



The Consumer Council



# Credible Credit

An Interim Report on  
the Financial Capability  
and Affordable Credit Pilot.



The  
**Community Foundation**  
for Northern Ireland

 **Ulster Bank**

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## Foreword from Consumer Council

The Consumer Council has long been concerned about financial capability and financial exclusion amongst consumers in Northern Ireland (NI). Historically we have had the lowest levels of financial capability in the United Kingdom (UK).

The Consumer Council is therefore pleased to lead the Financial Capability Partnership in NI. The group comprises banks, credit unions, building societies, community and voluntary organisations as well housing, advice agencies and government departments all brought together in the common aim of improving financial capability in NI.

The Financial Capability and Affordable Credit Pilot (FCACP) has also been the product of cross sector partnerships, whereby private, public and community sectors have worked together. The aim of the project has been to help and empower communities in two pilot areas of Ballymena and Derry to become more informed and confident in managing their finances. The project further sought to provide target groups with options to choose financial products which best matched their needs.

The work in Ballymena and Derry has been generously funded and supported by Ulster Bank and the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI). Without their expertise, guidance and commitment it would simply not have been possible to deliver this pilot. Likewise the dedication of those organisations involved at community level in Ballymena and Derry has also been critical in the delivery of this project and is very much appreciated.

In this report we share with you the lessons we have learned in developing this pilot. We hope that it will inspire further community based financial capability and inclusion initiatives and that it will make a useful contribution to the wider debate on practical ways to create a more financially capable society in NI.

## Foreword from Ulster Bank

Ulster Bank, in funding this initiative in partnership with the Community Foundation and Consumer Council, recognises the crucial role that financial capability plays in our everyday lives. People who can manage their personal finances are able to make the most of what they have. They are less likely to fall into financial difficulty and know where to get help if they need it. Being in control of personal finances is also linked to improved wellbeing and reduces the stress associated with unmanageable debt. In turn, this has a positive benefit for families, communities and the economy as a whole.

We believe that as NI's largest bank, we have a role to play in helping to build financial capability skills in our young people, our workplaces and our communities. Ulster Bank has for many years invested in developing and delivering free financial education resources for secondary students through our MoneySense for Schools programme. More recently, recognising the important role that parents play in shaping their children's attitudes to money we have introduced MoneySense at Home to help parents and families talk about money and work together to manage the family finances. Apart from our direct work with schools and families, this pilot project highlights the vital role that community organisations play in shaping financial capability at grassroots level. We want to continue to support those organisations working in our communities throughout NI to help people overcome barriers; get started in business, learn about budgeting and managing debt. These initiatives deserve our support.

This year we introduced a new Community Impact Fund, which has provided grants of £250,000 to local community organisations to help fund this important work across the island of Ireland. This report comes at an important and exciting time when the future of financial capability is being determined through the Financial Capability Strategy for Northern Ireland. Ulster Bank is proud to have been part of the development of that strategy, and will continue to support financial capability initiatives like this pilot project – both by supporting the work of our partners and community organisations and also by continuing to reach out to schools and families through our MoneySense programme.

## Foreword from Community Foundation Northern Ireland

The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland was delighted to be able to work with Ulster Bank and the Consumer Council in this important action-research exercise in Financial Capability and Affordable Credit Pilot project. We learned two lessons from this work – the wide ranging implications of financial hardship and debt, as well as the number of organisations and agencies keen to do what they can to address the issue of financial capability and affordable credit.

The Community Foundation has long believed in the power of evidence-based research. It is for this reason that we were more than happy to identify and liaise with local communities to raise the often sensitive issues of financial hardship and the management of debt. We are acutely conscious how current narratives that all too often stereotype those people that are in receipt of welfare benefits have served to undermine the sense of trust within local communities. Through our work on our Communities in Action project – supporting community resilience – the Foundation is working with eight neighbourhoods to examine what we can do together to reverse this trend. It is our belief that community groups, voluntary organisations and those agencies and institutions such as the Consumer Council and Ulster Bank must continue to work together to think of innovative social finance solutions to old problems. As the late Sir George Quigley senior civil servant, former chairman of Ulster Bank and the NI Economic Council so often said, 'Old problems need new questions asked of them.'

## Acknowledgements

The Consumer Council would sincerely like to thank steering group members in Ballymena and Derry for their hard work and dedication over the period of the pilot project in those areas.

