

**CHILD POVERTY PILOT PROJECT  
SEPARATED AND SEPARATING PARENTS IN HARLOW  
(JANUARY 2010 – MARCH 2011)  
FINAL REPORT**

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February 2011



## Messages from clients

"I know it's your job but I can't thank you enough for all the help and advice you have given me over the last few weeks. It means a lot to me. The work you do is invaluable to people like me..."

"I feel it's a shame that Family Support Co-ordination Service is stopping in March because it has been so helpful and useful. I don't know what I would have done without your help....."

"I have developed an excellent relationship with my support worker. She has helped me open up greatly and deal and survive some of the worst days and situations of my life. Her support and guidance meant that I am able to forge a new life for me and my son... there is a life after a breakdown of marriage."

"I wish I had met Michelle years ago. Words cannot describe how thankful I am for her kind words and for giving me the strength to leave the life that was inflicted on me. She has absolutely changed my life...."

"I honestly don't know and do not wish to imagine what situation my daughter (above) would be in without Michelle's help. I couldn't thank her enough for giving my daughter the strength, guidance and support to get away from her old life....."

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## **1. Background**

In May 2009 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) shortlisted Essex following the expression of interest and Essex was invited to submit a full proposal by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009. A formal offer of grant was made with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009; £100,000 for 2009-10 and a further £350,000 for 2010-11. The grant arrangements are in place until 31 March 2011.

Harlow was the area chosen as it was identified as being the most deprived area in Essex, based on the Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (EJSNA); it has some of the poorest health outcomes in the East of England for children, high suicide rates and some of the worst levels of child poverty and homeless families.

At the time of the proposal there were 18,725 children within the district of whom 24% lived in poverty; of the 10,615 families within the district 8,630 families were in receipt of benefits and there were 2,160 out of work families (25%) affecting 4,110 children.

It was agreed the pilot would specifically target those families living in poverty, many of whom may not be out of work, and identified as being at risk of separation or who were known to be separating. Families would be identified through a variety of routes, such as children's centres, schools, integrated children's teams, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), benefits officers and third sector organisations. They would also be identified by a risk stratification tool to be developed and based upon 'Think Family' principles.

Following a tendering process, the delivery was by a partnership between Harlow Women's Aid now known as Safer Places and Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice (HWRA) and was known as the Family Support Co-ordination Service (FSCS). Development work on the project started in November 2009. The formal start date for actual delivery was 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010, although in reality the delivery started in March 2010.

### **Service Outline**

The purpose of the project was to provide advice, support and co-ordination of local services for parents in Harlow who had recently separated or were separating, as they were at considerable risk of poverty.

The funding of £100,000 provided for a Project Manager from December 2009 to develop and set up the project and be responsible for ensuring co-ordination development and mainstreaming; securing services, administrative support and project office base costs; commissioning of support services; and developing plans for the risk stratification tool. The additional £350,000 covered staffing costs and service delivery.

The aims of the pilot project were to prevent children of separated or separating parents falling in to poverty, to protect and promote the well-being of children in these families and to support and promote their educational achievement.

The outcomes to be achieved were defined as:

- Provide a co-ordinated fast track advice and support service to parents
- Increased household income and/or reduced debts and/or debt repayments for parents
- Prevent deterioration and improve the children's educational achievement/ attendance and behaviour in school
- Prevent deterioration and improve mental health and wellbeing of children and families
- Develop a Risk Stratification Tool to identify at risk families and develop outreach methods to help and support them
- Ensure continuation of co-ordination between partner agencies and continued effective response to families beyond the pilot project period.

These were to be measured in three ways –increased income, improved educational engagement and improved emotional health and wellbeing. It was recognised that it would be unrealistic to expect improvement in educational attainment to be captured in such a short period of intervention, however, it was agreed improvement in attitude to school, to staff and to learning could lead to improved attainment over time and these could be gauged over the year.

FSCS staff were trained specialist workers who undertook assessments of families' needs, planned how to respond to those needs and provided signposting, support and advice. They worked closely with other agencies to provide fast and integrated access to other services.

In addition to FSCS input, two other providers, Relate and the Family Intervention Programme (FIP) were commissioned to complete specific work with some of the families.

HWRA provided specialist advice, advocacy and representation in debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits. It also provided a wide range of community information on other subjects and signposted to other services, if appropriate. Clients from the project could receive advice on the telephone or at the reception desk or arrange an appointment to see a specialist advisor, solicitor or support officer. Families requiring further support were referred to the FSCS, located in the same building.

There were 3 levels of support provided by the FSCS, defined at the outset as:

**Level 1** - Referral, signposting, basic support, and information or provision. *Clients are generally limited up to two support services with up to 3 weeks of support with no follow up action required;*

**Level 2** - Specific tailored signposting, complete referral support, assistance and advice with application forms, completion of any documentation, and one off accompanied referral support provision. *This is limited for up to four supported services and managed through a supported plan. Support is generally up to 6 weeks and a post service two-month follow up communication plan;*

**Level 3** - Intensive support and assistance due to multiple complex needs, they can access unlimited support services but defined and managed through the

detailed support plan. *Support is provided from 6 weeks up to 24 weeks with a detailed post service follow up communication plan.*

In addition, Relate was commissioned to provide counselling.

Service Level Agreements for each provider (Harlow and Broxbourne Women's Aid, Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice and Relate) were drawn up and signed. More informal agreements were made with CAMHS and FIP. CAMHS was to provide emotional health support to children and young people and FIP was commissioned to provide intensive support to 1 or 2 families at a time to address issues relating to poor school attendance and achievement; poor health and access to health services and to prevent families becoming homeless as a result of their anti-social behaviour.

### **Project Management**

Plans for the Harlow Child Poverty Pilot Project (for separated and separating parents) were developed by a partnership group consisting of representatives from key organisations. The group became the Project Board and continued to steer and manage the project.

Members were from Harlow District Council (Lynn Seward who is also the chair of Harlow Children's Partnership), Health (initially Adrian Coggins then Sally Theodoreson), Advice Services Manager (Benefits) Essex Benefits Plus ECC (Cathy Cunningham-Elliott), Child Poverty Lead and Head of Locality Commissioning West Essex, ECC (Lonica Vanclay) and Project Manager (initially Neil Morgan then Jane Bloom (ECC)). The group met every two months and project progress reports were circulated to the Board members and associates monthly.

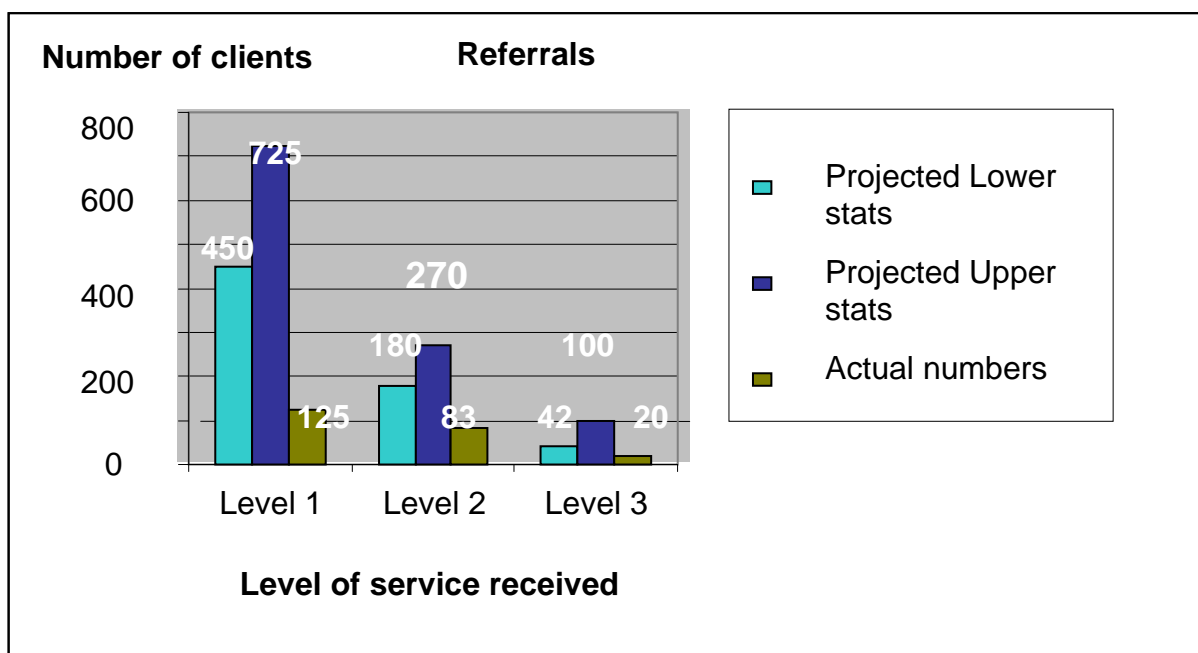
Initially a steering group was set up, however, due to inconsistent attendance it was felt that this role could be more appropriately fulfilled by the Board with links to Harlow Children's Partnership and the Local Children's Trust Board.

## 2. Project Activity to date (up to February 2011)

### 2.1 Numbers and Eligibility criteria

The numbers of referrals to FSCS up to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011 is 228, however, this does not include the open cases being dealt with by HWRA. Out of the closed cases 93 families have had an assessment of need completed; no assessment was required for simple signposting (*see Appendix 6 for example of FSCS assessment form*).

The predicted and actual numbers of referrals for the levels since the start of the project up to February are shown in the diagram below:



Actual numbers especially for Level 1 were well below estimates. It is considered that the original prediction was on the high side, as the upper figures required that half the out of work families contacted the service in a year.

Referral estimates were based on a series of assumptions largely reflecting staff capacity, namely that:

- All families entering the FSCS will receive a level 1 intervention, which will be delivered in the main part by the 2 Welfare Rights Advisers in the project. This will allow for a maximum entry to FSCS of between 540 – 870 families
- In addition, some of the families will require Level 2 interventions estimated between 216 - 324 families (around 1/3 of those entering the service)
- Some of the families will require Level 3 interventions estimated between 50 – 120 families (around 10% – 15% of those entering the service).

The FSCS from discussions with the community understands that support and advice is often given by relatives and friends who have been through a separation or divorce so this may contribute to the numbers of level 1 referrals being lower than anticipated. Families want immediate access to advice and support and generally seek that from someone they know.

Clients heard about the FSCS service from a number of different sources including: 24 from word of mouth; 3 from the guidance leaflet; 2 from GP or health professionals; 9 from schools/Children’s Centres; 1 from a support group, 100 from other advisors/professionals and 149 unknown.

The initial eligibility criteria (*Appendix 7*) stated that the service would support parents who are considering separation or had separated within the last six months, however, due to the low number of referrals it was agreed to amend and extend this to those parents who had separated within the last twelve months.

Only 1 person was not offered a service at the beginning of the pilot as they were not a parent and so did not meet the criteria. However, signposting and advice was given by FSCS. Another family following consultation decided not to engage further with the Service as they felt this was not necessary at this time.

