

# Merthyr Tydfil Financial Inclusion Forum Action Plan

1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012

Update 13 (28<sup>th</sup> October 2010)

**RED = RISK THAT TARGET WILL NOT BE MET UNLESS ACTION IS TAKEN**  
**YELLOW = SOME ISSUES BUT THESE CAN BE RESOLVED**  
**GREEN = ON TARGET**

## Theme 1: To Improve Access to Mainstream Financial Products & Services

REF	Objective	Beneficiaries	Output	Outcomes / Targets	Lead Body	Timescale	Progress Report
FP 1	To install 'free to use' ATMs in sites identified by LINK	Individuals in ward	ATMs installed	Reduced outgoing.  3 sites.	Merthyr FI Forum Chair  LINK  Communities First	By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	<p>Mapping exercise completed (Nov 08)                      Meeting with Graham Mott – Head of LINK (February 10):                      Merthyr: 7 installed; 2 pending; 3 sites outstanding.</p> <p>Locations eligible for premium: Town, Cyfartha; Vaynor.                      Sept 10: Town &amp; Park CF contacted Queens Road stores.                      Not in position to fill machine themselves (barrier).                      Costcutters Twyn difficult to contact. AC in contact with Twyn Carmel shop keeper.</p> <p>Note: 'Free to use' ATMs save average user £90 per year.                      Merthyr ATM locator:  <a href="http://www.link.co.uk/atmlocator/Pages/ATMLocator.aspx">http://www.link.co.uk/atmlocator/Pages/ATMLocator.aspx</a></p>

## Theme 2: To Increase Provision of Affordable Credit & Savings

REF	Objective	Beneficiaries	Output	Outcomes / Targets	Lead Body	Timescale	Progress Report
CSL 1	To support Merthyr Tydfil Credit Union.	Merthyr Tydfil Credit Union customers	Referrals to credit Union.	More members.  10% adult membership increase per annum.	MT Credit Union	Report Annually:  31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012.	Membership increase: 103% growth: 08 – 09.  17 outreach collection points operational. Town & Park CF (2).  8 new members referred to Credit Union from Trefechan CF (Sept 09).  Barclays Community Finance Fund application submitted (Nov 09) - unsuccessful.  Awarded WAG Capital Grant to relocate to high street premises (plans to open by end of 2010).
CSL 2	To set up Junior Credit Unions.	Children and Families in Poverty.	4 new primary schools junior credit unions.	More junior members.  5% junior membership increase per annum.	MT Credit Union - PSN & LEA	By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2010	5 primary school collection points established (Nov 09). CF referral to Edwardsville Primary (Nov 09). CF referral to Ysgol-y-Graig Primary School - new collection point opened (Aug 10).  Twyn School (Town & Park CF) working on opening collection point and quarterly campaigns (Sept 10).
CSL 3	To support work of appointed credit union engagement officer.	Financially excluded Merthyr.	2 way referrals.	Improved capacity to deliver financial inclusion initiatives.	MT Credit Union.	By 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2009	Andrew Rowland appointed (Nov 09).  (April 10): MT Credit Union ran some workshops at Cyfarthfa and Bishop Hedley high schools on financial issues such as loan sharks, responsible borrowing and the difference between credit unions and banks. Pupils produced animation film: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8OTANzZaJQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8OTANzZaJQ</a> Film won 'best animation at the Zoom film festival'. Positive example of what can be achieved through partnership working.
CSL 4	To facilitate the roll-out	Individuals on low	Training Sessions.	Increased financial	HMRC	By 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	MT Credit Union obtained Savings Gateway provider status (April 10).

	of 'Savings Gateway' in Merthyr area to ensure above average take-up.	incomes	Referrals.	assets of eligible target groups. £0.50 to £1 match.			HMRC to deliver introductory training session (July 10) in order to raise awareness through intermediaries and community groups.  <b>HMRC Saving Gateway initiative cancelled (June 10).</b>
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### Theme 3: To Improve Access to Financial and Debt Advice

