



Better off

West Lothian Money Week





West Lothian Money Week Evaluation Report 2011

Introduction

Welcome to the evaluation report for the first ever West Lothian Money Week.

West Lothian Money Week took place in West Lothian between Monday 21 and Saturday 26 November

- a unique partnership initiative which is part of our Anti –Poverty Strategy.

The week brought together a wide spectrum of the West Lothian community, including a range of council services, community planning partners, the private sector , voluntary organisations and members of the public.

Over 50 free events, workshops and activities took place during Money Week. Their purpose was to get people thinking about how they manage their money and how to make their money go further.

Background

The ongoing difficult economic situation is having a major impact on West Lothian residents. Many people are now living with money worries for the first time following redundancy or changes to their working hours.

The potential impact of the proposed welfare reforms is further adding to the financial pressure facing so many people today. It is estimated that people in West Lothian stand to lose between £17 and £20 million per year in benefit income as a result of changes to the benefit system .

Purpose of Money Week

The purpose of ‘Better Off: West Lothian Money Week’, was to raise financial awareness and get people thinking about how to best manage their money. We aimed to encourage people to engage with services and make sure that they know the support available.

Summary

We recorded 1136 people attending events held during Money Week 2011.

Key Events Attendance

Event	Target of Numbers Attendees	Actual attending
Switched on	100	201
Jobs Fair	80	105
Health and wealth	60	57
Regal Film Show-case	200	99
Connect up	80	144
Big Day Out	100	250
All other Events	400	280

Key Events Satisfaction

Event	Did Event Meet Expectations	Was Event Well Organised	Overall Thoughts of the Whole Event
Switched on	Yes 96%	Yes 90%	85% very good 15% good
Jobs Fair			
Health and Wealth	Yes 100%	Yes 100%	92% very good 8% good
Regal Film Show-case	Yes 92%	Yes 92%	67% very good 33% good
Connect up	Yes 84%	Yes 92%	92% very good 8% good
Big Day Out	Yes 96%	Yes 98%	56%very good 40% good

Recommendations and Lessons Learned

1. Events

- Events targeted at people in work were unsuccessful, with very low attendances. We need to rethink and improve for Money Week 2012
- The number of events was too high. This meant that we were not able to effectively promote some smaller events. We will reduce the number in 2012
- The large 'flagship' events had very good partner participation and public attendance. We will concentrate on these in 2012

2. Planning and Organisation

Money Week 2011 was organised in a space of 11 weeks. This was too short a time for some partners to organise their activities. We will begin to plan Money Week 2012 in January.

3. Time of year

We should have Money Week earlier in the calendar year, in early October. The weather affected the attendance at some of the events this year, and caused a barrier to having outdoor displays. It was also held too close to Christmas.

4. Funding

We managed to attract some private sponsorship, and need to attract more in 2012. Therefore we need to have a rough programme of events ready in summer 2012.

4. Publicity

What we did this year worked well in the main. We need to evaluate the strategy with Corporate Communications early in the new year.

6. Participation

More agencies that deliver services to the people in West Lothian under the anti-poverty agenda need to be better engaged. Schools should be actively encouraged to participate and ways of which they can be involved identified. We will attempt to engage better with the voluntary sector through Voluntary Sector Gateway

7. Partner expectations

From the onset, clarity is needed about roles and responsibilities, what participating agencies need to know and what support they need and can expect.

8. Partner Evaluation

Most partners responded to requests for some form of evaluation. We will review how we got feedback and improve for 2012

The organisation of Money Week

The events

Events were planned in line with our six priorities as described in the Anti Poverty Strategy:

Income
Employability
Housing
Health
Education
Community

Activities were designed to target specific groups and areas where consultation and existing research shows that intervention is most needed. For example:

- A jobs fair in Fauldhouse.
- An energy advice session for disabled people at the Ability Centre. (Consultation with disabled people's groups revealed that gas and electricity issues were a major concern for many disabled people).
- A financial and legal information event for older people and carers in Whitburn, an area with a significant population of older people.
- A careers and jobs fair event for young people at West Lothian College.

A wide range of partners were involved in the Money Week events. These included West Lothian Council services, Lothian and Borders Police, Department of Work and Pensions, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue, local housing associations, Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian, West Lothian Credit Union Forum, the Salvation Army and Homestart West Lothian.