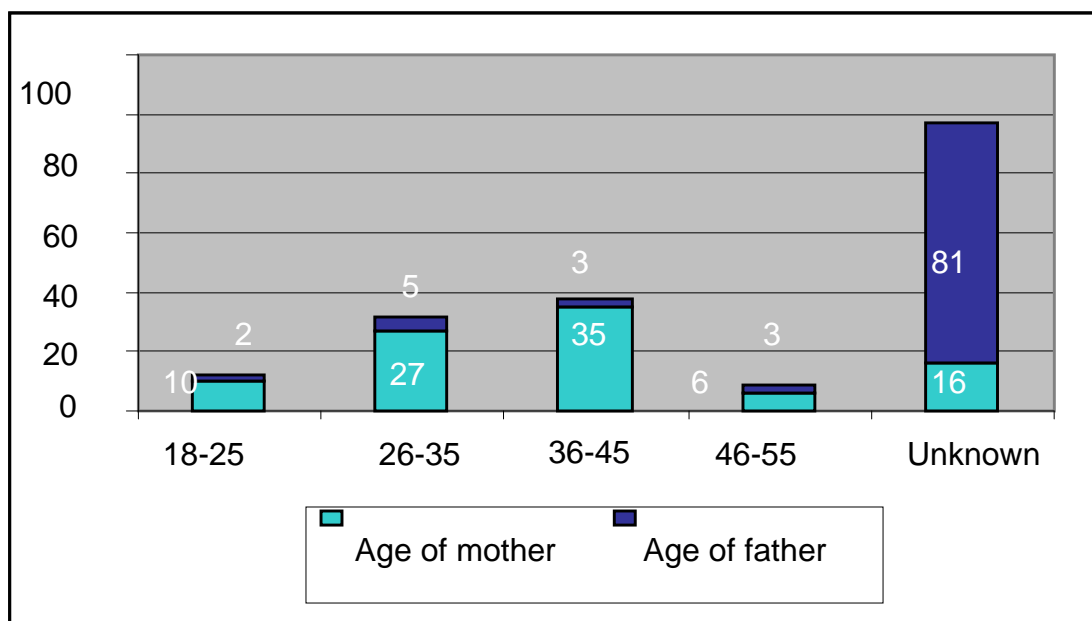
## 2.2 Family Characteristics

It is worth noting that the project has received requests for help from clients living in all 11 of Harlow's wards and that the need is not therefore confined to a limited area of the town.

The following information has been gathered from the assessments completed with each family receiving a Level 2 or 3 service.

Of the 93 families assessed at by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011 (the cut off point for data for this report), 80 were mothers and 12 were fathers and 1 was recorded as ‘unknown’. The majority of clients were married (62), 29 were co-habiting and 2 were recorded as ‘unknown’; 32 clients were still living together.

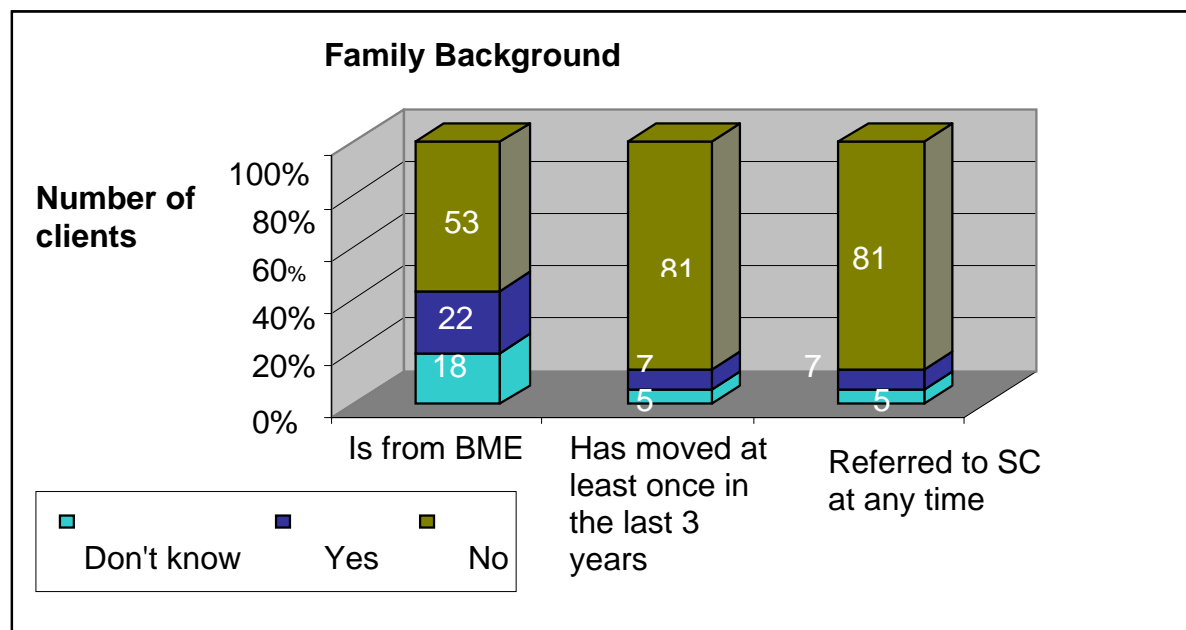
As can be seen by the graph below the age for the majority of mothers was between 36 – 45 years, but it is difficult to identify for the fathers as 81 details are not known.



A total of 286 children live within the families who have sought support from the FSCS. Their ages range from being a few months old up to the age of 18; from the details parents gave there are at least 32 children between 0-2 years; 26 children between 3-4 years; 49 children between 5-7 years; 45 children between 8-11 years; 37 children between 12-14 years and 15 children between 15-18 years olds. It should be noted that families were not always willing to share details about their children, in particular their ages or the schools that they attended as parents did not want them to be involved.

The majority of mothers (56) who presented were white British; the vast majority of father's ethnicity is unknown however, from details recorded the majority (14) are white British. Only 1 mother presented as a refugee/asylum seeker, but there is a large proportion (21 mothers and 71 fathers) where details are unknown. One mother and one father advised they were disabled.

22 families (23.6%) were from a black or minority ethnic background, which compares to 8.43% (2009 figures taken from the Essex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) in the Harlow population as a whole.



Only 7 families had moved at least once in the last 3 years; for 1 family the children did not change schools, for 2 families the children moved schools once and details have not been shared by 4 families.

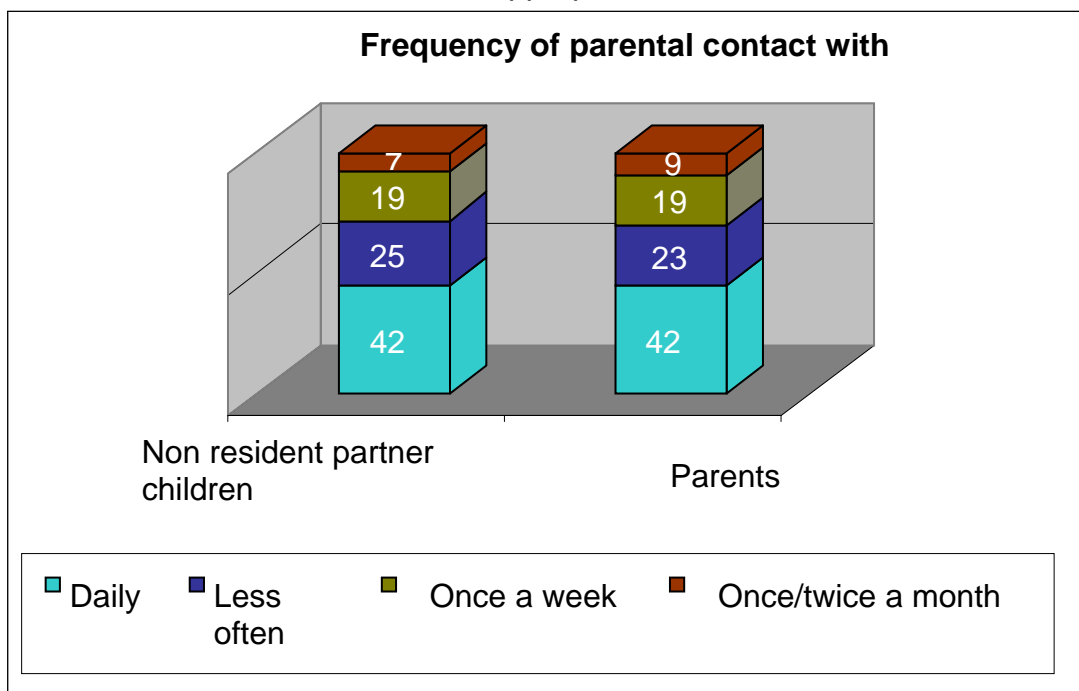
Seven clients have been referred to Social Care at some stage and 1 parent had 1 or more children on the child protection register.

There were only 12 children reported as living with their father and 11 who had shared care between their mother and father; the rest lived with their mother.

Contact for children: 42 clients indicated that they had daily contact with the other parent and daily contact with the non resident children and 19 said they

had contact once a week with both the other parent and non resident children. Only 9 parents stated that they had contact with the other parent between once or twice a month and 7 parents stated that they had contact with their non resident children between once or twice a month.

23 clients indicated that contact with non resident partner's children was a great concern to them in particular having regular contact; absent fathers wanted to see their children more regularly and mothers wanted their children to have contact more or less frequently depending on their circumstances and relationships with their separated partner (parents were not always in agreement with the frequency). 14 clients stated it was of little concern to them and 56 said it was of no concern. It should be noted that most parents had not been through the court process for defined contact at this stage but clients were referred to the in-house solicitor for advice where appropriate.



More clients (35) had great concern about contact between themselves and the other parent, 12 of them stated it was of little concern and 46 said it was of no concern.

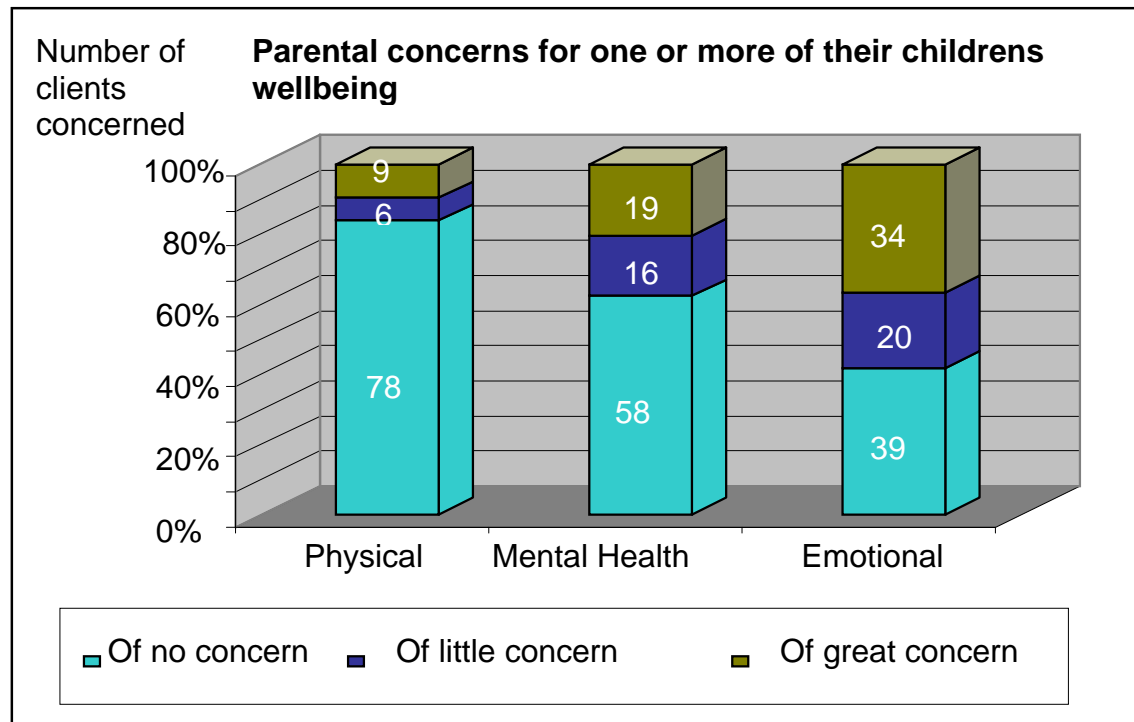
### 2.3 Education

According to the information supplied by parents none of the children have special educational needs; 2 have been in trouble with the police and none have been excluded or been persistently absent from school. 3 clients were unable to respond to these questions as they did not know.