REF	Objectives	Beneficiaries	Output	Outcomes / Targets	Lead Body	Timescale	Progress Report
FA 1	To increase provision of <b>specialist</b> financial / debt advice.	Individuals requiring assistance with financial problems.	Face to Face advice sessions.	Provision increase (100 hours p.a.).  Less people in financial difficulty.	Task & Finish Group.	By 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2011	CAB outreach monitored through CF template. CF Outcomes Fund EOI developed and submitted (Dec 09). EOI application rejected with comments. (April 10). EOI to be amended (July 10).  Christians Against Poverty establishing Merthyr Town Centre presence (Nov 10).
FA 2	To increase provision of <b>preventative</b> financial advice.	Individuals requiring assistance with financial matters.	Face to Face advice sessions.	Provision increase (250 hours p.a.).  Less people in financial difficulty.  Reduction of inappropriate referrals to FA 1.	CFEB & Chair	By 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2010	CFEB funded money guide in post Merthyr & Blaenau Gwent (March 10) to fill guidance gap.  Hosted by forum members: Trefechan CF outreach (June 10) on monthly basis. 14 residents accessing service. <i>1 resident saved over £100 on utility bills and unclaimed benefit. 1 resident saved over £1000 on bills, budgeting and bank overcharging.</i>  Digital inclusion / financial inclusion proposal to include element of financial advice.

FA 3	To promote Housing Debt Helpline Wales <a href="http://www.housing-debt-helpline-wales.org/">http://www.housing-debt-helpline-wales.org/</a>  <b>0800 107 1340</b>	Individuals (social & private housing) with mortgage / rent arrears.	Referrals to Helpline	Sustained tenancies.  Fewer evictions.  (10 referrals p.a.)	CCCS	Report Annually:  March 2012	Promoted through Trefechan newsletter & website (July 09). Promoted through Brighter Merthyr Tydfil website (Nov 09). Promoted in Town & Park CF office window (Sept 10)  Forum update (May 10) 4 referrals (2 rent; 2 mortgage) all successfully remained in homes. Promotional material free and available.
FA 4	To promote and support Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit.  <b>0300 123 3311</b>	Vulnerable individuals.	Referrals to confidential hotline.	Eradication of loan sharks.  More support for victims.  (No reports of illegal money lending activity).	Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit	Report Annually:  March 2012	Number of ongoing cases in Merthyr area – time delay before convictions. Promotional material free and available. 1 CF referral to Unit (Jan 10). Promoted in Town & Park CF office window (Sept 10)  Update (Feb 10): Operation Holly, successful conviction of loan shark operating in Merthyr area. 35 victims, total loan book value £53K. 10 month sentence, £79,000 confiscation order. <a href="http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/2010/02/23">http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/2010/02/23</a> Client liaison officers supporting victims; restructured finances, prevented eviction and found employment.
FA 5	To evaluate Communities First Debt & Benefit (DABS) 'Demonstration' and if deemed appropriate support application for roll-out in Merthyr area	Communities First Partnerships	Application Bid	More 'DAB' type provision	Forum & Task Group	By December 2009.	Fact-finding visit (Sept 09). DABS deemed unsuitable for roll-out, however, conclusions developed in EOI application (FA1).

#### Theme 4: To Strengthen Financial Capability

REF	Objective	Beneficiaries	Output	Outcomes / Targets	Lead Body	Timescale	Progress Report
FC 1	<p>To deliver CFEB initiatives:</p> <p>Young People &amp; Money intermediary training.</p> <p>Parents Guide to Money</p> <p>Making The Most of Your Money for employees.</p>	<p>Intermediaries working with 16-25 year olds</p> <p>Children's Centres.</p> <p>Employees</p>	<p>Workshop Sessions</p> <p>Parents Guides</p>	<p>Improved financial capability of individuals and intermediaries.</p> <p>Improved access to financial information.</p> <p>(15 intermediaries)</p> <p>(15 employees)</p>	FSA	<p>Report Annually:</p> <p>March 2012.</p>	<p>4 Merthyr FI Forum members attended Young People &amp; Money session (Oct 09 &amp; Nov 09). Merthyr Young people session delivered April 09. Trefechan CF 'young people &amp; managing money' session (Jan 10).</p> <p>Quarterly financial inclusion workshops held in Trefechan with Trefechan Youth Club and Communities First (Apr 10 – Mar 11).</p> <p>Parents guide to money given out to all parents in the Vaynor Ward. FSA leaflets available in local Trefechan CF Office and Community Café (Oct 09).</p> <p>'Moneymadeclear' leaflets available in community venues. FSA guides now included in all WEA enrolment packs 6,000+ per annum.</p> <p>FSA workplace training delivered at Merthyr Housing Association staff, WEA &amp; Wales Co-operative Centre staff (50+ employees).</p> <p><b>(Feb 10) FSA now rebranded CFEB (Consumer Financial Education Body).</b></p>
FC 2	<p>To deliver WEA led financial literacy classes e.g. 'budgeting'</p>	Individuals	Financial literacy classes	<p>Improved financial capability.</p> <p>Improved financial decision-</p>	WEA	<p>Report Annually:</p> <p>March 2012</p>	<p>Basic Skills Cymru OCN financial literacy units delivered through WEA community classes – free of charge.</p> <p>(Jan 10) 2 courses held 'budgeting' in CF areas.</p> <p>Family Resource Guide distributed to 130 WEA</p>