### In Ballymena;

- Chrissie Cahill, Community Foundation Northern Ireland (CFNI)
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- William Millar, Harryville Partnership Initiative
- Robin Andrews, Slemish n tha Braid Credit union
- Lorraine McAllister, High Kirk Church
- Ellen McKernan and Rachel McAree, Gingerbread

Also we would like to thank the trainers and everyone else involved in the delivery of the project including Janine Jackson from Waveney Youth Centre

### In Derry;

- David O'Donnell and Teresa McCloskey, Apex Housing
- Lorraine Williams, Greater Shantallow Area Partnership (GSAP)
- Carol Anne Doherty and Joan Gallagher, Derry Credit Union
- Sean Feenan, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland
- Ruth Barry, former Housing Rights Service and Nicola McCrudden, Housing Rights Service
- Jacqui McGinley and Ciaran McGinley, Foyle hospice

Special thanks also to Angela McIntyre in Greater Shantallow Area Partnership.

# 1.0 Introduction

In 2010, the Consumer Council, the Community Foundation for NI (CFNI) and Ulster Bank decided to form a partnership, with an agreed level of funding, to deliver a financial capability and affordable credit project pilot (FCACP) in areas of Ballymena and Derry. The project had two main objectives. The primary objective was to support consumers to become financially capable and proficient through helping them manage their money better, building awareness of borrowing options and encouraging them to choose financial products best suited to their needs. The second objective was to improve access to affordable credit for people on low incomes, thereby breaking the cycle of reliance on high cost doorstep and high street lenders.

This interim report will look specifically at the work to date and what the steering groups have learnt along the way regarding financial capability initiatives. Please note the overall scheme will continue to run until March 2015 to cover the repayment of loans (subject to review).

# 2.0 Context

In 2010, the Consumer Council launched research,<sup>1</sup> detailing how people were faring with the economic downturn. At that time 62 percent of low income households were worried about making ends meet. That picture remained static in 2011,<sup>2</sup> with the same proportion of consumers worried about making ends meet and 44 percent of households struggling to keep up with bills and credit.

The credit options and advice available to people in low income households are limited with many resorting to sources of high-cost credit on a cyclical basis to cope with each arising expense. The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) reported in 2010,<sup>3</sup> that when it comes to accessing credit, many consumers are unaware of the options open to them and advice is limited. Consumers also tend to focus on how quickly and easily they can access credit and the affordability of the repayments rather than the total cost compared to other products.

Whilst the extent of high cost credit in NI was and remains unquantified, members of the Consumer Council led Financial Capability Partnership, reported growing numbers of their clients accessing these forms of credit. The 'perfect storm' of a harsh economic climate, changing personal circumstances, inaccessibility to mainstream credit and a lack of budgeting/ money management support, means that many low income communities here are at greater risk of becoming stuck in a trap of financial exclusion.

Since the launch of the FCACP, research has been carried out into the cost of credit and the role of credit unions in low income areas. In May 2013 the Housing Rights Service and Liverpool John Moores University, with the support of the Consumer Council, published a report into the development of credit union financial services in NI.<sup>4</sup> The report painted a picture of increasing

1. Consumer 2010, CCNI, 2010  
2. Report on Consumer Proficiency Research, CCNI, 2011  
3. High Cost of Credit, Office of Fair Trading, June 2010  
4. The "Towards Financial Inclusion Report" May 2013

numbers of low value loans, for example one credit union reported that 59 per cent of its loans were for a value of under £500, while a quarter of loans (24 per cent) were for less than £250. Furthermore over half (52 percent) of credit unions saw high cost, subprime or illegal lenders as their main competitors.

A discussion paper produced by the Northern Ireland Council on Voluntary Action (NICVA) and Advice NI<sup>5</sup> states that, “greater access to affordable credit is key to reducing reliance on high cost lending.” The FCACP sought to find practical solutions to the problem of access to affordable credit in low income areas. It did this by working directly with communities and credit unions to find a viable, low cost, low value alternative and by providing information, support and advice. The findings of this pilot demonstrate that the involvement of community and other organisations working directly with consumers is absolutely vital in changing grassroots perceptions and behaviours.

## 3.0 Evaluation Methods

Steering groups in Ballymena and Derry were established to deliver the pilot projects. In Ballymena, the main steering groups consisted of; The Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (CFNI), Harry Partnership Initiative, Doury Road Residents Association, Slemish n tha Braid credit union, Gingerbread and High Kirk Church. In Derry, the steering group consisted of; Apex Housing Association, Housing Rights Service, CFNI, Greater Shantallow Area Partnership (GSAP) and Derry Credit Union.