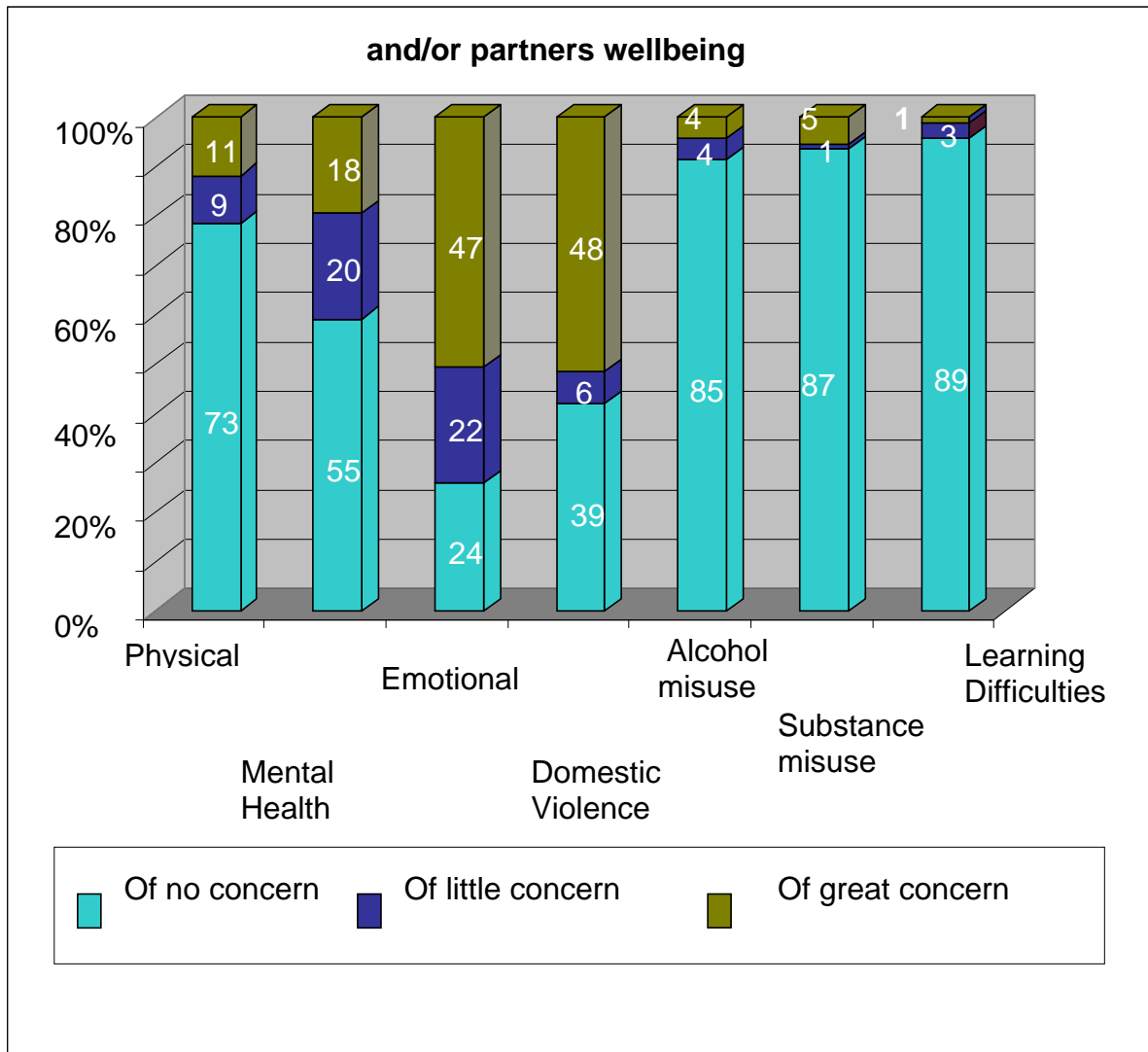
The FSCS through the spot purchasing process provided emergency funding for a school uniform, bag and shoes for a child who previously had not attended a school in the UK and as the family had just won an appeal to remain in the UK a local school had offered an immediate place.

## 2.4 Wellbeing

Clients were asked if they had any concerns about their children's wellbeing (physical, mental health or emotional wellbeing) and were not restricted to highlighting concerns to one particular area. As the chart below shows: 9 parents were greatly concerned about the physical health of their children (deafness, asthma, eczema and obesity) and were referred to either the school nurse or GP; 19 parents were greatly concerned about the mental health of one or more of the children and 34 were greatly concerned about the emotional health of one or more of their children; these families were referred to CAMHS Relate or MIND for advice and support.



Clients identified areas of concern about their own or partner's wellbeing as can be seen from the chart below. It was clear from discussions with parents that due to the anxiety around the family breakdown the greatest concern was around emotional health and they were referred for support including counselling through MIND, Relate or their GP. The second largest cause for concern was domestic violence and although predominantly mothers, this did involve some fathers and some referrals for them were made to Women's Aid for outreach support and refuge in some cases. There were 40 families who reported they had a history of domestic violence and 3 mothers and 10 fathers reported that they had drug/alcohol issues.

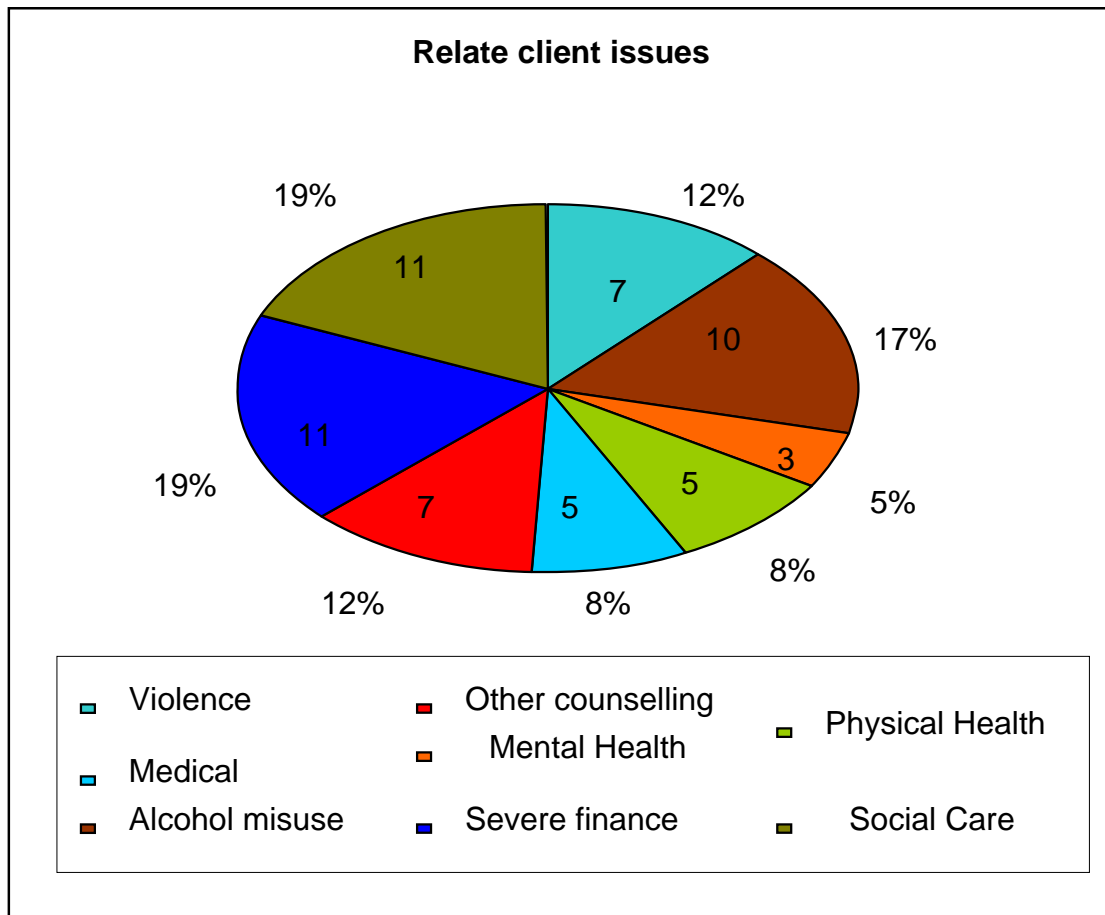


Clients were signposted to other support services such as ADAS (Alcohol and Drug Service), CALM (Counselling and Life Management Centre), Young Concern and their GP for specific help with other areas of concern.

### 2.5 Relate counselling

The pilot referred 50 families to Relate for counselling as a result of family breakdown. A total of 224 sessions were offered ranging from between 1 and 10 sessions per client. 45 sessions were not attended. Feedback from 59 clients (some may be from both partners) indicate that the 3 main areas of discussion were around severe finance worries, social care involvement and alcohol abuse. It is noted that due to the number of clients who did not attend the last session it was not possible to gain 100% feedback.

Clients wanted to have support to improve communications and relationships with their children and other family members or to improve, end or move on from their relationship with their partner.



**2.6 Family Intervention Programme (FIP)**

One of the children’s centres made a referral to FSCS and support was given to the family for 4 weeks, but due to the clients complex needs and the number of agencies already involved a referral was made to FIP in July for intensive, long term family intervention. Support is ongoing (*See Appendix 8a case study*). Another referral was made, however, at that time this second family did not meet the FIP criteria as they did not live in social housing. Circumstances have since changed and the family (now living in social housing) has recently been accepted by FIP for support and intervention on a short-term basis.

**2.7 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

Common Assessment Framework (CAF) training has been undertaken by all staff in the project and joint working is taking place once a week between FSCS workers and Tier 2 mental health workers. 11 referrals have been made to the mental health workers and 11 families have been supported for an average of 4 - 6 weeks.

CAF forms have been completed for 8 of the 11 clients; 3 clients were referred on to ADAS and another was given emotional support and liaison with the child’s school. There is ongoing work for 6 of the clients with joint work between CAMHS and FSCS workers.