Many events were held in partnership with agencies from both voluntary and private sectors. For example the theme for West Lothian's Credit Union Forum's school poster competition was "Saving for the Future". This was chosen to reflect a theme of the anti-poverty strategy. The competition had over 800 entries from pupils from local primary schools.

Publicity and Marketing

The Council's Corporate Communications team played a vital role in the publicity and marketing of Money Week. The team created a purple and gold colour theme for the week which was then adopted for posters and flyers and all Money Week publications. This enabled us to create a common 'look and feel' for the money week events.

The run up to money week saw a range of activity to publicise the week using available media forums:

Articles in West Lothian Courier

Article in the Council Bulletin which was distributed to over 7,000 West Lothian homes.

Regular updates to the Council's Facebook page, which currently has over 15,000 subscribers

10,000 copies of the full programme were created and, with the help of partners, distributed widely across West Lothian and displayed in community spaces such as libraries, family centres, CIS offices, community centres and local shops. Partners in customer facing roles, such as Advice Shop and Access 2 Employment also took a proactive approach in the lead up to Money Week by handing out programmes and encouraging their customers to attend suitable events.

Experienced door knockers were recruited to go out and about in local areas to make people aware of events happening on the day. Local Councillors also played an important role, coming along to many events, talking to attendees and saying a few words to remind people of the purpose and aim of Money Week.

Creativity and Innovation

Money week was all about finding new ways of giving information in a range of different spaces.

We were keen to create spaces that were non-threatening, informal and inviting, to enable as many people as possible from our communities to engage in the activities.

Sponsorship

We sought sponsorship from a variety of agencies in the private sector, and were successful in securing sponsorship for one of our main events from Southern and Scottish Energy.

We were also successful in gaining support from local businesses. We received a number of donations of raffle prizes and vouchers.

The Events

We had over 50 events during the week. This report summarises examples of some of the events that were held during the week. We have listed them under our six themes.

Income

Work Your Money An event aimed at retail workers in the Centre in Livingston. Benefit checks were offered in the Winter Gardens of the Centre Week. However, no one attended.

Money For Life A workshop for professionals looking to gain the skills and knowledge to assist their customers with making appropriate financial decisions. There were 11 participants, the majority of whom decided to sign up for an accredited training programme following the workshop.

Kerching These series of workshops facilitated Community Learning and Development were run around different locations to give people information about using the internet to buy and sell, banking etc.

Other events	<p>Money Advice Service workshop for West Lothian Council employees.</p> <p>Money advice and budgeting sessions were done by the Citizens Advice Bureau.</p> <p>Benefit advisers ran advice sessions at community centres, groups halls, on the library Buses to give information to the public on how to maximise their income. 307 people approached them for information and advice and 12 people wanted contact for follow-up help and support.</p>
Education	
Schools	<p>8 West Lothian schools participated in the week by holding financial awareness sessions for pupils, organizing Christmas Fayres and running credit union saving schemes</p>
Skint	<p>A workshop for young people using the new interactive resource 'Skint' took place. A follow up workshop for practitioners working with young people was also held and participants took away copies of the 'Skint' book to use with their customers.</p>
'Dosh' Sign Up	<p>West Lothian Credit Union Forum were at the Bathgate Partnership Centre during Money Week to encourage people to sign up for the 'Dosh' financial education course.</p>
Employability	
Just the Job	<p>A jobs fair held in Fauldhouse, organised by partners of the Working Together group. Over 100 people attended the event and were able to meet with local employers and find out about employability services available in the area.</p>
Connect Up'	<p>A youth careers event at West Lothian College also organised by partners of the Working Together group. 144 young people attended, including school pupils. The young people were able to speak to local employers about career prospects. DJ skills and art workshops helped create an informal non- threatening atmosphere for the young people. Skills Development Scotland Team, provided financial advice for those thinking about training or study.</p>

Housing

Switched on An event held at the Bathgate Partnership centre provided members of the public with a chance to drop in for advice on housing, energy and preparing for winter. Several local agencies including Weslo, Credit Union, Council Housing team and Lothian and Borders Police were on hand to offer information and advice. Attendees were entertained by Carmondean Primary School Choir.



Other Council Housing services held rent advice surgeries around different locations. Almond Housing held also held a joint Revenues and Housing surgery in their Craigshill offices.

