



Local Welfare – Our Experience & Ways Forward

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UK picture

- £573m of individual financial assistance per annum provided by benevolence charities
- Tension between state & charitable provision
- Social fund abolition presented specific challenge alignment against 100+ different schemes & criteria
- Localisation presented (and still does!!) opportunities
- Local welfare clients often meet criteria for charitable assistance
- Challenges the ability of UK funders to provide consistent additional support to those most at need



Our Experience

- Saw large rise in applications across London in April – July 2013
- Shift of interpretation to emergency or crisis regarding sums previously provided by Community Care Grant Scheme
- Subtle change from harm prevention eg to ease “exceptional pressure” under previous CCG
- Largest losers are those where LA duty of care is weakest – again this is a change – could argue other funds available – this is where Govt is!



Case Study

- Sept 2013 – A single 18 year old male – sleeping on sister’s couch following violent incident with mother’s partner
- Following homeless application receives unfurnished local authority one bedroom flat
- On ESA – lower level mental health needs

What should Local Welfare Support provide?



What are Local Schemes providing?

- Residency Requirement? Are they living in same LA area? Cases of failure to meet standard
- Offer a credit union loan at 26.2% APR - £56.80 a week income – is this reasonable?
- Not eligible for scheme as not directly from Young Persons Foyer/Care/Social services referral
- Offer a starter pack of single bed, microwave and table top fridge
- Offer £750 grant as start up grant to include second-hand goods & electrical goods



Our response

- Provided £300 starter grant to allow basic items to be covered – agency has developed own pack in response to LWS failings
- Contacted Local Authorities where scheme is restrictive
- CU scheme – there are emergency grants (not publicised!)
- Single people in particular have seen the largest withdrawal of assistance



National Experience

- Post-code Lottery
- Scheme in transition – “Building a car engine whilst travelling down the motorway at 70mph”
- Schemes not spent full allocation of funds
- Schemes are more generous now than in April
- Funds used elsewhere
- Reasoning for allocation of funds very hard to determine – no clear outcome framework



What can we do?

- Best examples are where clear outcome framework and link other existing funds eg DHP/S17/Leaving Care
- Link to prevention – eg cost of failure of tenancy – idea of home is key in determining tenancy success – Shelter Research
- Link to other support eg Improving financial confidence programmes – 13 awards in London
- Collective action – sub-regional activity
- Work proactively with external funds. We want to reward good practice not bad!