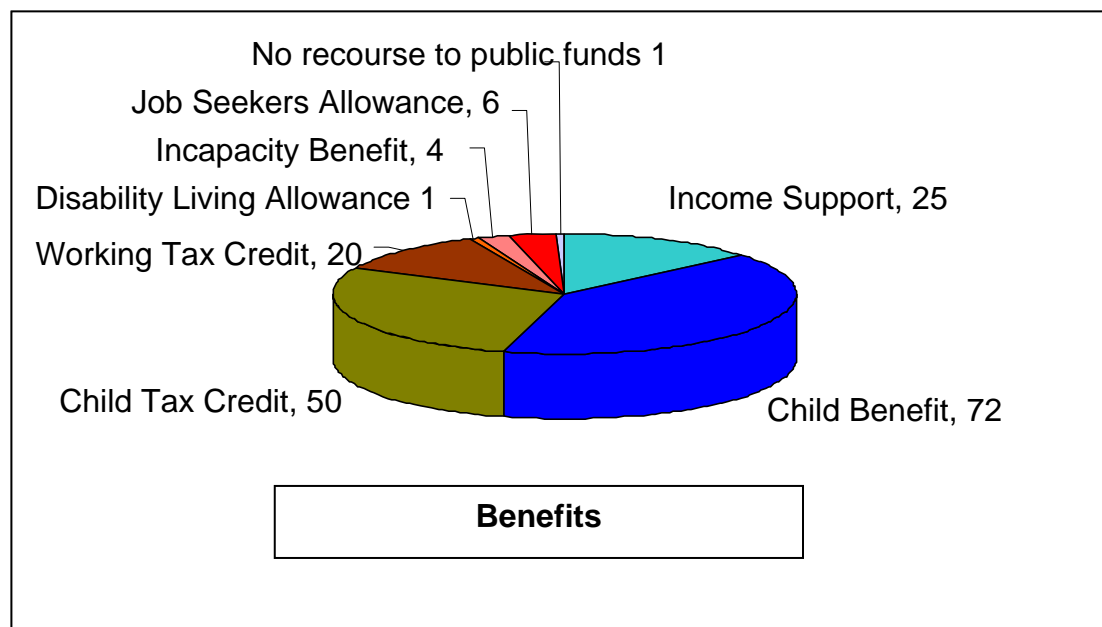
## 2.8 Finance

In most cases clients indicated through discussions that they preferred to sort out child maintenance arrangements themselves for fear of antagonising the absent parent but this was not proving effective: 73 clients stated that there were no arrangements for child maintenance; 9 said arrangements which were in place were not working well and only 11 said arrangements were working well.

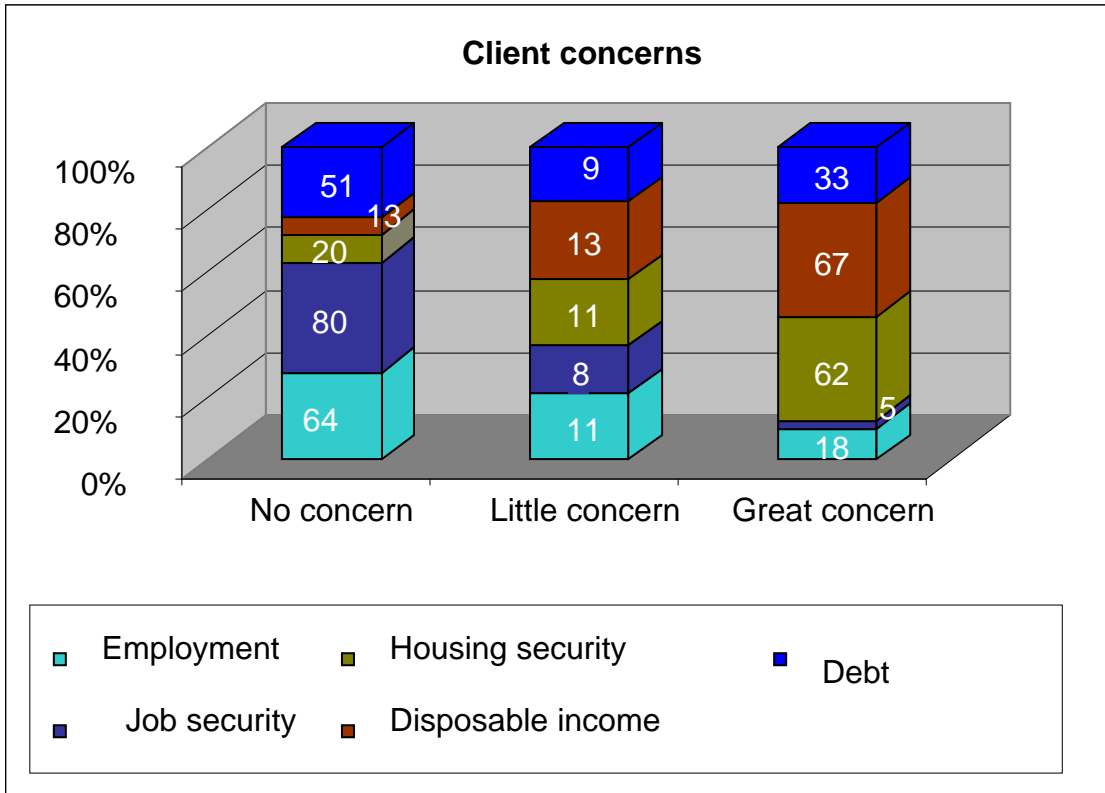
Clients were referred in house to HWRA for advice about claiming benefits and having benefit checks; 39 clients presented and were able to make new claims and receive additional weekly income ranging from between £65.45 - £273.48. On average these families increased their annual income by £5,000, in several of these cases adding over 50% to their disposable income. One client became bankrupt and his mortgage and debts of £235,800 were written off. Other clients received advice on tax credits (child and working), Council Tax Benefits, Free School Meals, divorce, child maintenance and property matters. Three were referred on to solicitors and 2 clients returned to their husbands (see Appendix 2a for examples of increased income for and Appendix 2b for examples of debt 'write off' for individual families).

Additional income information provided by parents: 1 does not receive money for the child even though they have joint custody, 2 husbands receive child tax credit and 1 husband has debt and gambling problems and has opened up accounts in his wife's name.

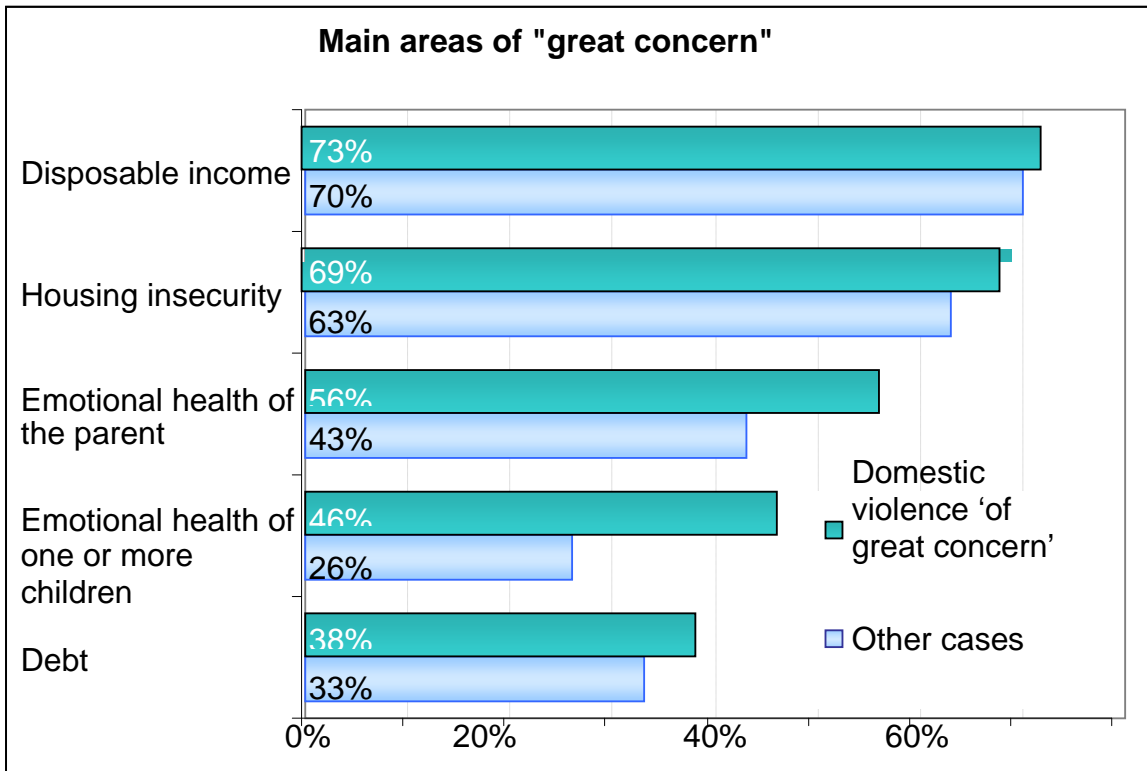
The chart below shows the number of clients claiming these benefits; with a large proportion of parents claiming child benefit and child tax credit.



The chart below shows that disposable income was raised as a great concern for the majority of clients (67 of them) with housing security for 62 of them and debt for 33 clients; appropriate appointments in-house were made to offer advice and support.



It was found that the issues of financial concern were mentioned most often as a great concern, more often than emotional concerns. However, as the table below shows, emotional concerns, especially for the child, were much greater when domestic abuse was an issue.

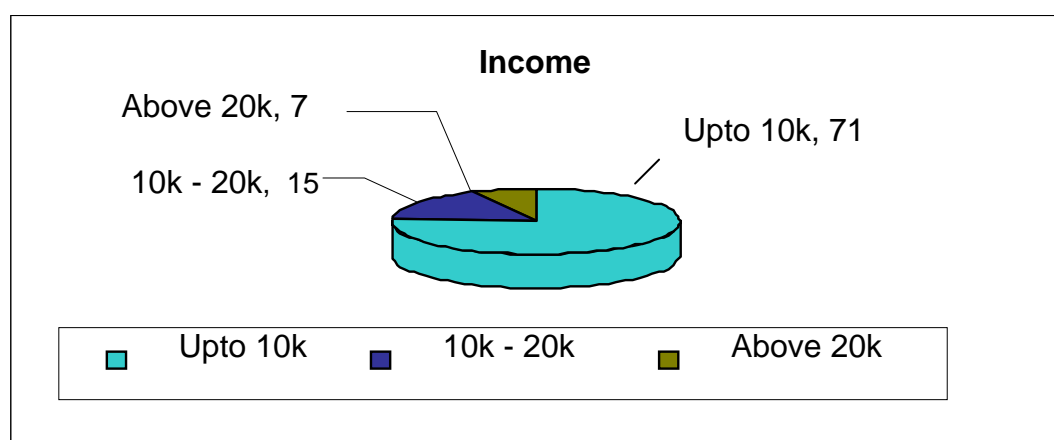


21 clients reported that they work full-time, 20 work part-time, 35 were looking after their family, 5 were sick or disabled, 2 were recorded as 'other' and only 10 were looking for work. The majority of clients stated that they had no concern about employment. Employability was only seen as a great concern for 17%.

FSCS staff gathered the following information from clients through discussions:

- Clients were more than happy to undertake voluntary work as this does not affect their benefits and it gets them back into the work place
- Clients have been referred to Women's Aid for free skills for jobs and e-learning courses with registered off-site child care provided.

