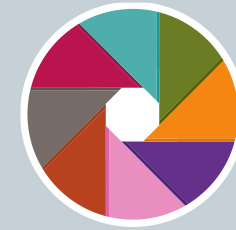


Financial Inclusion: The Leeds approach



Outline of the session



Evidence and Research

- The necessity for financial inclusion in increasing social mobility and tackling poverty

Partnership

- The importance of a strategic, holistic approach to confronting financial exclusion

Action

- Increasing access to financial services, providing debt advice, and improving financial capability to reach whole families

Sharing, learning and developing

- Lessons from the development and delivery of financial inclusion programmes



Financial Inclusion in Leeds- Research, Partnership & Action



- Approach to Financial Inclusion in Leeds started in 2004
- Based on Research, Collaboration and Partnership to inform the action undertaken
- Research
 - Household surveys in 2004, 2010 & 2018 (banking, savings, credit and debt)
 - Economic Impact of Financial Inclusion initiatives
 - Improving Health through income maximisation
 - Cap on the total cost of credit
 - Problem Gambling in Leeds
 - Poverty Fact Book

www.leeds.gov.uk/fi



Leeds Research: Banking Services



	Bank Account Ownership
2004	70%
2010	81%
2018	96%

Use of Direct Debits or Standing Orders for Fuel Bills (35%)

Homeowners 3 x more likely than Social Tenants

2 x more likely than Private Tenants

17 to 29 year olds and Lone parents less likely than all other groups to pay by these methods.



Leeds Research: Savings



	Those with no savings or less than £100
2004	59%
2010	75%
2018	56%

No savings or less than £100

Almost 70% social housing and private rented tenants compared to 33% of homeowners

79% of lone parents

67% of low income families

73% of 17-29 year old



Leeds Research: Debt



	Borrowing for day to day living expenses
2004	14%
2010	34%
2018	35%

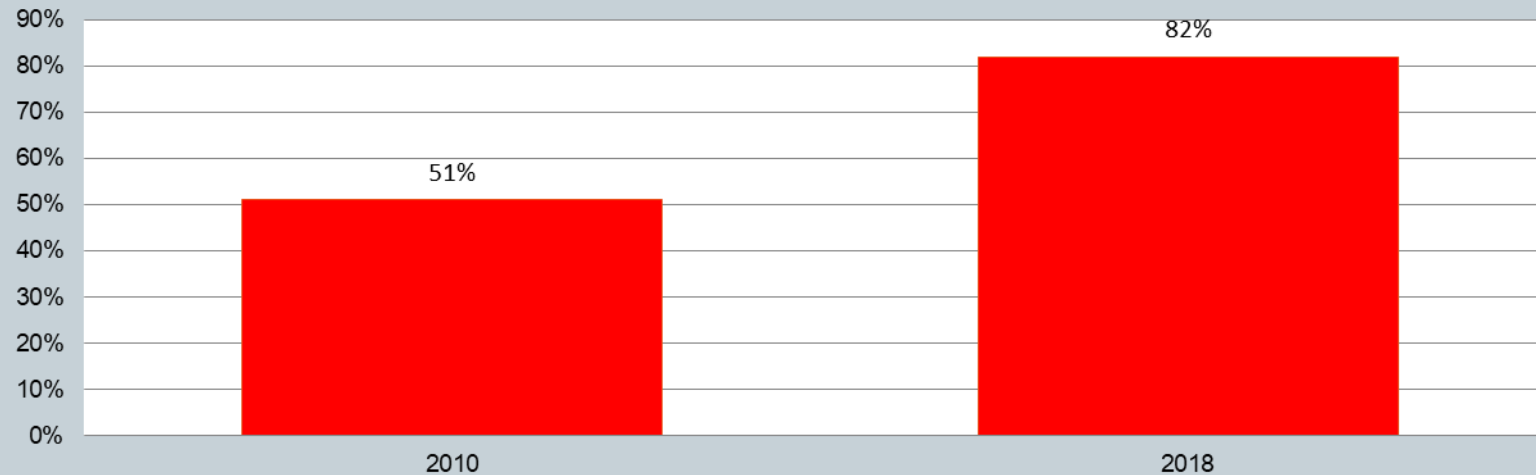
40% of the sample debt caused stress and anxiety