In order to evaluate the project, a survey was sent in advance to all steering group members in each pilot area. Steering group members were asked to either complete and return surveys or to meet to discuss the project in more detail. Most members chose to meet to discuss the project as a group or as individual organisations. In tandem with this, most training initiatives were evaluated as the pilot progressed.

5. Commissioned by the Centre for Economic Empowerment and researched by NICVA & Advice NI published in April 2013



## 4.0 Financial Capability

The FCACP's objective is to support consumers to become financially capable and proficient through helping them manage their money better. This remains a crucial goal as NI has the lowest levels of financial capability in the UK. Recent research by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment<sup>6</sup> (DETI), shows that certain groups are more likely to display low financial capability behaviours. These include people who are not in paid employment, people who are economically inactive, lower social class groups, those living in the west of the province, and those living in households where incomes total less than £10,400.

These characteristics fit the profile of many consumers living in the project pilot areas. Low levels of financial capability mean that these consumers are less likely to keep track of their spending, plan ahead and make informed decisions when choosing financial products. These consumers are less likely to know where and how to get advice when needed and to stay informed of changes that might affect their personal finances. Compounding this is a local culture of guarded privacy and sensitivity around money issues, particularly in areas where social exclusion is a factor.

This pilot aimed to increase financial capability through providing information, training and the appropriate resources.

### 4.1 Information

In both pilot areas we ran information events in community venues engaging the attendance of banks, credit unions, energy providers, advice organisations, charities and community organisations. Interest in these events was unfortunately limited and did not attract the hoped-for numbers. Other methods of getting information to consumers seemed to be more effective in

these particular settings. For example, in Derry, information events based on specific issues were held, such as on the topic of welfare reform. These were well attended.

An assessment was undertaken of the types of information available and where gaps in information could be identified. One gap was the absence of an easily accessible and comprehensive information source on different types of credit. As a result we produced a "Guide to Borrowing Money," in partnership with Gingerbread, a steering group member in Ballymena. Information such as this guide was directly distributed to households in both project areas. The aim was to help consumers make informed choices when borrowing money and to assist them to take steps towards ensuring that financial products chosen met their individual needs.

Generally the feeling from the steering group members in Derry and Ballymena was that the information events didn't work well as it was hard to generate interest to get people to attend. The people who did however attend found the information and advice very useful. One solution for the future would be to hold the information events in areas with high footfall such as shopping centres. Another proposal would be to link these to pre-planned and existing community events or festivals.

### 4.2 Training

Training plays an important role in increasing financial capability levels. Giving young people skills for the future was a particular emphasis of the training programme. Three tranches of training entitled, "Looking at Money Differently," were delivered in Ballymena and Derry to young people living in supported housing. The training was tailored for groups of 7 to 10 year olds, 12 to 15 year olds and also 17 to 18 year olds. The aim was to raise awareness and confidence among the young people about money. The group demonstrated a strong desire to increase their knowledge of money issues. The course

It is very hard to get people interested in talking about money issues, people are so private. Our older persons group will talk superficially about money but get 'cagey' if the conversation goes beyond a certain point.  
Steering Group Member,  
Ballymena

6. "Financial Capability in Northern Ireland 2012", DETI Analytical Services Unit, March 2013

was delivered by youth leaders in a youth club setting and received positive feedback as well as an ongoing continued commitment for further work of this kind.

From talking to the young people they decided that they wanted to learn more about money and how it affected them and how they could build their knowledge for later on in their life. One of the things I noticed was the commitment that the young people had - they came every week and that alone shows that it was a success. They gained an understanding of the impact that money has and how expensive everything is. A lot of the young people realised the cost of things and the importance of saving. It's a real benefit for young people to do it.

Youth Leader, Ballymena

As a result of this training, 25 young people in Ballymena and Derry have knowledge of money issues and are better equipped for their futures. They are now;

- Aware of their attitude to money;
- Aware of personal income and expenditure patterns and are able to develop more effective budgeting habits;
- Capable of making more informed choices about methods of saving and borrowing;
- More knowledgeable about financial terminology;
- More able to deal with debt if it arises; and
- Knowledgeable about where to access appropriate money advice if required.