As the Income chart below shows, the majority of families (71 of them) have revenue of less than £10k and only 7 have an income of above £20k.



Even for the 45% of clients who worked part-time or full-time, 1 in 4 did not manage to earn more than the equivalent of a full-time minimum wage (approx. £10,300 p.a.). For those who worked but for whom domestic violence was a great concern, less than half managed to exceed this.

Clients identified that there was no disposable income for treats and outings for the family. Some families had not had a holiday for several years. For 20 of the neediest families (being supported on level 2 or 3), arrangements were made through the Family Holiday Association (FHA), for them to go on a caravan holiday to Butlins/ Haven camp sites around Britain and to be given spending money. 15 of the holidays offered and taken were in term time and only 5 were offered and taken in school holidays. Only 1 family declined because of the date availability. Parents advised that no school had refused permission to take their child/ children out of school. 3 clients said the accommodation was 'excellent', 2 said it was 'good', 6 said it was ok and 1 client said it was poor. The rating for the sites was slightly different with 12 clients saying it was excellent and 8 saying it was 'good'. 15 clients said that they were 'very happy' with the overall holiday and 5 said they were 'happy' with it. The children's feedback overall was that they thought the holiday was 'very good'. As a result families have sent in thank you cards to FSCS and one client phoned up from holiday to say thank you as it meant so much to her and her children. Additional holidays have just been agreed for spring time.

In addition to the holidays the Family Holiday Association also kindly donated funds for Wetherspoons vouchers and cinema tickets for around 50 families to enjoy going out.

The FSCS has accessed the ‘Food Bank’ for clients and their families which has had a great impact on families struggling to pay for food; some have received appropriate food parcels for three continuous weeks. Clothes donations from Tesco’s have also proved very successful with FSCS staff visiting the local Tesco’s clothes bank to chose appropriate clothes for families in need.

**Spot Purchasing**

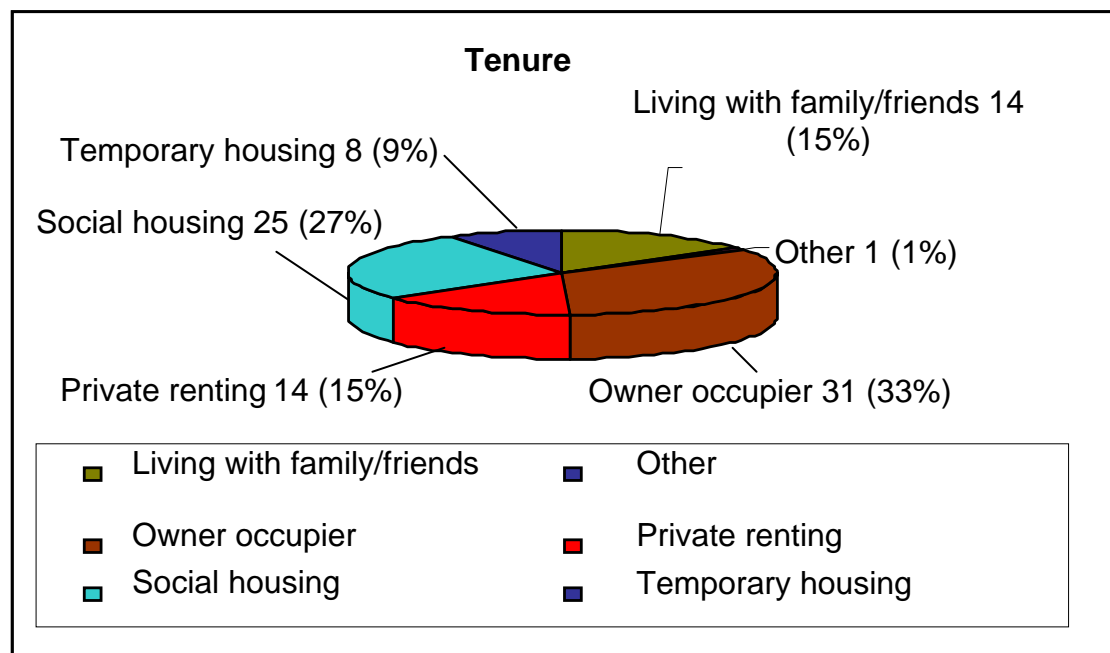
The spot purchasing budget allocated through the pilot has proved invaluable for particular clients and made a real difference to their family life providing some of them with the means to prevent them from going in to poverty by enabling them to work (see Appendix 8e for more examples of spot purchases).

FSCS staff arranged a Christmas party with a children’s entertainer for some of the most needy clients and their children. This was a great success; each of the 19 very happy children that attended went home with a small present.

**2.9 Housing**

In a few cases a refuge was identified for the safety of some clients.

The majority of clients (31) advised they live in owner occupied properties with the next largest number (25) of them living in social housing. Clients identified that housing security was their main cause of concern; either they cannot afford to maintain their mortgage or rent payments; 3 clients reported they were unable to pay bills or for repairs after paying the mortgage; some were having to live with parents again which is not always appropriate and led to overcrowding.



If a child goes with the absent parent to live, social housing identified housing benefit payments as needing to be reassessed again, causing potential poverty for that family.

Absent parents who were not the main carers for the children advised they found it very difficult to access social housing in this current climate.

## **2.10 Project Evaluation**

The Tavistock Institute is an independent research team appointed by the DCSF to look at all 10 pilot projects (across England) supporting recently separated or separating parents to identify which types of support parents find most helpful.

Client data was input to a Tavistock spreadsheet by a member of the local project team and sent monthly to the Tavistock Institute; this contained the same plus additional information to that captured by the FSCS assessment and is included in this report. In addition to receiving the monthly statistics members of the Tavistock team conducted a follow up telephone interview with a sample number of parents over the phone across the Country (four months after the client has been assessed). A sample of 1000 parents is being sought to discuss and identify what services they required; what they liked or didn't like about them, what helped them and what worked best for them.

The Department for Education (DFE) will use the findings from the research to consider whether it would be useful to provide this support throughout the Country. Data from this independent evaluation has not been made available to the project due to changes in central government and waiting for authorisation to continue their work.

Through follow-up phone calls and the completion of the final questionnaire (*Appendix 6b*) the FSCS was able to gather information about the impact the service has had on these families and this information is included in this report.

## **2.11 Feedback from clients about the FSCS Service**

When work with clients had been completed they were all asked via a questionnaire how easy it was for them to find out through the FSCS what services were available to them and all 37 clients who responded said it was 'easy' for them.

Two clients who received support from FSCS for up to 3 weeks said they both received a 'very good' service which was 'easy' to access and they didn't have to wait long for support.

From the 3 clients who received support between 3-6 weeks, 2 said they received a 'very good' service, 1 said they received an 'excellent' service which was 'easy' to access and 2 said they didn't have to wait long, whilst the other said they did.

From the 32 clients who received support for over 6 weeks, 1 said the service they received was 'good', 7 said 'very good' and 24 said 'excellent'. They all said

the service was 'easy' to access and 29 said they didn't have to wait long, whilst the other 3 said they did.

All clients stated that they were made to feel welcome by staff, their cultural needs were respected and none of them had any complaints about the service they received.

Eleven clients said that they would rate the service 'very good', 25 said the service was 'excellent' and 1 who received over 6 weeks support said it was 'good'. No clients said the service they received was poor.

One client who had up to 3 weeks support used a solicitor from the project and said the support was 'very good', 2 who had between 3-6 weeks support used a solicitor from the project and said they found the support 'very good'. Of the 22 who received over 6 weeks support and used a solicitor from the project, 9 said the support was 'excellent', 1 said it was 'good' and the other 12 said it was 'very good'.

32 clients said they were satisfied with the outcomes and 4 did not respond to the question asked. Only 1 said the service could be improved but did not indicate how. All clients reported they would use the service again if required and they would recommend it to others.

From the 37 clients, bearing in mind they could have more than one issue to resolve, 23 of them were looking for advice about domestic violence, 33 advice about housing, 21 advice on debt, 8 advice on employment, 26 advice on benefits, 19 advice on family law and 6 advice on behaviour problems. All parents reported they received the advice they required.

Other comments clients made about the service were:

"Relate counselling was very good"

"Great Holiday and great help with form filling"

"Thought the service was great. I got everything I needed from the service and the staff were very helpful".

### 3. Project Costs and Outcomes from the Project

#### 3.1 Costs

It was originally anticipated that over a 15 month operational period and based on the estimated number of referrals that the cost per family could be broken down as below:

**Level 1** referrals, being delivered in the main by 2 advisers in the project, allowing between 540 and 870 clients would give a cost per family at this level of between £172 and £278.

**Level 2** interventions in addition to level 1 with an estimated number of families being between 216 and 324 would give a cost per family between £463 and £694.

**Level 3** interventions in addition to levels 1 and 2 with an estimated number of families being between 50 and 120 (around 10-15% of those entering the service) would give a cost per family intervention of £3,000 - £3,250.

Averaged across the 3 levels of interventions, the typical cost of an intervention would be between £517 and £833 per family

These figures were calculated by using the total cost of the project and apportioning it equally across the 3 levels of intervention (e.g. £150,000 per intervention level divided by the number of families receiving each intervention level).

Using the same approach and the actual figures at the time of writing this report (for a 13 month period) the cost per family for level 1 intervention would be £1,200; for level 2 intervention £1,807 and for level 3 intervention £7,500.

*It should be noted that these amounts will be reduced when the actual number of families for February 2011 and March 2011 are known and closed cases are recorded.*

The total budget for the project was £450,000 from December 2009 to March 2011. This was spent as follows:

Activity	Actual expenditure	Comments
Overall Project management, coordination, development and mainstreaming including materials (project publicity materials, this final report, resource directory and guide specifically for professionals to assist them with working with separating families)	58,090 (2010-11)  30,147 (2009-10)	
Provision of Family Support Coordination Service	151,944 (2010-11) 44,042 (2009-10)	Safer Places
Provision of Welfare Rights	99,576	Harlow Welfare Rights &

Advice Service, administrative support & project office base costs	(2010-11) 22,811 (2009-10) 900 (insurance)	Advice
Analysis and risk stratification tool	14,490	
Support services Commissioning	12,000 6,000 10,000	Relate FIP Spot Purchasing
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>£450,000</b>	

### 3.2 Outcomes for families

#### Finance

An Income Success Indicator form (*Appendix 4*) was designed for HWRA to complete when undertaking an assessment of a clients needs. A number of clients received a weekly increase of between £65.45 and £273.48. On average families increased their annual income by £5,000, in several of these cases adding over 50% to their disposable income. (*Appendix 2a shows the actual increase in income that clients received following their assessment and Appendix 2b shows the actual debt 'write off' for 2 families*).

Non-monetary outcomes achieved include better management of debt, the prevention of homelessness and equipping people with the knowledge to deal with their problems.

#### Education

An Education Success Indicator form was designed and was sent out to parents along with a covering letter from the FSCS (*Appendices 5a and 5b*) requesting parents either ask their child's school to complete and return it to the project or parents return the form with their reasons they do not want the school to complete it.

