

Welfare Reform Advice Monies	11th October 2016
(Department for Communities – Community Support Programme) -	
To: Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officers	Head of Community & Culture Community Development Manager
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Elected Members on funding from the Welfare Reform Advice monies that have been allocated through Department for Communities Community Support Programme, to Council’s for Welfare Reform Readiness and Welfare Reform Training for existing front line advice service providers.

The amount allocated to Causeway Coast and Glens is £43,529.56 for the period remaining up to 31st March 2017. Councils are not required to match this additional funding which must be used to meet the specific objectives referred to below:

1. Welfare Reform Readiness Programme. To support the efforts of existing front line services pending the implementation of the Welfare Reform Advice Service. The objectives are as follows:
 - i. Maintaining Services during training: Provide additional services for time lost through staff training through overtime, additional outreach, tailored services and recruitment of extra volunteers.
 - ii. Capacity for Additional Enquiries: Enhance staff availability to manage the increase in enquiries pending the introduction of the Welfare Reform Support Service.
 - iii. Management Information: Ensure staff have sufficient awareness to effectively record and report all additional management information as a result of Welfare Reform enquiries.
 - iv. New Processes: Ensure all front line staff are aware of the impact of the new service on current processes and provide feedback on effectiveness when required.
 - v. Displacement: Ensure potential displacement issues in the current advice service are identified and managed effectively.

- vi. Enhancing - Links with Specialist Organisations due to Welfare Reform Issues: Develop and enhance relationships with specialist services ensuring seamless customer referrals when required.
- 2. Welfare Reform Training Programme. Consisting of six Welfare Reform courses required by all front line generalist advisers and volunteers. The Department is using councils as their delivery partners to distribute this funding to the front line, to ensure all advisers receive the full training package. The following six Welfare Reform related courses have been identified as essential for front line advisers to provide accurate advice to clients:
 - a. PIP including form completion.
 - b. ESA legislative changes/mandatory reconsiderations.
 - c. Sanctions.
 - d. Mitigation schemes.
 - e. Discretionary support.
 - f. Rates/housing changes.

The Department for Communities is also planning to offer Welfare Reform Awareness Raising Sessions to Council Elected Representatives across Northern Ireland and further details will be provided when they become available.