Leeds Research: Digital Inclusion



Households with internet access (%)

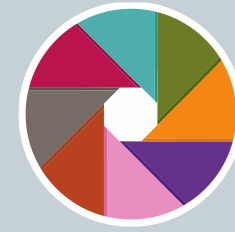


Young people and households with children most likely to have access to the internet (around 90%)

Over 60's (36%) and households earning less than £200 pw (59%) least likely
22% said they found it difficult to use the internet and **11%** rated their skills as fair



Conclusion



People most impacted

Social and private rented tenants, lone parents and families with children, low income and people not in work, & younger age groups

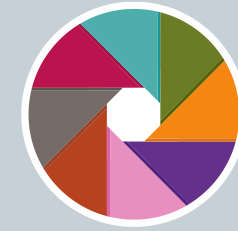
Overall

In 2018 households are less resilient and worse prepared for an external shock or crisis than in 2004.

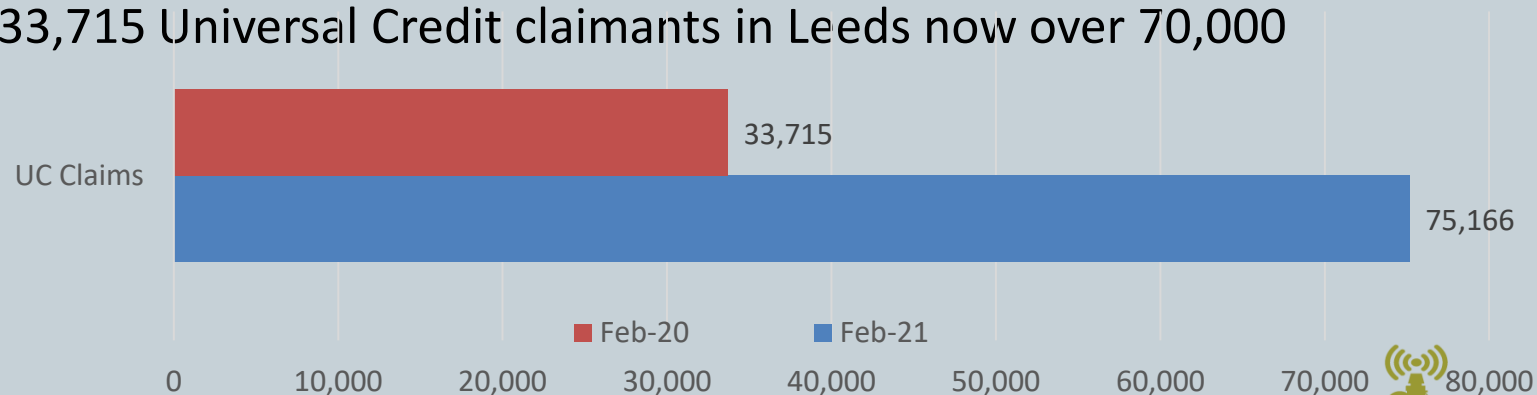
Before the pandemic problem debt impacted 8.3 million people nationally and 113,000 people in Leeds



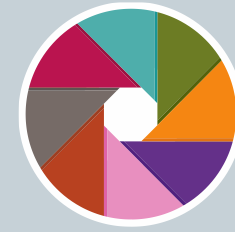
In 2021



- Financial interventions such as mortgage holidays, forbearance, temporary uplifts in benefits and furlough have been vital support for many, however;
 - Unemployment and redundancy rising
 - Income shocks- fall income due to job, losses, reduced hours and furlough (Citizens Advice & Stepchange)
 - Estimated 6 million people fallen behind with at least one payment due to the pandemic (Citizens Advice)
 - More people facing financial hardship and destitution, debt crisis looming (Citizen Advice and Stepchange)
- 33,715 Universal Credit claimants in Leeds now over 70,000