It is important not only to sustain but build on this type of intervention. There needs to be a clear focus so we can identify how this can be effectively achieved over a prolonged period of time. Consideration should also be given to the roll out of financial capability training to young people and children in a range of settings such as schools, youth clubs and those in care.

The project placed a strong emphasis on the 'Train the Trainer' approach throughout both project areas. This ensured that financial capability knowledge was passed on and that the project left behind a lasting legacy. Training the trainer also allowed members of the local steering group to build on their existing skills. This approach was key in the execution of the affordable loans element of the project, particularly in Derry.

Throughout the pilot, community representatives, credit union staff, housing officers as well as others were trained. This empowered them to help people

track their spending, plan ahead, and make informed choices when choosing financial products. This also meant that those trained would know where and how to get advice when needed and stay informed of changes that might affect their personal finances. The 'Wiser Advisor' course, an introduction to debt training, was provided alongside an overview of benefits information. This increased the background knowledge of those working with people in a credit union, community or housing setting.

People from both Ballymena and Derry attended 'Made of Money,' training aimed at engaging families' money issues, especially in hard to reach areas. 'Made of Money' is an award winning training course designed by Quaker Social Action (QSA). The training is broken down into sections on budgeting, credit, debt communication, children and money as well as learning about money as a family. The main attendees were from community based bodies, youth organisations and credit unions.

Feedback on the usefulness of the course was encouraging. Community organisations were particularly enthusiastic, the women's group attendees were keen to get the course up and running and use the resource on a day-to-day, 'round the kitchen table,' setting. Community based youth organisations said they would adapt the training for use as stand-alone sessions, saying they planned to start this immediately. All attendees enthused about the training materials and were keen to start using them.

### 4.3 Money Bites

'Money Bites' are short information sessions. These formed part of the pilot as a mechanism for delivering financial capability into communities. They were designed to make financial capability training portable and suitable for any setting. The idea behind 'Money Bites' is to deliver short and informative ten to fifteen minute financial capability sessions to help people think about their money and to manage it better. 'Money Bites' can be bolted on to existing classes, courses, groups and events which people already attend in the community. The Consumer Council has developed a 'Money Bites' resource pack of eleven different sessions dealing with issues such as payday loans, payments methods and budgeting.



**'Money Bites' give us access to a great resource we didn't have before and would have never been able to do ourselves."**

**Steering Group Member,  
Derry**

The view of steering group members in Derry and Ballymena was that 'Money Bites' were a success. In Derry and Ballymena community representatives, credit union staff and housing officers as well as tenant forum users were trained in the delivery of 'Money Bites.'

Small 'bite sized' interventions building on existing networks and groups can help build skills in relation to financial capability. These are a non-intrusive way of developing interest in money issues, are transferable across a variety of settings, and have a tangible and cumulative impact over a number of weeks.

With minimal training, housing officers, community representatives, family workers or teachers can easily use the 'Money Bites' resource. Feedback from Derry recommended that the 'Money Bites' programmes be used as the building blocks to community based financial capability training.

It was felt that programmes could then be expanded from there and that the range of groups that could avail of them was limitless. The success of 'Money Bites' is further evidenced by the number of sessions that have been run in Derry and Ballymena - up to 20 so far in Derry and eight in Ballymena. The Train the Trainer approach to 'Money Bites' has helped with incentivising roll out. This means that the 'Money Bites' programme has enjoyed a larger reach and bigger impact. Whilst this is welcomed, it is thought that future roll out of 'Money Bites' could also be framed strategically to target specific groups such as Sure Starts and mother and toddler groups.

## 4.4 Practical Resources & Tools

As part of the project our aim was to equip consumers in the pilot areas with practical advice and tools to help them manage money. Keeping track of finances is one of the key measures of financial capability. It is very easy to lose track of day to day spending. Many consumers really don't have an idea where their money goes and do not have control of their finances.

With this in mind, the Consumer Council developed a spending diary resource. This part of the pilot aimed to help consumers track their spending habits over a period of time and assist them with taking control of their money. A total of 3500 spending diaries have been distributed in the pilot areas. This resource has had a ripple effect beyond the project pilot areas as many organisations such as advice agencies and those working with students have requested copies of the spending diaries. In total 5,000 have been distributed to date across NI. A further 5000 have been ordered and will continue to be distributed.

Other financial capability resources distributed throughout the pilot project areas include the Consumer Council's budget planner and receipt wallets.

