

## Financial Inclusion Fund (FIF) Debt Advice Project

### Stage two evaluation response document

This document explains how the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) and the project managers (PMs) will follow up the recommendations of the Stage two evaluation report of the FIF Debt Advice Project.

Category	Para	Recommendation	Page no	Response / Implementation Plans
<b>Additionally and Impact Evaluation</b>	3.1.3	<p>“The evaluation recommends that it may be useful to include the more commonly raised gaps in training (such as tax and benefits) in the core FIF course.”</p> <p>“The evaluation recommends that it may be useful to provide ongoing funding for in-house training likely to be necessary in order to fill additional gaps.”</p>		<p>The training strategy has now been approved following detailed consultation with the PM Liaison Group on suitable topical issues to be included in the refresher courses. This training is compulsory for all FIF debt advisors who have a need for it.</p> <p>The Money Advice Trust attend PM Liaison Group meetings to discuss training issues.</p> <p>Projects are able to fund in-house training subject to prioritising funds accordingly.</p>
	3.2.3	<p>“The evaluation recommends that BERR continues to collate any examples of displaced funding and carefully monitor as the project continues.”</p>		<p>Mechanisms were in place in FIF1 for PMs to report any displacement issues through their quarterly monitoring report. These will be continued in FIF2. BERR will act accordingly on any evidence of displacement.</p>
<b>Appropriateness and Targeting</b>	4.1.4	<p>“The evaluation recommends that BERR develops a strict protocol on</p>		<p>BERR to issue a new 2008 Monitoring Handbook, including Client Data Form and Guidance with any neccy updates and</p>

		<p>monitoring and recording client data which should be standardised across all projects. In addition, reporting effectively could be included as part of the core FIF training.”</p>		<p>revisions. PMs to reiterate the importance of following the guidance. PMs and MAT to consider the training aspect. PMs and BERR to discuss any areas flagged as still problematic. We believe this was a fault, by a minority, in not following existing guidance. As was soon realised in FIF1, it is not feasible to fund development of a single IT reporting system.</p>
	4.2.4	<p>“projects should continue to promote themselves and develop links within the wider welfare sector to benefit from referrals into the FIF face-to-face debt advice service.”</p>		<p>Whilst most agencies are working at full capacity, any new clients will be at the expense of existing alternatives. However, within reason, there may be scope to “ease out” some lesser financially excluded clients and replace with some more intensely financially excluded by such linkages. The PMs and BERR can consider good practice examples of where this has helped target even more the highly financially excluded clients sought.</p>
	4.3.1	<p>“The evaluation recommends that either the indicators are reviewed in consultation with the participating agencies and HM Treasury or that the current indicators are reiterated to all those involved in the delivery of the project if the number of clients with high numbers of indicators are to be maximised.”</p>		<p>On the first:</p> <p>A further 2 FE indicators will be added to the client data sheet:</p> <p>a) Household Income less than £15,600</p> <p>b) No Home Contents Insurance</p> <p>as requested by the Treasury’s Financial Inclusion Taskforce.</p> <p>On the second:</p> <p>The opportunity of the new 2008 Monitoring Handbook above provides for this.</p>

	4.4.2	<p>“The evaluation recommends that BERR and project managers reiterate the desired target audience for the FIF debt advice project and ensure that the participating organisations use this information to prioritise clients appropriately.”</p>		<p>The opportunity of the new 2008 Monitoring Handbook above provides for this.</p>
<b>Overall Value for Money</b>	5.1.3	<p>“The evaluation finds that projects would benefit from clearer guidance on whether client numbers or number of financial exclusion indicators should be prioritised.”</p>		<p>BERR has discussed with the PMs that they have a “clients seen” target to achieve as the priority and within that an objective to increase the average FE intensity of clients.</p>
	5.2.1	<p>“The evaluation recommends that BERR improves the reporting mechanisms to adequately record the full outcomes for each client.”</p> <p>“BERR make considerable effort to ensure reporting is consistent and standardised where possible.”</p>		<p>BERR, with the PM Liaison Group, has developed a more detailed cost schedule to include information on debt and FE clients.</p> <p>BERR is also introducing a new reporting mechanism for the Financial Inclusion Taskforce which will give them a richer picture.</p> <p>See 4.1.4 above.</p>