Partnership



Leeds Financial Inclusion Steering Group

- Established in 2005
- Open forum
- Regular attendees from council services, advice agencies, credit union, Housing, DWP, Health, & Universities
- Three key areas of focus;
 - Increase access to affordable financial services
 - Increase access to free debt advice
 - Improve financial capability



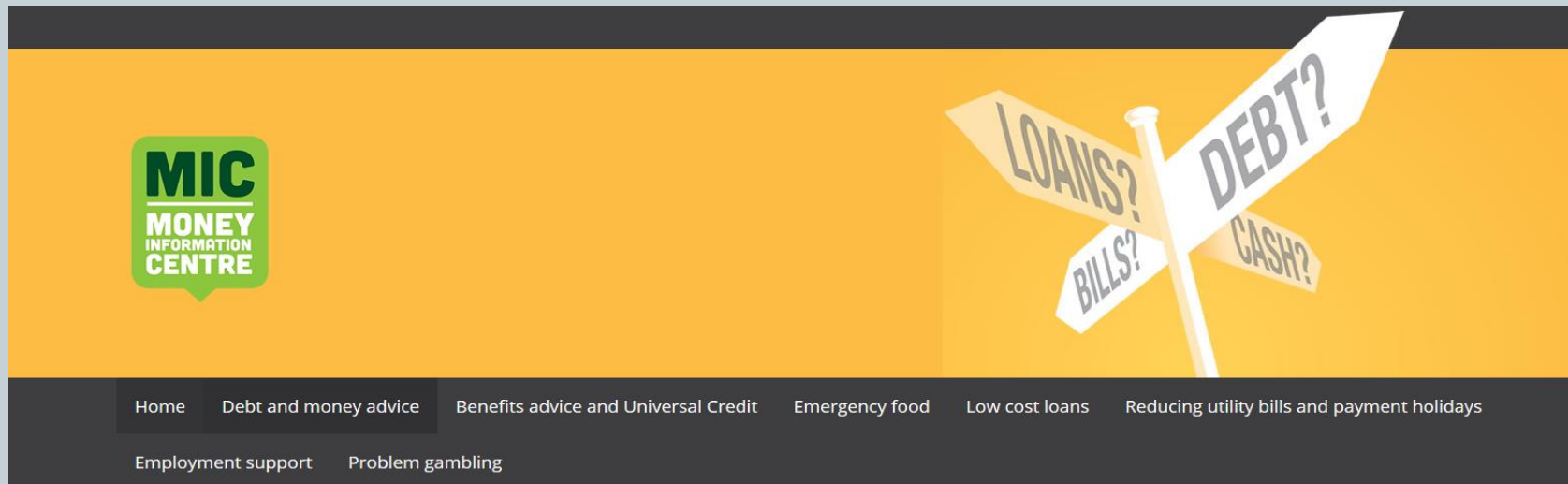
Partnership



- Ensures services and projects are influenced by the people they are aimed to support
- Underpins each project undertaken
- Joint accountability
- Capacity building
- Sustainability and longevity
- Essential in the City's Response to COVID-19



Action: Financial Support



- Includes details of where and how to access free, independent and confidential advice and support
- Aimed at both the public and referral staff
- All information reflects the current situation and is updated regularly

www.leedsmic.org.uk



Action: Affordable Financial Services

Leeds Credit Union

- Increased membership from 11,000 in 2005 to 37,000 in 2020, 6 branches and information points in community hubs
- Range of products and services
- School savings club
- Money and Budgeting Service with Housing Leeds
- Payroll savings & Getting Workforces Saving

www.leedscreditunion.co.uk



Action: Advice Provision



- Leeds Debt Advisor Network and Forums
- Council contract led by Citizens Advice Leeds, with the aim to improve access through increased opening times and expanding telephone and online support
- 38k clients assisted in 2019/20, 50% increase since 2014/15 despite a decrease in funding