Health

Health and Wealth' This stall event was delivered in partnership with 'Together in Health Project' in Armadale. Mums and Tots from local groups attended and were able to gain information from the various agencies about a range of health and money related issues, for example , preparing weaning foods from fresh ingredients and the cost of this, as well as how to save money by growing your own fruit and vegetables.



The Health Improvement Team facilitated a session 'Have your say on poverty', at the Bathgate Partnership Centre.

7 people took part in an interesting discussion on how best to help minimise the impact of poverty in West Lothian.

Community

Regal Film Showcase

The audience was given a chance to browse through stalls and have light refreshment before the film showings. Several agencies including RBS, Scottish and Southern Energy, Homestart, the Credit Union Forum and the Advice Shop participated in this event. The 2 sessions were aimed at families and older people. The audience were also treated to free popcorn and refreshment, sponsored by Scottish and Southern Energy.



Big Day Out'

Our week's finale event saw the audience treated to a variety of entertainment from a range of performers and dance troupes which reflected West Lothian's diverse communities. Stalls were held by several agencies around West Lothian which offer help, advice and support to families. Small local businesses were invited to hold a stall at this event.



Other events included 'Better safe than sorry', a roadshow which was designed to give older people a financial and legal information. This event was well received and saw 30 people attend.

Public Feedback

Members of the public attending events were asked for their thoughts:

"very enjoyable, glad I came" (Regal Event)

"Council should run events like this more often" (Regal Event)

good to get some energy saving ideas, would have liked more practical examples” (Regal Event)

“Great way to discover local community resources” (Health and Wealth)

“Have more with info in the one room at the same time” (Health and Wealth)

Learnt a lot about help for people my age’ (Connect Up)

“Good information stalls, but thought that should have had more kids entertainment” (Big Day Out)

“ would like this to be a regular event” (Big Day Out)

These are some of the responses that we got back from our partners who either had events or attended events:

‘I thought the venue was excellent. There were less stalls than I expected but quality more than quantity. There were a number of people who I assisted with regards to housing issues. I would estimate that I actually assisted with about 30-40 people during the day. The highlight was the the children’s school choir. They were brilliant and I loved the use of the Scottish language. The hall was close to food facilities which were good value.’

it was well organised and offered a good service for members of the public. (Switched On - Weslo)

‘The event was enjoyable and seemed well planned. The only issue we found was that there weren’t that many attendees. Those that we did meet were often already council tenants, and were therefore not looking for alternative housing options. Otherwise, a very enjoyable event’. (Switched on’ - Cyrenians)

‘I was really pleased with how the event went. The weather was awful, so I was really concerned that not many people would turn up, but we had over one hundred come, I think it was really useful for all of them. Some people who came were quite young, but I think this was a really positive event for them because it sets them thinking about career pathways at an earlier stage’. (Connect Up)

‘The main topic discussed at our stand was energy efficiency measures to help reduce client’s bills. Advice was also given to help reduce condensation. Energy consumption monitors also proved popular’ (Regal - Scottish and Southern Energy)

‘Information on the event was sent a little late and therefore planning was more difficult’ (Health and Wealth- Xcite)

Thank you to all who contributed to Money Week 2011

In particular we would like to thank

West Lothian Council Housing

Weslo

Ingeus (West Lothian)

Adult Basic Education

Libraries

Ability Centre

Community Learning and Development Team

Together in Health group

Care for families West Lothian

Regal Community Theatre

Scottish and Southern Energy

Local Credit Unions

West Lothian Art Services

Land Securities

Mayfield House

Lothian and Borders Police

Kidzeco

NHS Lothian

Alcohol Reduction Project

Volunteer Gateway West Lothian

West Lothian Council Area Services

Almond Housing

Salvation Army (Fauldhouse)

Health improvement Team

Disability West Lothian

West Lothian Credit Union Forum

Heart and Stroke group (Bathgate)

Homestart West Lothian

ChangeWorks (Love food hate waste)

Regal Film Society

Skills Development Scotland

RBS

Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

Sunny Dale group , Armadale

Milan Asian Women's group

Lothian Fire and Rescue

Tesco

Food Train

Xcite

We would also like to Thank Scottish and Southern Energy for Sponsoring the Regal Showcase Event.

And the following for their kind donations:

Scottish and Southern Energy

Tesco

Lidl

Morrisons

Inchwood Interiors

Schuh

West Lothian Credit Union Forum

David Stein Butchers (Bathgate)