A total of 102 questionnaires have been sent to parents. Only 5 schools have returned the form; 1 parent has refused to involve the school; 25 parents have contacted the FSCS for further explanation and no parents have returned the forms with explanations. From the 5 forms completed by schools and returned (one school did not give their name, 3 were from infant or primary schools and one was a nursery); 1 said that the child's attendance remained the same, attitude to learning remained the same but their attainment had improved and the other 4 reported no change to attendance, attitude to learning or attainment. This is too small a sample to consider if any of the children involved in this project has made any improvement in attendance, attainment, attitude to learning or improvement in behaviour.

## **Wellbeing CAMHS**

The CAMHS remit was to provide those children identified within the pilot project with a fast track access to CAMHS provision. CAMHS staff would help and advise with developing and undertaking an appropriate outcome measure to see if children's mental health had improved as a result of intervention they and/ or their parent/s received from the FSCS (whether or not the children had specific mental health input from CAMHS).

Initially CAMHS offered a 'drop-in' service to FSCS where families could access consultation and advice to ensure that the appropriate services were made available for individual family needs. Through discussions it was agreed that there was no need for this type of service but it could be reviewed at a later date.

Up to September 2010, there had been very little involvement from CAMHS so it was agreed that a CAMHS worker would spend Tuesday mornings with FSCS staff to discuss cases, see clients and offer advice/support. This has worked better and the number of clients supported has increased.

It has been agreed by FSCS and CAMHS workers that the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) has been a barrier as a completed CAF was required to access CAMHS and families did not always agree to this. However, it was also recognised that for the majority of clients it is specific relationship breakdown support and advice that has been required so referrals have been made to Relate and Mind and in some cases to ADAS.

## **Relate**

Relate offers a relationship counselling service for individuals, couples, families and young people. 50 families were referred. Recorded outcomes from Relate are positive; showing that families are communicating better, and one family is staying together. Clients report they felt more confident in their life and were able to move relationships forward or end them and move on. Some clients did not feel they required the full allocation of sessions offered to them.

## **MIND**

MIND 'for better mental health' provides a counselling service that covered depression, bereavement, family difficulties, traumatic experiences, anger management, chronic illness, low self esteem, anxiety and stress. The FSCS has made 12 referrals to MIND for counselling: 73 sessions have been offered to these clients and 63 sessions have been taken to date. 3 clients continue to be supported and 4 clients are reported to have achieved 'excellent outcomes' and 5 achieved 'good' outcomes.

## **Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service (ADAS)**

ADAS offers a free service relating to issues surrounding drug and/or alcohol misuse. The service includes individual and couple counselling, children's support services, family therapy, complementary therapies, stress and anxiety management groups and relaxation groups. The FSCS made 8 referrals to ADAS for counselling: 8 children received play therapy and feedback indicates received an 'excellent' service. 7 children were offered 6 sessions and 1 was

offered 4 sessions. At least 2 children attended all the sessions offered. In addition to the play therapy 3 children also received individual counselling. 6 outcomes are reported as being positive, 1 child is still receiving support and 1 outcome is unknown.

### **CALM**

CALM promotes mental health and mental wellbeing and provides counselling for domestic violence, drug and alcohol, eating disorders, stress, self esteem, anger and depression. The FSCS has made 3 referrals to CALM for counselling. Each client has been offered 12 sessions and all three are still ongoing.

### **Young Concern Trust**

Is a counselling service for young people in and around Harlow and provides 1-1 and small group counselling. The FSCS has made 2 referrals for children to the Young Concern Trust. They have both been offered and attended 12 sessions and both outcomes were reported as 'positive'.

#### **4. Project delivery lessons**

- As the duration of the project was short it has been difficult to fully engage schools which could have made a difference to the support children could have accessed. It is impossible to know if children were supported by different areas such as Connexions or Youth Service
- The FSCS team have been surprised how many potential clients were not aware of HWRA or confused it with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Failure and cancellation rates for the pilot project clients with HWRA have been an extensive drain on administration resources; the rate is higher than for general HWRA clients
- HWRA clients presenting with housing or Income issues may not have identified that they are recently separated or are separating so therefore may not have been identified as project clients
- FSCS staff found that demand has not been exclusive to classic high-risk groups
- The CAMHS team report that some parents did not want a Common Assessment Framework completed or their information shared; some agencies did not want to complete them (due to their perception that the time required was a drain on limited resources) or didn't know how to. There have been some delays getting essential information from schools. This has slowed the process of gaining a full assessment of children's needs for emotional support.
- Agencies have learned more about each other's roles through working closely together.

##### **4.1 Impact the FSCS has made on families**

- Early identification and speedy interventions enabled families to make a 'quick recovery' preventing them from going in to poverty. The FSCS was able to commence work with all families within two weeks.
- By providing an intensive support service to clients with multiple issues resolution was achieved in a much shorter time period (e.g. in 6 weeks rather than taking several months)
- Families were able to make informed decisions as they were given all the information in a one stop shop provision
- Increased income: many separating families were not receiving their entitlement of benefits

##### **4.2 Contact Issues identified**

- Some fathers were finding child contact difficult (children wanted contact with both parents) but even though there was no domestic violence, in some cases the women made the decision they didn't want the father involved (they didn't want support, money or family contact)
- Advice and emotional support needs to be available to support families not eligible for legal aid.

##### **4.3 Barriers to training and employment**

- Free training courses are offered if clients are on benefits, but if they are not, they are often too expensive for clients; there is no sliding scale

- There is no crèche facility at Harlow college and this prevented some families accessing courses there
- Child care was an issue as many parents cannot afford childcare especially if they have more than one child
- Courses that enable learning to take place at home are expensive and often unaffordable
- Some parents are financially worse off by returning to work and it adds to their stress and anxiety
- Mental health is a barrier to clients finding employment as many feel depressed and unable to cope with work as well as their relationship break down
- Many parents feel they are not able to leave their children soon after the separation as this will have a negative affect on them.

#### **4.4 Successful ways of working**

- It is important to have regular (e.g. fortnightly) meetings between the deliverers to identify and resolve issues quickly
- It has been extremely successful and productive having FSCS and HWRA working under the same roof; this has enabled speedy access to specialist advice allowing immediate answers to be given to often distressed clients. Being based in the town centre also enabled easy access
- As the FSCS was able to identify family difficulties early and built up good working partnerships with Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice, Relate, MIND, Youth Concern, and ADAS, fast track referrals to these agencies proved successful as these at risk families were able to gain access to advice and early interventions quickly, preventing further deterioration in their family circumstances. The FSCS team recognised that fast track services worked best where a good working relationship was developed between agencies and they understood each other's roles and expertise. It was further facilitated by having a personal initial presentation about the pilot at the start rather than just being sent publicity material. That the service was delivered by agencies well known and respected locally helped
- Having named contacts has developed good working relationships and improved networking - promoting flexibility in delivery of services
- Having a focus specifically on coordination was important for ensuring effective and holistic support was provided to families. HWRA for example indicated they found it difficult to think about emotional support and children's needs while engaged in their focused work on welfare rights
- Polish clients have helped and supported other non- English speaking Polish clients.

#### **4.5 Project management and evaluation**

- At the time of bidding for funding, partners did not feel their views were fully listened to and as a result, unrealistic assumptions were made (e.g. the predicted number of families expected to be referred).

- A full time Project Manager was appointed at the start of the project via an agency but the cost was high and it was felt that after the initial set up it was unnecessary so Essex County Council (ECC) was able to identify a Project Officer and allocate them to manage the project for 3 days per week. However, this inevitably caused some disruption.
- Initially a steering group was set up as well as a Project Board to involve a wider range of agencies but it was felt that once clear aims and objectives were agreed, other agencies were more effectively involved through discussion about the project in existing groups
- The project funded the development of the Risk Stratification Tool for child poverty. This was undertaken by the Research and Intelligence Unit, ECC. Had there been capacity to develop this locally it could have been more locally focused and completed and used earlier in the life of the project. However, it has now become the foundation for wider risk and resilience work which will ensure it has a wider usage.

## 5. Risk Stratification Tool (RST)

The project plan included two components:

- Using mapping data to identify geographical areas known to have a high risk of separating families
- Developing a risk stratification tool to be used by frontline practitioners to gauge the level and nature of the risk of parents separating with negative outcomes and refer those considered to have high risk to the FSCS.

It was agreed by the Project Board that it would be mutually beneficial for this work to be incorporated within linked work being undertaken by Essex County Council County aimed at developing a wider approach and tool for identifying risk and resilience across a range of areas (e.g. teenage pregnancy, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), mental health etc) which overlapped with child poverty. Following discussions, it was agreed that ECC Research and Intelligence Unit would undertake the development of the tool and that the mapping of areas would be undertaken as a first component of the tool.

The work commenced with identifying the drivers of child poverty through a literature search. The timing coincided with considerable development of work on child poverty by the government including indicating the need for Local Authorities to undertake a child poverty needs assessment. Hence, much of the information obtained about risk factors for child poverty came from national work on child poverty and was used to inform the Essex Child Poverty needs assessment and Strategy.

The key drivers of child poverty were identified as income inequality, lone parents, low educational attainment, discrimination, health inequality and housing inequality.

Data relating to each of these factors as well as on the Index of Multiple Deprivation was mapped onto Lower Super Output areas in Harlow and then a final map combining all the factors was produced. This highlighted the areas of Harlow most likely to have families who were poor or at risk of poverty.

Areas with a high proportion of lone parents showed considerable overlap with areas of child poverty; however lone parents were distributed much more widely.

Hence, it was agreed that while publicity about the project should be targeted in areas with high poverty, publicity about the project should be town wide and the FSCS should be open to all families who were separating, not just those in some geographical areas.

The intention was that the risk stratification tool was developed early on in the project so that it could be used by the FSCS to prioritise referrals. However, referrals took some time to build up and the FSCS never reached capacity, hence there was no need to use the tool for prioritising. Also the development of the tool proved to be more complex and time consuming than initially

envisaged. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the decision to incorporate the development of the tool within a wider approach to risk and resilience identification slowed the development process down further. FSCS staff found it complicated to use and were not persuaded of its benefits at a casework level; hence the trialling period was elongated and not as comprehensive as was required, further lengthening the development process.

The tool has been completed and although it has not been utilised to drive activity within the pilot FSCS service, it does provide the potential for use within services where prioritisation is necessary. It is perhaps most useful for area level focusing of provision, rather than at individual level.

The tool was developed to identify and combine risks at three levels: area, family risk and child risk. The process for obtaining area information has been described above. With more time and research, additional local data could be added (e.g. from Harlow District Council and HWRA). This data was built into the tool so services can proactively target geographical areas of need. Currently the data in it is for Harlow only as this was the project area. However the framework could be applied and data for other areas could also be input into the tool.