**I am impressed by the spending diary – it is a great resource for local people.**

**Steering Group Member,  
Ballymena**



## 5.0 Affordable Credit

Many households in low income areas are marginalised from mainstream financial institutions for various reasons. The credit options and budgeting support available to people in low income households are limited. In the project areas we found that people regularly resort to sources of high-cost credit because many feel they don't have any other choice. This type of credit is also seen as an easy option given that it is available literally on the doorstep. Repayments are on a weekly basis making such forms of credit appear more affordable.

This project aimed to make low cost loans more accessible to those living in the project areas. This was achieved through close partnership working with the credit union. Historically there have been two main issues with regards to accessibility which needed to be addressed. The first was to inform people about credit unions and the second was to help remove the traditional barriers to credit union membership and loan access, such as:

- Having a proposer and seconder;
- Requiring a certain level of savings already built up; and
- Being a member for a set period of time.

In Derry, proposers and seconders from other steering group organisations were accepted as meeting the required loan criteria. Once set up, this helped the affordable loan applications process run smoother. Both Slemish n tha Braid Credit Union and Derry Credit Union waived their terms and conditions around clients having established a savings record as part of the pilot. A lot of ground work was therefore required to prepare the way for the loans element of the pilot. This was especially true given that both credit unions - like all credit unions in NI - were at that time ensuring their systems and processes were fully compliant with Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulation.<sup>7</sup>

The loans were set from a minimum of £10 to a maximum of £350. Consumers could be referred from steering group organisations to the credit union if a loan

would help them to cope with changing circumstances, reduce their financial burden or manage spiralling debts. The proviso to this was that borrowers had sufficient income to sustain the loan repayment.

The affordable loan element of the pilot was a mixed success. In Ballymena, largely due to the financial status of consumers, no loans have been advanced to date. Despite the dedication of Slemish n tha Braid Credit Union and other steering group members, the harsh financial situation of consumers in the pilot area of Ballymena meant that no loan, however small, would have been regarded as affordable. Potential borrowers would have been unable to pay back even modest amounts.

Steering group members reported that people were routinely desperate for credit to buy essentials such as food and pay utility bills. This meant that people were turning to doorstep lenders and payday loan companies who were still prepared to lend even though realistically people could not afford to fully repay the loans. These consumers would require a different type of intervention.

In Derry however ten loans have been approved to date. Critical to the success of the loans element in Derry has been the close partnerships set up with Greater Shantallow Area Partnership and Apex Housing and the invaluable work of those two organisations with clients.

Whilst delivering the loans aspect of the pilot in Derry, the steering group were able to successfully establish symbiotic partnerships with other organisations. For instance a partnership has been forged with Foyle Hospice who provide good quality second hand furniture. Through this partnership the housing association refers new tenants in need of furniture to the hospice. Tenants can then avail of an affordable loan to purchase items directly from Foyle Hospice. To simplify this, a system has been created where the credit union can if necessary write a cheque directly to Foyle Hospice.



7. Now Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA)

## 6.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

I don't know what we could do differently if we were doing the project again. There is no doubt that a project of this nature was needed. A lot of effort on the part of the steering group has gone into the project but it has to be recognised that some elements were more successful than others.

Steering Group Member,  
Ballymena

The Financial Capability and Affordable Credit Pilot has been great for our organisation. It has given us access to information and resources through the Consumer Council that we didn't have before. We would have never been able to do a project like this by ourselves.

Steering Group Member,  
Derry

One of the most important legacies of the FCACP has been partnership building. Much emphasis is given at government level to the social and economic regeneration of deprived communities in NI. However, not much attention is given to tackling lack of financial capability at an individual level. Yet it stands to reason that if financial capability and inclusion issues are tackled at community level, the impact on the wider socio-economic situation can also improve. The financial capability and affordable credit pilot saw important partnerships being formed at community level. Many of the partnerships created by the project continue to develop and grow, and as a result have sparked new incentives.

Undertaking a financial capability and affordable credit pilot in Ballymena and Derry was not without significant challenges in both pilot areas. Not least of these was the economic situation affecting communities. During this pilot, steering group members were continually witnessing first-hand how the economic downturn was manifesting in low income areas. In real terms it was a dire situation with worsening finances and rising debt. The stark reality is that many people were going without meals and many continue to do so. Charities, churches and community organisations were focusing efforts on ensuring people had food to eat, through the organisation and distribution of food parcels. So when the emphasis and effort at community level was on the most basic of human needs, it was understandably difficult to encourage groups to focus on helping people manage their meagre resources that little bit better.