				making.  (1 class per CF area) Or (At least 100 people to have been on course)			tutors (July 10)  Town & Park CF: 1 class run (Feb 10) 7 participants; 5 passed. Promoted regularly thorough Adref.
FC 3	To offer Financial Inclusion road show / events at community venues	Communities and service providers.	Events	Improved access to financial products and services.  (1 event per year) (100 beneficiaries) (10 exhibitors)	Marketing Task & Finish Group	By Dec 2009	<p>Credit Crunch day will hosted by Trefechan CF (Sept 09). 12 exhibitors attracting 20 residents resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4 new members to the credit union</li> <li>- 2 specialist referrals to the pension advice</li> <li>- 1 referral to specialist debt advice through CAB</li> <li>- 1 referral to the safe and sound project</li> <li>- 1 referral to reduced cost chipping and neutering service</li> <li>- Increased membership of the local food co-operative</li> </ul> <p>Feb 10: Merthyr CLIC website (Promo Cymru initiative) to be promoted. Service written by and aimed at young people.</p> <p>Merthyr Vale Money Management event to be held 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010.</p> <p>Financial Inclusion element to Taff Bargoed festival to be held 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010.</p> <p>3 G's health, jobs, training and financial inclusion event to be held September 2010).</p> <p>Town &amp; Park CF running 'getting into work awareness day' (Sept 10). Application for funding submitted 'Financial Awareness &amp; Play Advice Day' Twyn School.</p> <p>30 attendees at 3G's 'only men aloud' event, Money Guide present (Sept 10).</p> <p>5 attendees at Treodyrhiw CG Money Management Event (Sept 10).</p>

**Theme 5: To Improve Lives through Income Maximisation**

REF	Objective	Beneficiaries	Output	Outcomes/ Targets	Lead Body	Timescale	Progress Report
IM 1	<p>To identify and supply information on money saving schemes within the Borough :</p> <p>Dogs Trust neutering &amp; micro chipping Local Safe and Sound children's products Welsh Water Assist Home Heat Helpline</p>	<p>All individuals in particular households suffering from fuel poverty &amp; child poverty.</p>	<p>Referrals. Information leaflets. Adverts placed.</p>	<p>Less expenditure.</p>	<p>Service providers</p>	<p>Report Annually:  March 2012</p>	<p>Forum mapping exercise completed (April 09).</p> <p>Subsidised neutering £30 available through Victoria Vets and RSPCA Surgery (usual price up to £150). 01656 725345.</p> <p>At cost child safety products available through CF. Keep Well This Winter event (Nov 09).</p> <p>Trefechan CF promoting green horizons to all residents to encourage uptake of services through website (Nov 09).</p> <p>Bedlinog chosen as WAG neighbourhood renewal area (July 10) opportunity to address fuel poverty issues.</p> <p>Merthyr CBC 'lookinglocal' digital TV communication method to be explored (July 10).</p> <p>Ysgol Y Graig ran fashion project (July 10) to promote reuse of clothing and recycling using clothes sought from charity shops and donations. Families had the option of purchasing clothes at very low cost at event.</p>
IM 2	<p>To promote Housing Benefit &amp; Council Tax Take-Up Campaign</p>	<p>Individuals and families on low incomes</p>	<p>Referrals</p>	<p>More benefits awarded resulting in increased income for families and</p>	<p>Benefits take up officer.</p>	<p>Report Annually:  March 2012</p>	<p>Update: Additional benefit awarded to March 1<sup>st</sup> 09 (from July 08) Merthyr: Housing Benefit £10,638 Council Tax £9,442.</p>