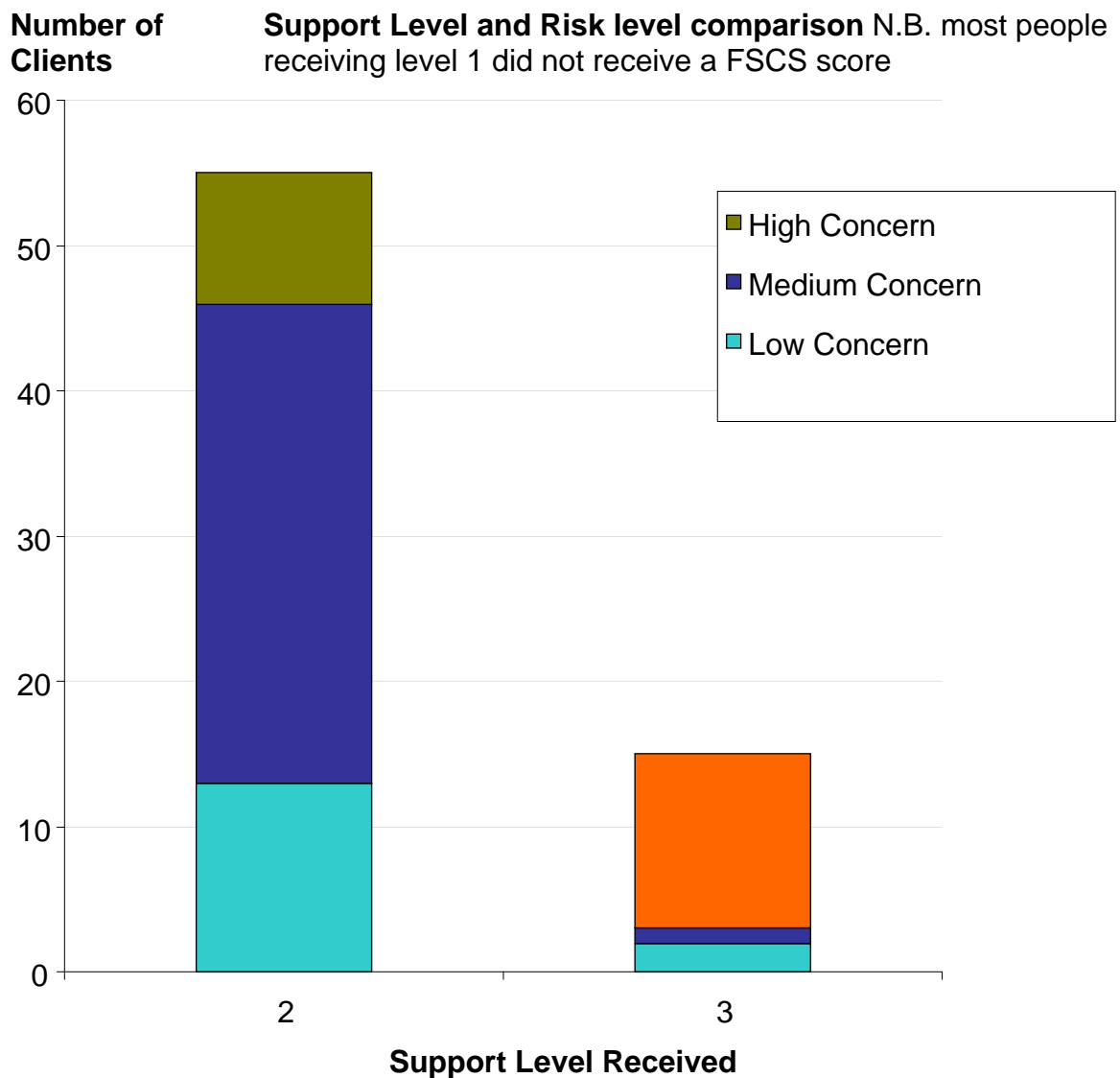
The family risk component of the tool was developed to help prioritise the needs of families approaching the service. The data was obtained by assigning a weighting to components of family need, drawing on the information about risk factors from the literature, the information from the family assessments completed by the FSCS as part of assessing family needs and the experience of the FSCS staff.

The intention of the child risk component was that it could be used to identify children and young people in the families who were particularly at risk of becoming NEET themselves, thereby leading to another generation of poverty and hence the parental separation would have a disproportionate impact. It was envisaged that information already available (including from a Total Place review of work to address NEET issues in another area of Essex) could be used to help identify risk factors and input that into the tool.

Analysis and evaluation of the outcome of various modelling tests undertaken by looking at tool findings and project activity showed that the child based component does not provide sufficiently specific information for use in decisions about individuals. This is partly due to the fact that the focus of the project's work was the parents and FSCS staff had no direct contact or worked with few children so there is insufficient child data in the tool and partly because the correlation between family poverty now and NEET status of the child or their engagement in associated risk behaviours later has not been shown.

The analysis of family data has shown some useful information. It highlighted that income issues are not a big contributor to the overall child poverty risk assessment. More significant risk factors are emotional health and wellbeing, parental contact, domestic abuse and substance misuse.

As shown in the following diagram, the family modelling also highlighted that 12 families with the highest score received a Level 2 service, others with a lower score received a Level 3 service. Staff report that this is because families were initially assessed as requiring one level of support but during their contact the level of interventions required changed. Not all initial assessments were correct and the FSCS tried to be flexible in the support they gave. The criteria were open to interpretation and there was no guidance and scoring initially.



The tool has value as a qualitative approach to risk assessment, although the number of risk factors weighted is simple and quick it may be as useful and as informative as a more complicated numerical and statistical process. It provides support to professional judgement and assessment by staff.

“Risk” for the purposes of the Stratification tool was defined as “enhanced risk” of child poverty having a detrimental impact on child development and uptake of risk behaviours as a teenager. Literature suggests that whilst poverty is

associated with poor child outcomes, it is not a cause in itself. Risk factors are found to reinforce each other, creating a compound effect. Disruptive events such as separation and moving schools thus have a greater impact on families with other risk factors that are often associated with child poverty.

It has not been possible to date to match individual child and family (member) information because of the time consuming processes of data matching as well as resolving data protection issues. Also, accessible data sources on parental separation have not been identified.

By March 2011, the following additional data will have been added to the Risk Stratification Tool:

- CAB information at lowest available resolution (SOA or LSOA) showing CAB family advice patterns
- Assessment of usefulness of referral information from the local multiagency resource allocation meetings showing a spatial pattern, if possible at LSOA level as well.
- Analysis of FSCS family data to investigate correlation of spatial risk map and actual risk identification patterns for separating families.

The Harlow Child Poverty project has been the main starting point and test for the development of a wider tool and it is considered that there is scope for further development and usage of the tool. This work will be continued by Essex County Council beyond the pilot project period.

## **6. Mainstreaming**

A project information leaflet has been designed so that other agencies can use it themselves and offer it to parents who have recently been separated or are separating giving them details of who they can contact for particular support with a view to preventing them from going in to poverty (*See Appendix 3*). The project will distribute 100 leaflets which can then be photocopied and continue to be given to parents in the Harlow area in the future. The document will also be available in a PDF format and will be accessible on the Essex Partnership Portal website.

An existing A-Z Directory Guide of available support and contact details is being updated by HWRA and will be available to professionals (a limited number of hard copies and available on-line through Essex Partnership Portal website where it could be filtered by district and theme). The project information leaflet details will be added but information will not be just for separated or separating families but for anyone affected by poverty or families in need.

Safer Places and HWRA staff will maintain and build on the working partnerships after the project has ended in order to continue to help other families and individuals in the future.

Harlow has been selected as one area to pilot Community Based Budgets (CBB) in Essex. These pilots are focused on supporting families with complex needs. There will be scope to draw on the findings and experience of this project and that of the Family Intervention Programme Project and to build continuing support for families separating and at risk of child poverty into the developing approach to integrating, coordinating and improving support for these families through the CBB activity.

*Acknowledgements:*

*Thank you to the following for the work they do with project clients and providing the information contained in this report:*

*Michelle Kilford and her team (Family Support Co-ordination Service)*

*Sue Jones and her team at Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice*

*Dawn Jenkins and counsellors at Relate*

*Christine Selby and her team at Family Intervention Programme*

*Jenni McRae and her team at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service*

*A particular mention to Pippa Everett and Bauke van de Meer - Research and Intelligence Unit for designing the Risk Stratification Tool and support in the analysis of the information and to the Board members Lynn Seward, Harlow District Council, Adrian Coggins/Sally Theodoreson, Health, Cathy Cunningham-Elliott, Advice Services Manager (Benefits), Essex Benefits Plus ECC for their contribution to the smooth running of the project. Chris Fluskey, Harlow Education Consortium for his input and assistance.*

## Appendix 1

### Abbreviations

ADAS	Alcohol & Drugs Advisory Service
CAB	Citizen's Advice Bureau
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CSC	Children's Social Care
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families (now known as DFE)
DFE	Department for Education (previously known as DCSF)
EMA	Education Maintenance Allowance
FIP	Family Intervention Programme
FSCS	Family Support Co-ordination Service
FSM	Free School Meals
HEC	Harlow Education Consortium
HWRA	Harlow Welfare Rights Advice
ILF	Independent Living Funds
INC	Income
LSOA	Lower Super Output Area
MIND	Charity who supports mental health issues
NEET	Young People not in education, employment or training
RST	Risk Stratification Tool
SOA	Super Output Area
VED	Vehicle Excise Duty

## Appendix 2a

Increased weekly income for individual families (includes closed cases only up to 31/01/11)

Family	Income description	Estimated (weekly) amount of increased claim	Total p.a. (based on 52.14 wks)
1	Council Tax Benefit Housing Benefit Child Tax Credit	27.36 70.00 99.00	<b>10,238.21</b>
2	Child Benefit Child Tax Credit	20.30 54.81	<b>3,916.24</b>
3	Working Tax Credit	52.20	<b>2,721.71</b>
4	Jobseekers Allowance (income-based/ including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs)	102.75	<b>5,357.39</b>
5	Council Tax reductions and disregards Working Tax Credit Child Tax Credit	6.84 72.14 96.56	<b>9,152.66</b>
6	Council Tax reductions and disregards EMA	6.84 30.00	<b>1,920.84</b>
7	Income support (including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs)	64.30	<b>3,352.60</b>
8	Council Tax reductions and disregards Income support (including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs)	27.36 64.30	<b>4,779.15</b>
9	Free school meals Council Tax Benefit Income related employment and support allowance (including Mortgage interest payments/ housing costs Income support (including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs)	18.50 20.00 65.45 70.59	<b>9,100.52</b>
10	Working Tax Credit	66.00	<b>3,441.24</b>
11	Council Tax Benefit Income support (including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs) Housing Benefit	27.36 65.45 70.00	<b>8,488.91</b>
12	Free school meals EMA Income support (including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs) Child Tax Credit	9.25 30.00 65.45 99.10	<b>10,626.13</b>
13	Jobseekers Allowance (income-based/ including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs Housing Benefit	65.45 75.00	<b>7,323.06</b>
14	Council Tax reductions and disregards Working Tax Credit Child Tax Credit	6.84 54.22 54.81	<b>6,041.46</b>
15	Working Tax Credit Child Tax Credit	46.49 88.58	<b>7,042.55</b>
16	Working Tax Credit Child Tax Credit	58.72 65.27	<b>6,464.84</b>
17	Housing Benefit	172.60	<b>8,999.36</b>
18	Disability Living allowance (Adult)	49.85	<b>2,599.18</b>
19	Income support (including Mortgage interest payments/ Housing costs)	65.45	<b>3,412.56</b>
	<b>ALL FAMILIES</b>	<b>2,205.19</b>	<b>114,978.61</b>

## Appendix 2b

Debt 'write off' for individual families - includes closed cases only up to 31/01/11

Family	Debt Write Off	Amount
20	Bankruptcy	£235,800
21	Debt Relief Order	£ 11,593
	<b>Total for both families</b>	<b>£247,393</b>

## Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet

(can be accessed at: <http://www.essexpartnershipportal.org/live/partnership/7>)

### Family Support Services for Separated or Separating Parents

*These details were correct as at February 2011*

This booklet is intended to assist professionals in guiding recently separated or separating parents to appropriate support and advice. It has been designed by the Family Support Co-ordination Service which was the delivery arm of the *Child Poverty Project for separated and separating parents in Harlow* and contains details of the main organisations they mostly worked with. The project was funded by the Department for Education until March 2011.