Community infrastructure had a significant bearing on the scope and penetration of the project elements in certain areas. The areas in which we delivered the FCACP are deprived low income areas. These areas are home to precisely the key groups of people that financial capability initiatives should be aiming to reach. There is no doubt that if DETI's Financial Capability Strategy is to be a success amongst hard to reach groups, the community sector will need to be a key delivery partner.

Some partners felt that the time span for putting affordable loans structures in place was slow. Further they viewed the processes that clients had to go through to access loans as cumbersome. Some felt that to compete with high cost lenders, the credit union needed to show the loan process to be both quick and convenient.

Meanwhile the challenge for credit unions, already trying to meet FSA compliance, was the need to balance quick access to loans with the broader credit union ethos. Despite these difficulties, the credit union loans element in Derry continues to work well.

A factor contributing to the success of the Derry loans element of the pilot project was that members of the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership worked closely with individuals in the area. There is a great opportunity within the community sphere to develop the idea of peer-led money mentors. The example of the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership family officer working on a one-to-one basis seems to work well. Similarly relationships between congregation and church workers show that this could work further. This type of financial capability intervention has been working effectively in London for some time leading to initiatives such as London Citizens Project and other schemes run by Toynbee Hall.

The steering groups believe that we have developed a model which is easily transferable. Core components of the project can be adapted to suit other areas. Historically people are reluctant to talk about finances and for the most part are shy of attending formal financial capability training. 'Money Bites' has helped to address these problems by delivering short focused sessions that deliver the basics of financial education and from which attendees can continue to build their skills in ways appropriate to their needs.



Much has been achieved as part of the Affordable Credit Pilots. However there is still much to do and much that can be done.

The key points arising are:

- Areas with extremely weak (or no) community infrastructure present significant challenges in terms of improving financial capability.
- Due to poor community infrastructure, these areas are often overlooked and are thereby suffering more from low levels of financial capability.
- Understanding the community context and arising issues and concerns is important. The need to work with the community to build appropriate responses is critical.
- A major learning point is to set realistic timescales. Apathy can arise when communities feel forgotten about after initiatives developed for them are delivered and have ended. Sustainability and legacy planning is key.
- A community based approach (which builds on the 'settings' approach evident in other sectors i.e., education, public health), provides a strong ethos and an integrated approach for building financial capability.
- The pilot has developed a portfolio of toolkits and approaches. These models may be useful to community organisations and others considering financial capability initiatives. The overall approach and the toolkits are adaptable to a range of settings.
- Given the current economic climate in Northern Ireland, the impact on consumers deepens and the full extent of this is only beginning to come to light. The work established by this pilot needs to be continued to find further ways of providing support and helping people manage their money.

## 7.0 Recommendations

### Role of Government

The financial capability strategy being taken forward by DETI must have a real and lasting impact at community level in Northern Ireland and ensure that associated action plans address real needs at local community level. This should include work with stakeholders to explore ways to further develop affordable loan schemes.

The Office of the First and Deputy First Minister should also look at how 'Delivering Social Change' and more specifically the Social Investment Fund could ensure financial capability and inclusion programmes are embedded at local community level given the appetite for financial capability information, training and help.

### Role of Credit Unions

We will continue to work with stakeholders to build on the role of credit unions in local communities. We will also work with the Housing Rights Service to promote their research and the recommendations they published in May 2013. <http://www.housingrights.org.uk/policy-archive/201304>

### Role of Financial Capability Partnership

The Consumer Council is committed to continuing work with partners to review new and existing community programmes and to identify where wider financial capability resources and initiatives could be incorporated across NI.

We will also make the Financial Capability Partnership mapping more accessible to organisations working with communities to increase awareness of new and existing resources developed both in print and online.