	<b>0800 917 1800</b>			individuals. (20 p.a.)			
<b>IM 3</b>	To inform and compliment work of Older Persons Income Maximisation Group	Older People	Group Meetings	More income for older people.  Avoid duplication.	FI Forum & Chair of Older Persons Group	Report Annually:  March 2012	Maximising Income Group meetings held quarterly. Financial Inclusion Forum updates provided at each meeting.

**Theme 6: To Establish & Sustain Merthyr Tydfil Financial Inclusion Forum**

REF	Objective	Beneficiaries	Output	Outcomes / Targets	Lead Body	Timescale	Progress Report
MT 1	To support and integrate Forum activity to wider local authority priorities.	FI Forum.	Policy documents.	Additional resources to support FI activity.	FI Forum Chair	Report Annually:  March 2012	<p>Merthyr Tydfil was selected with Blaenau Gwent to pilot a Financial Inclusion project for victims of domestic abuse by applying for IT equipment and accessing the Money Made Clear Money Guide for Teulu Partnership Team (TPT) clients.</p> <p>TPT were successful in securing funding to purchase a computer, laptop, internet access and printer to enable clients too safely and quickly access information on a variety of matters including benefit allowances, housing advice and information, legal advice on child access.</p> <p>Together with support and advice from the Money Guide, <b>14</b> clients have confidentially accessed information which historically they would not have known how to access. Over <b>35</b> clients to date have used the financial inclusion equipment with assistance of Teulu staff.</p> <p>Feedback from clients and staff confirm that without this financial advice and support, many clients would have stayed or returned to their violent and abusive relationships due to the financial worries and lack of information and confidence to take on financial commitments and future planning.</p> <p>Self esteem and confidence has been raised in many clients who have had the opportunity to use computer equipment for the first time with assistance. Some have accessed further learning in their own communities.</p>

							<p>Many clients now save with Credit Union and are aware of the low cost loans available rather than turning to loan sharks or lenders such as Provident who have extremely high interest rates. (Oct 10).</p> <p>WAG Financial Inclusion Strategy consultation response submitted (June 09).</p> <p>Response submitted to Merthyr Vision 2020 (Jan 10). Marketing/communication task &amp; finish group to be established (May 10). WAG Child poverty consultation event (July 10). Consultation response submitted through CF.</p> <p>Financial Inclusion &amp; Homelessness Event (June 10) attracting 90+ delegates. DWP 3<sup>rd</sup> sector application submitted (Jan 10) unsuccessful.</p>
MT 2	To provide regular progress reports, incorporating new priorities and publicising success.	FI Forum	FI Strategy.  FI Action Plan.	Improved understanding of financial inclusion issues and work of forum.	FI Forum Chair	Jan 2010  Sept 2010  Jan 2011  Sept 2011  Jan 2012	<p>FI Action Plan agreed (Sept 09). Action plan to be circulated prior to each forum meeting, traffic light review system adopted. Individual themes to be reviewed at each meeting. (July 10).</p>
MT 3	To promote the work of the Forum to external audience.	Merthyr FI Forum	VAMT webpage  Network News  Presentations	Improved transparency and dissemination.  Greater access to Forum	FI Forum Chair  VAMT	September 2009	<p>Forum information accessible through VAMT Website (August 09): <a href="http://www.vamt.net/financial_inclusion_forum.html">http://www.vamt.net/financial_inclusion_forum.html</a></p> <p>VAMT Financial Inclusion 'Network News' launched (May 10) circulated to all Forum members.</p>

			to other networks.	strategy documents and generic financial inclusion information.			Communications sub-group established (May 10). Forum logo developed by Glamorgan GATES (Sept 10). Design voted on by Forum (Sept 10).
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