

Trialling Universal Support Delivered Locally



*Douglas Whyte, Housing Services Argyll and Bute
Council
4 February 2016*



Expressions of Interest

- EOI submitted to DWP June 2014
- 3 core elements:
 - Triage
 - Personal budgeting support
 - Digital inclusion
- Randomised Control Trial starting 1st September 2014 for 12 months
- Formal evaluation



Demographic Overview

- **Population of 89,590**
- **Ageing and reducing population**
- **Very rural: second largest local authority area and third sparsest population density**
- **23 inhabited islands**
- **Poor broadband and mobile coverage**
- **High proportion public sector jobs**

Excellent Partnership Working



- Multi-agency Welfare Reform Working Group
- Argyll and Bute Advice Network with a common referral system used by all supporting multi-agency referrals
- Housing Options Hub & Home Argyll Partnership
- Existing contracts with Housing Support Providers
- Forward thinking Adult Learning & Literacy team

Argyll and Bute
ADVICE NETWORK



Embedding a cross sector approach to deliver support

- Joint leads =  + 
- Plus  Advice for Scotland &  &  Local Housing Associations

AIMS

Improve literacy, IT and personal budgeting skills

Identify levels of demand for support

Identify gaps in provision up to the implementation of Universal Credit

Refer 2,000 participants to the trial.

Trial Timescales



- Initial trial period 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015.
- Extended for three months to 30 November 2015 in agreement with DWP. Delivery model to operate in same way
- Council will extend the process further to 31 March 2016.
- Hope to secure funding through the European Social Fund.



Improving Digital and Financial Inclusion

Outcomes for initial trial period:

- 1,739 referrals
- 617 referred to Housing Support for low level triage

98% of referrals come from:



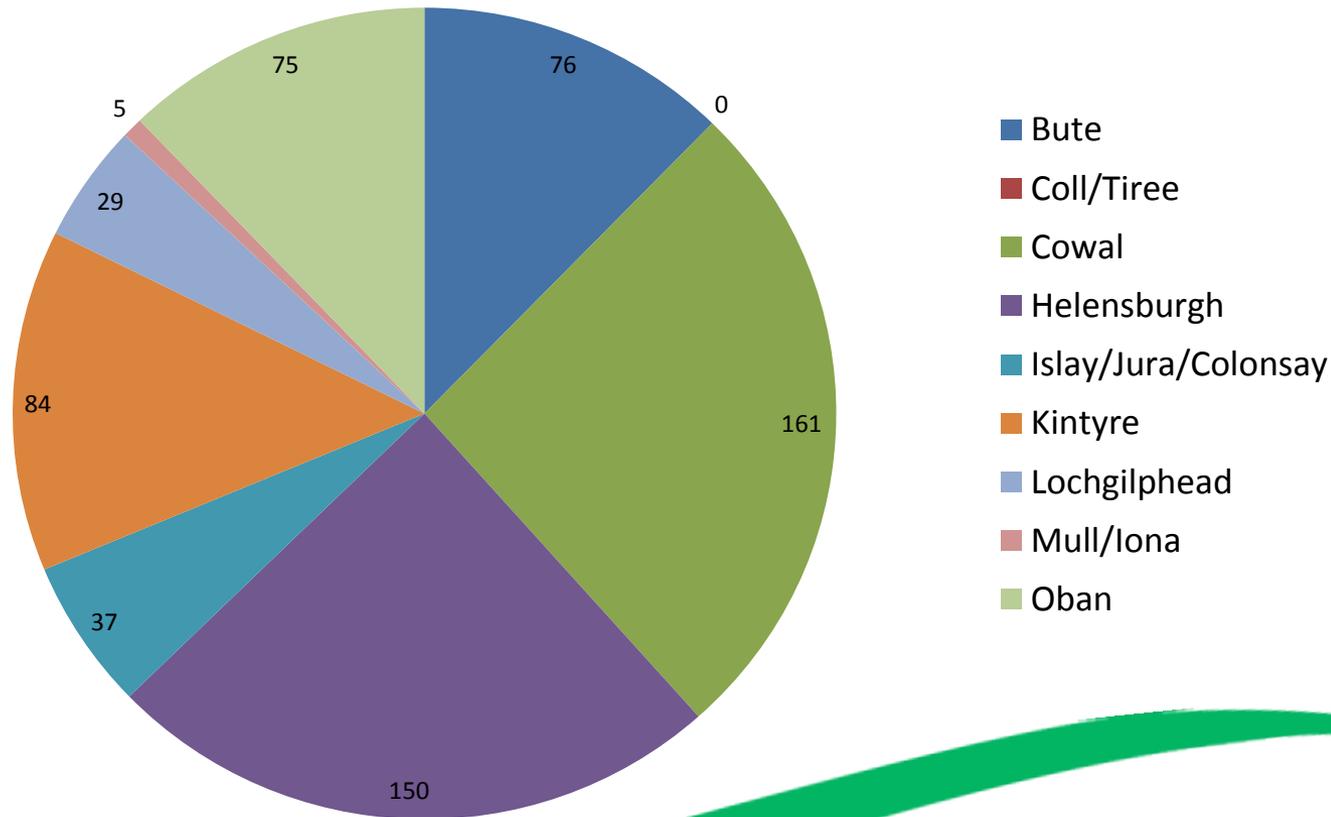
Scottish Welfare Fund



Improving Digital and Financial Inclusion

Referrals came from across the area:

Area of Referral per Housing Market Area



Trial Challenges



- Rural locations
- Lack of facilities for digital support
- Poor broadband
- No standardisation of PBS support
- No job club in Mid Argyll – nearest JobCentre is Oban
- Poor public transport links

Successes!

Outreach work for PBS,
we go to customer where
possible.

Guest wifi access
provided to 20 rural
primary schools

Bank tutors recruited
across the council area

40 laptops made available

Development of an online
PBS toolkit in conjunction
with "Entitled to"
providing standardisation
in PBS support

Taxis used by clients
where public transport
links poor

More Successes!

Improved
partnership
working

Much better
understanding of
needs and barriers

Engaging with
households not
previously known
to us

Allows access to
support before
crisis

Case Study

1



- M was referred through the Triage.
- With support she has gained employment, participated in a range of activities, from visiting Kilmartin museum to gorge walking, which has increased her confidence and widened her horizons.

“Where do I begin? I’ve now got a part time job thanks to the HELP project, and also have an updated CV and cover letter, a better understanding of budgeting and more confidence and self-esteem. I could write loads on how they have helped me but you’d end up with an essay Ha! Ha! I also have ADHD and they’ve helped me with that more than they know. I appreciate everything they’ve done for me and I can’t thank them enough.”



- When K. was referred to Adult Learning through USDL she was unemployed and already known to us; having received literacy support for her dyslexia.
- She started an IT course as a result of the USDL referral and has since taken part in 5 more separate courses, achieving four SQA accreditations. She is now competent in basic IT and her confidence has grown significantly.
- She completed and gained her Food Hygiene certificate, attends the Work Club regularly and has a firm idea about her future career path.
- K has been offered a 30 hour permanent contract with a local employer.
- She has applied to the Open University for a short course. She is a continuing her learning with us, and will be undertaking a personal development course and a beginners course in Spanish.
- In addition to her job, she is starting a part-time counselling course at college after summer for 1 day a week.



- N. is a man in his fifties who had been made redundant from a manual job some time ago and had been unable to find work.
- He has a very bad stammer, and often cannot articulate at all when nervous.
- Following a USDL referral to Adult Learning he did not respond to offers encouraging him to attend an IT course, even when support was offered by contacting a family member.
- Eventually, he attended Work Club and was supported to set up an email account, register with Universal Jobmatch, update his CV. and upload this.
- N Began to learn basic IT skills in the Job Club, and, once he gained more trust in the staff he agreed to progress to a Beginners' IT course and is slowly gaining confidence within group situations. The course tutor noticed he stammers much less now when talking in the class.
- He took his Food Hygiene certificate, passed and scored joint highest on course, with which achievement he was utterly astonished and delighted.

"I passed. It made my day. I am not thick! I have enjoyed being in a learning environment. I have learned a lot about bacteria and how easily it can spread. It was good meeting new people, listening and learning."

Summary

- The trial has reached >90% of the referral target of 2,000 people.
- Referral process extremely successful.
 - JCP using e-mail system with questionnaire and consent form to refer. Informative and good basis for further triage.
 - Other partners used ABAN
- Housing Services case management system captures referrals so that management reporting is possible.



- It was difficult to get referrals from NHS
- People in employment and struggling, plus those referred from SWF didn't engage
- Relatively easy to get people to accept help with digital skills – **much** harder to get them to accept help with personal budgeting support
- Will this change with Universal Credit?

Conclusions



- Universal Credit goes live in Argyll and Bute on 7 March 2016.
- Some will struggle to budget on a monthly basis and others will struggle with making claims online.
- USDL trial has ended.
- We now have an effective model – can we use this going forward?