# Appendix 1: Financial Capability and Affordable Credit Pilot in Ballymena and Derry Outputs

Information Events	Where	Key messages/learnings	Numbers attended
Ballymena	Harryville	Low attendance - link into existing events.	25
Ballymena	Doury Road	Better to link into existing events.	20
Family Fun Day	Cornshell Fields, Derry	Link into existing community organised events if possible.	50
Welfare Reform Event	Derry	Useful topical information. Single issue information sessions are useful, particularly on benefits given welfare reform is ongoing.	50

Information Resources (jointly branded Consumer Council and Money Sense)	Distributed Where	Numbers distributed to date	Feedback received / impact of information?
Borrowing Money Leaflet x 11,000	Ballymena, Derry, Money Week, All CCNI external outreach events including party political conferences.	Ballymena 1800 Derry 800 Other events 6000 <b>Total 8600*</b>	Information provided was easy to understand, in a useful format and helped people make more informed choices.
Spending Diaries x 5000	Ballymena, Derry, Money Week, All CCNI external outreach events including party political conferences.	Ballymena 1000 Derry 1000 Other Events 1500 <b>Total 3500*</b>	Advice workers and family support workers in particular found these a really useful tool. Demand for spending diaries has been high and CCNI have reprinted to meet demand.

\*Correct at time of print



Training	Where	Numbers attended	Key Themes
'Looking at Money Differently' Youth Training	Ballymena - 2 tranches  Derry - 1 tranche	Ballymena - 20  Derry - 12 (5 completed course)	Attitudes to money, effective budget and awareness of habits, making informed choices, financial terminology, where to get help & support.
Benefits Training	Ballymena	14	Overview of benefits available, eligibility, signposting.
'Wiser Advisor' Debt Advice Training	Ballymena and Derry	Ballymena - 13 Derry - 7	Different types of debt, priority versus non priority, drawing up a financial statement, dealing with debtors, the legal system, signposting.
'Made of Money,' Train the Trainer Training	Ballymena and Derry	Ballymena - 3 Derry - 13	Budgeting, credit, debt communication, children and money and learning about money as a family.
'Welfare Reform Rights' Train the Trainer training	Derry	7	Overview of the universal credit and changes to the welfare system.
'Cook It' and 'Money Bites'	Derry - 2 tranches of 'Cook Its' with 6 'Money Bites' sessions each	20	Cooking nutritious meals on a budget. Bite size training on food shopping, finding the best deal, preparing for Christmas, payday loans, benefits of different payment methods, personal budgeting, priority versus non priority debt and spending diary.

Training Resources	Distributed Where	Numbers distributed
'Money Bites' Toolkit	Derry, Ballymena, community groups and tutors.	500

## Appendix 2: Survey Questions for Steering Group Members on the Financial Capability Affordable Credit Pilot Projects

Please give us your honest views of the project. This will help us to make things better for future projects.

### Information

1. How effective were the information events in your area?
2. In your view, what could be done differently; is there a better way or format to deliver information events in your area?

**Two publications have been produced as a result of the pilot projects, a borrowing money leaflet and spending diary (enclosed for ease of reference)**

3. Do you think that these publications are useful?
4. What groups of people/organisations do you think would find these publications useful?
5. Are there any other needs for information in your area, if so what are they?

### Training

6. How useful was the Train the Trainer training? e.g. benefits overview, dealing with debt, 'Made of Money' training.
7. Since the training, have you used the skills that you have learnt?
8. If so, please tell us how?
9. How useful was the youth training in your area?
10. Is there a need for further youth training? What groups/organisations should avail of this training?
11. The 'Money Bites' training was designed to be short, fun training sessions on money matters. How useful was the 'Money Bites' training/delivery in your area?
12. Have you or anyone else delivered 'Money Bites' in your area since?

13. Do you have any additional training or support needs with regards to training on money matters?

### Affordable Loans

14. Affordable loans - has the affordable loans scheme been working well in your area?
15. Please give reasons for your answers
16. Is there another approach which you feel might work?

### The whole picture

17. Looking at the project as a whole, what would you do differently?
18. How could a project like this work better in your area in the future?

### Financial Capability

The NI Assembly is developing a strategy on financial capability. The strategy will deal with areas such as;

- making ends meet;
- keeping track of your personal finances;
- planning ahead for the future;
- choosing financial products; and
- staying informed about financial matters

19. What do you think the specific needs are in your locality?
20. What would you like to see government do to increase levels of financial capability?
21. In relation to financial capability, what is the role of your organisation or other groups in the area? Is this relevant to you?
22. What financial capability support would your group need?
23. Having participated in the pilot project, what do you think is the best way to reach people?

### Any other comments/views?





## The Consumer Council

Elizabeth House  
116 Holywood Road  
Belfast  
BT4 1NY



Complaints line: 0800 121 6022



Tele/Textphone: 028 9067 2488



Fax: 028 9065 7701



Email: [info@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@consumercouncil.org.uk)  
[complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk)



Website: [www.consumercouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)



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