessed of integrating financial capability into mainstream debt and money services.
- 6.20. For the CAB, the pilot project helped greatly by saving time. The financial capability worker built the case file and completed a budget with clients before they saw the debt adviser (the latter process can take at least 30 minutes). This allowed the debt adviser to get on with dealing directly with the debt crisis issue, thus enabling the debt advisers to see more clients. In addition, the pilot project allowed clients to receive financial management and capability advice that debt advisers often do not have time to provide.
- 6.21. The Debt Support Unit has rolled out the project (funded through Nationwide) by training volunteers to act as money support workers. (At the time of interview with a representative of the Debt Support Unit in February 2011, 16 volunteers based throughout Sheffield were at different stages of training). It was hoped that some of these volunteers would then move on to provide more specialised debt advice. The volunteers are based in centres where FIF (Financial Inclusion Fund) funded debt advisers are based (although at the time of writing there is uncertainty around the long-term funding of these debt advice workers).
- 6.22. Joint working between the Debt Support Unit, Sheffield Homes and the FISY Financial Capability project has also delivered money management sessions to 350 entry level students at Hillsborough College. These sessions were delivered as part of Money Week and involved an aspect of financial capability being delivered during students' tutorial time. An informal workshop highlighting the costs associated with living independently was also delivered to A-level students.
- 6.23. This chapter has reviewed the project's approach to networking and working in partnership with agencies around three key areas of support: housing, worklessness and employability, and debt and money advice services. It has revealed that practitioners have valued the work of the Financial Capability project and perceive considerable benefits to their clients. In the case of the debt and money advice pilot project, the integration of financial capability and debt advice has been demonstrated to be beneficial to clients and organisations and the pilot has provided a model for the ongoing delivery of these services across the city.
- 6.24. The final chapter of this report contains the conclusions to the evaluation.

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1. The Sheffield Financial Capability project is an example of a project which has been developed successfully to meet the needs of clients and agencies in relation to the delivery of financial capability services.
- 7.2. The evaluation has revealed a number of conclusions:
- **the importance of working in partnership:** collaborative work with organisations like the Debt Support Unit, Probation Service, HMP Marshgate Prison in Doncaster and Sheffield Homes has been key to success of project and has enabled sessions to be delivered to a large client base. The project has also benefited greatly from the support and resources of the Financial Inclusion Champions and from opportunities to work with other financial inclusion practitioners in the sub-region
  - **financial capability is central to the remit of many organisations:** as a result of the project's activities financial capability has moved up the priority list of many agencies. The project is reaching a wider range of groups and also getting more requests to train front-line workers. Agencies are also making use of learning resources and materials developed by the project and have been able to build on the experience of working with the financial capability project to begin to address wider issues around financial inclusion
  - **flexibility in terms of delivery is needed to meet the requirements of different groups:** sessions have been tailored to meet the needs of different clients and have worked well for groups with learning disabilities, those with problems with literacy and numeracy and other groups with special needs such as the deaf
  - **the project has received positive feedback from participants and agencies:** sessions are widely regarded as 'helpful' and 'useful' and are generally enjoyed by participants
  - however, it can be **difficult to evidence tangible outcomes from the project:** there is evidence that participants are gaining new knowledge and skills but longer term tracking of participants is needed to assess longer term outcomes.
- 7.3. The end of a number of grants for financial inclusion projects combined with cuts in public spending have created an uncertain funding climate and some financial inclusion services in the city have already been lost. However, there remains a clear need for financial capability services within the city and the Sheffield Financial Capability project provides a solid framework on which to develop any future proposals. Potential funding opportunities include the BIG lottery programme 'Improving Financial Confidence' programme, which provides £30 million for proposals for projects to deliver financial capability projects to social housing tenants over the next three to five years.
- 7.4. In this context, it is recommended that any future financial capability project:
- **builds on the successful partnerships** which have been established through the South Yorkshire-wide financial inclusion projects

- considers carefully the costs and opportunities associated with models which concentrate on the delivery of financial capability education in **group or individual settings**
- ensures that financial capability is **integrated into other services which affect the financial inclusion of vulnerable clients**: housing, employment, debt and money advice
- **considers the need for longer term tracking of participants** in order to establish outcomes associated with financial capability; this may require the need for incentives to maintain the commitment of participants and the benchmarking of outcomes for recipients of financial capability sessions against those who have not received equivalent services.



## Appendix One Research methods and issues

### Phase One Evaluation

Between January and March 2010 the following research activities took place:

- interviews were carried out with FISY staff, Nicky Campbell, Dianna Coupe and Eric Thompson who was also the DWP Strategic South Yorkshire Financial Inclusion Champion. These addressed the progress of the Financial Capability project and provided an opportunity for project workers to influence the development of research tools
- we received and analysed quarterly reports and monitoring data. We also accessed feedback data from organisers and frontline staff from selected no. of groups
- we carried out Interviews with several agency partners: Debt Support Unit (Eileen Chatterton); Probation Service (Avril Montgomery); and Sheffield Homes (Maxine Stavrianakos) In addition we tried to contact a debt support worker at SE CAB (Suzi Goddard) but were unable to secure an interview despite email and telephone contact
- we observed delivery of three financial capability sessions (at SE CAB; the Probation Service and Sheffield Homes). The latter session was attended by a very small number of participants and, as a result, we tried to arrange an additional observation. However, this did not prove possible due to absence and diary commitments
- we completed structured questionnaires with seven participants (four via the Probation Service session and three at SE CAB).

### Phase Two Evaluation

Between January 2011 and May 2011 the following research activities took place:

- interviews with Financial Capability workers Nicky Campbell and Dianna Coupe to discuss project progress since the first phase of the evaluation and any key issues
- interviews with project partners including Sharon Kitchen at Jobsteps Autism Plus, Angela Dennis at YASY and Suzi Goddard of the Debt Support Unit (and formerly of SE CAB). Other agencies were also contacted including the Probation Service and Best Training but attempts to secure interviews were unsuccessful
- we received and analysed quarterly reports and monitoring data. We also accessed feedback data from frontline staff from a number of organisations and also accessed additional information reports on participants who had attended sessions
- we attempted to observe delivery of financial capability sessions but unfortunately all three arranged sessions were cancelled. Attempts to observe additional sessions also failed due to cancellations, diary commitments and lack of scheduled suitable sessions to observe.

### Accessing participants and their feedback

It proved difficult in Phase One to access ten participants for interview. This was primarily because there were not sufficient numbers of participants at the sessions we observed. We were also only able to get limited information from those participants who had attended only one session. As it was not possible to contact participants through observation sessions in Phase Two, additional feedback from participants was requested from FISY. Eight forms were received which represented the previous six months feedback. On all these forms participants indicated that they had enjoyed the sessions attended and found them useful

but few contained additional comments which could be used in the evaluation. Most of the eight participants indicated they would be happy to be contacted again by FISY. Whilst it was not feasible for FISY to obtain consent for the evaluation team to contact these participants, feedback forms may be a means by which FISY could obtain some data on the impact of the Financial Capability project, to see whether participants have made changes as a result of their involvement in Financial Capability courses. A mechanism to follow up participants after three months has been incorporated into the monitoring feedback forms for the new Sheffield Homes Money Management Project which builds on the Financial Capability project. Participants who have consented can be contacted by the project to see if they have acted on advice received and whether or not their financial behaviour has changed as a result.

Participant feedback used in this report comes via FISY from Information Reports compiled by a DWP South Yorkshire Financial Inclusion Champion, as well as from Phase One interviews.

# Sheffield Hallam University

*Evaluation of financial capability project*

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