Action: Money Buddies



Money Buddies support, educate and empower clients to Maximise their Income, Save Money and Reduce Money worries

Help clients to;

- Take action on the options offered following debt advice – often acting as a hand holding and confidence building service
- Identify Money Saving ideas, Tips and Solutions that keeps more money in their pocket
- Apply for affordable financial services
- Negotiate bills and get better tariffs
- Complete forms and write letters
- Educate on the various types of debts and how to budget their income
- Identify when to see a specialist advisor for benefits, debts or even housing

The result is a more confident, happier, relieved and empowered client so that if difficult situations arise again the client may decide and usually does to handle it themselves, armed with the knowledge that the service is still available as a fall back if they ever need it again



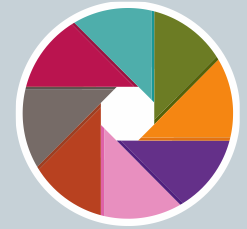
Action: Healthy Holidays



- **Aim:** to provide food, fun activities, learning and support for vulnerable children at risk of going hungry
- **Delivered through:** Schools, Third Sector Organisations and Community Hubs
- **Funded** since 2018 by Leeds City Council, Businesses and Department for Education
- Estimated **35,000** children in poverty across Leeds
- Currently **28,614** children entitled to **free school meals** in Leeds, up by 2,596 since lockdown first took effect.
- Healthy Holidays generally caters for roughly **5000** children on a referral basis
- In 2021 Department for Education are funding all local authorities



Action: Healthy Holidays



Shantona Leeds
@ShantonaLeeds

Interested in what our Early Year's children have been doing through lock down? Take a look below.

Cooking, gardening, eating and creating!



12:00 PM · Jun 15, 2020 · Hootsuite Inc.

“...Every year Healthy Holidays help people in less obvious ways than anticipated. We think it just addresses the obvious, 'we feed the children and give them something to do' however each year it demonstrates the opportunities it provides for people.

Engagement with parents means we can help support with other things such as money, housing advice, bills, adult activities, counselling, volunteering, catering etc.

The grant helps us gather information along the way about people, the area and surroundings. It helps identify gaps and it connects people, partners, parents, Children and young people and other organisations as a result.”

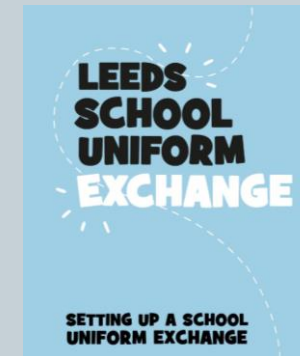
New Wortley Community Association – Project Worker



Action: Uniform Exchange

ZERO
WASTE
LEEDS

- Average cost of new school uniform **£348.55** per child per year
- Zero Waste Leeds is a local registered community interest company working towards making Leeds a zero waste city by 2030
- Project aims to **reduce** the amount of uniforms sent to waste, **increase** donations and **help** more families on low income access low cost or free uniform
- **The Leeds School Uniform Exchange Facebook Page**
- **Inspiration Guide**
- **School Uniform Exchange Map**
- 2021 Expansion – Big School Uniform Giveaway



If every new starter at primary and secondary school in Leeds this year had just one second hand shirt or blouse that would save Co2 equivalent of driving 25 times round the world – 34 times if it was a skirt or pair of trousers



Action: Response to COVID-19 pandemic



- **Strength and depth of partnership- weekly meetings on financial inclusion and emergency food**
- **Sharing practice, key information and resources**
- **Key activity:**
 - COVID-19 Helpline
 - Local Welfare Support Service & Food Warehouse
 - Leeds Credit Union branch accessibility
 - Clear and up to date information on the Leeds Money Information Centre website



Sharing, Learning and Improving



- Build a strong evidence base
- Never underestimate the power of partnership
- Political and Senior Management engagement
- Embed in strategy, policy and practice
- Share what you are doing
- Learn from others



Further information



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www.leeds.gov.uk/fi

www.leedsmic.org.uk