Advice can be accessed for:

#### **Fact sheet 1**

Counselling Services

#### **Fact sheet 2**

Parenting Advice and Support

#### **Fact sheet 3**

Advice/Legal/Mediation

#### **Fact sheet 4**

Other useful services

### **Fact Sheet 1 Counselling Services**

**Relate** offers relationship Counselling services for individuals, couples, families and young people.

**Individual Counselling** can help clients clarify their problems and difficulties and find ways of working through them. For many, the ending of a relationship, whether voluntary or involuntary, can be extremely painful with feelings of loss and underlying emotions that may range from shock, numbness and despair through to anger, shame, eventual acceptance and moving on. This time can feel like an emotional rollercoaster and be hard to manage. Counselling can offer a safe environment to explore and work through these feelings. The counselling process can also be beneficial to those who need to work through other issues such as self esteem, anxiety, communication etc.

**Couples Counselling** has no set agenda within an organisation such as Relate. The service is to help clients move forward with their lives, whether together or apart. The focus may be exploratory, to get an understanding of the reasons behind their difficulties or more focused in the here and now, enabling clients to separate amicably and where children are involved, with the least conflict possible.

**Family Counselling** is a service where all members of the family can express their feelings, developing their communication skills and helping to settle differences. For a separating family where, at times, children may be caught in the conflict of anger and blame being directed from one or both parents to the other, this environment can give children the opportunity to be heard.

### **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

**Youth Counselling** can offer the opportunity for the children to talk about how they feel and find coping strategies for difficult situations. During a separation parents cannot always be as emotionally available to their children as they may normally be or, in some cases, children may feel that they cannot burden their parents, who are already distressed, with their problems.

**Contact:** Relate North Essex and East Herts.

**Telephone:** 01245 258680

**Email:** [admin@relate-northersex.org](mailto:admin@relate-northersex.org)

**Website:** [www.relate-northersex.org.uk](http://www.relate-northersex.org.uk)

**MIND** offers a free counselling service that covers:

- Depression
- Bereavement
- Family difficulties
- Traumatic experiences
- Anger management
- Chronic illness
- Low self esteem
- Anxiety/stress.

**Contact:** West Essex MIND

**Telephone:** 01371 876641

**Email:** [counselling@westessexmind.org.uk](mailto:counselling@westessexmind.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.westessexmind.org.uk](http://www.westessexmind.org.uk)

### **Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service (ADAS)**

ADAS offers a free service for people who are directly affected by drugs and/or alcohol misuse.

The services include:

- Counselling: Individual and Couple
- Children's Support Services
- Family Therapy
- Complementary Therapies
- Stress and Anxiety Management Groups
- Relaxation Groups.

**Telephone:** 01279 641347 or 01279 438716

**Email:** [admin@adasuk.org](mailto:admin@adasuk.org)

### **Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

Is a targeted service providing mental health and emotional wellbeing support to children and families. They provide direct work to children in a range of settings which include schools, Children's Centres and GP surgeries. Referrals are made through a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and can only be made by professionals.

### **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

For referrals requiring consideration from other agencies, CAMHS may refer to the Multi Agency Allocation Meeting (MAAG) to ensure families receive a range of services according to need and availability, this is only considered with consent from parents or those with parental responsibility.

A duty worker is available Monday to Thursday from 09.00 to 18.00 and Friday from 09.00 to 16.30 for consultation to professionals, foster carers or parents who may wish to discuss any concerns. The service is located in Chelmsford.

**Telephone:** 01245 353789

**CALM** is a long established charity which provides high quality professional counselling service on a range of issues including domestic violence, drug and alcohol, eating disorders, stress, self esteem, anger and depression and promotes mental health and mental wellbeing to residents in and around Harlow. A contribution is requested for an assessment followed by counselling sessions (£30 per session for an individual and £50 per session for a couple).

**Contact:** CALM

**Telephone:** 01279 411330

**Email:** calmcentre@btconnect.com

**Website:** [www.calmcentre.co.uk](http://www.calmcentre.co.uk)

**Young Concern Trust (YCT)** is a community based organisation, supporting young people in the Harlow area for over 20 years. It's mission is 'to support young people in around Harlow and east Hertfordshire by providing one to one counselling, support groups and other projects relevant to young lives'.

**Telephone:** 01279 414090

**Email:** yct@youngconcern.com

**Website:** [www.youngconcern](http://www.youngconcern)

### **Fact Sheet 2 Parenting Advice and Support**

**Sure Start** Children's Centres are one stop shops for children under 5 and their families.

Services offered:

- Play and Early Learning
- Family Drop-Ins
- Health Services
- Family Support
- Training for Adults
- Linked Child Care

There are 6 centres in Harlow, open Monday to Friday. For opening times please phone the individual centre.

### **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

**Contact: The Tree House**, Parnall Road, CM18 7NG

**Telephone:** 01279 772600

**Email:** [viv.derrick@hccn.org.uk](mailto:viv.derrick@hccn.org.uk)

**Contact: The Meadows**, Harberts Road, CM19 4DL

**Telephone:** 01279 773900

**Email:** [chris.arrowsmith@hccn.org.uk](mailto:chris.arrowsmith@hccn.org.uk)

**Contact: Potter Street**, Carters Mead, CM17 9EU

**Telephone:** 01279 420587

**Email:** [bev.jones@hccn.org.uk](mailto:bev.jones@hccn.org.uk)

**Contact: Burnt Mill**, First Avenue, CM20 2NR

**Telephone:** 01279 442419

**Email:** [colin.slattery@hccn.org.uk](mailto:colin.slattery@hccn.org.uk)

**Contact: Sunflower**, Sumners Leisure Centre, CM19 5RD

**Telephone:** 01279 772600

**Email:** [fay.norris@hccn.org.uk](mailto:fay.norris@hccn.org.uk)

**Contact: ABC**, Garden Terrace Road, CM17 0AT

**Telephone:** 01279 423625

**Email:** [Louise.orme@hccn.org.uk](mailto:Louise.orme@hccn.org.uk)

**Parentline plus** is the leading national charity providing support for families with children of any age (w.e.f. January 2011 known as 'Family Lives')

Confidential advice is offered in a range of areas:

- Relationships
- Divorce and Separation
- Bullying
- Finance and Work
- Lifestyle
- Health and Wellbeing
- Families and the Law.

**Telephone:** 0808 800 2222

**Web:** [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

**Accuro** is a local charity providing a range of services to support children with a disability and their families.

Services provided include:

- Parenting Support: Home visits, Parenting Programmes, Support Groups and Drop-ins
- Family Support Work
- Sitting Service
- Shared Care
- School Holiday Support Project
- Under 19s Scheme for young people with ASD.

**Telephone:** 01279 433117/433667

**Web:** [www.accuro.org.uk](http://www.accuro.org.uk)

### **Children's Welfare at school**

Parents should first talk to appropriate school staff to discuss any concerns about their child(ren) (e.g. Head of Year, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Head of pastoral care)

### **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

#### **Parental Wellbeing** (signs of anxiety, depression or stress)

Appointments should be made with individuals' GPs for advice.

#### **Fact sheet 3 Advice/Legal/Mediation**

**Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice (HWRA)** is an independent charity and a member of Advice UK.

The services include:

- Advice, advocacy and representation in debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits
- Access to specialist advisers, solicitors and support officers
- Provides a wide range of community information on other related subjects
- Holds the quality mark issued by the Legal Services Commission (LSC).

Reception staff will assess the enquiry or problem, check if there are any essential deadlines, give brief advice and/ or information where necessary, explain how the service works and book an appointment if appropriate. If it is difficult for clients to attend appointments during the Advice Centre's normal opening hours, it is possible to make out-of-hours appointments or home visits for housebound clients. Reception staff will need some personal and income details before booking appointments as the majority of casework is available only to clients who are funded through HWRA's contract with the Legal Services Commission (LSC). The LSC contract covers clients whose incomes are low enough for them to qualify for legal aid AND who live in the area covered by Harlow Council or Epping Forest District Council AND who need specialist help that is covered by the legal aid scheme for issues with debt, employment, housing and welfare benefits. HWRA has only very limited funding to do casework for non-legally aidable clients. There is some funding for Harlow residents who need benefits, housing, debt and employment advice. Harlow Council funds most of this work.

HWRA offers a service at Harlow County Court on possession hearing days. There is no requirement for people assisted via this scheme to be legally aidable. Clients should allow enough time on the day for the HWRA Duty Court Adviser to look through their papers before they have to appear before the court officials. This work may be transferred to hearings at Harlow Magistrates Court from April 2011.

#### **Debt**

Advisers help clients resolve debt related problems (other than most business debts) that they may face including arrears on essential services, bailiff action, Council Tax arrears, inability to repay credit or loans, mortgage arrears and repossession and rent difficulties. They can assist with Debt Relief Orders and personal bankruptcies. Advisers prioritise debts, maximise income, prepare a financial statement showing income and essential expenses and then agree a plan for coping with the debts with the client. As debt problems can be complex, this may require extensive long-term work. Advisers may also be able to assist with court appearances.

## **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

### **Employment**

Advisers help employees and workers with most aspects of employment law, including breach of contract, discrimination, dismissal, holiday pay, minimum wage, redundancy, rights for parents and other carers, unpaid wages and working time regulations. They can normally write to employers on a client's behalf to try and negotiate a resolution to the problem. They can help clients complete Employment Tribunal or County Court applications where needed. In some circumstances, they can represent clients at Employment Tribunals, Employment Appeal Tribunals and County Courts. However, they cannot normally represent clients at internal disciplinary or grievance hearings.

### **Housing**

Advice is offered on a range of housing issues including disputes, harassment, homelessness, householders' responsibilities, leasehold conditions, right to buy, security of tenure, tenants' rights, deposits and waiting lists. Advisers will inform clients of their rights, act as advocates and represent clients in Court when needed.

### **Welfare Benefits**

Advice is given on means-tested and non means-tested benefits, including disability and incapacity related benefits, NHS benefits, industrial injuries, benefits for those looking for work, Employment and Support Allowance, maternity benefits, Statutory Sick Pay, Pension Credit, Social Fund, State Retirement Pension and Tax Credits. Problems with overpayments and underpayments of benefits are also covered. Claimants who are being investigated and/or prosecuted for alleged benefit fraud should seek the advice of a solicitor specialising in criminal law. Advice ranges from simple benefit checks and 'better off' calculations through to challenging decisions on benefit claims. Advisers can make written representations to benefit appeal tribunals and at Upper Tribunals and Courts where appropriate. In some circumstances, they may be able to attend tribunals with clients.

**Contact:** Harlow Welfare Rights & Advice

Harlow Advice Centre, 2 East Gate, Harlow, CM20 1ND

**Telephone:** 01279 446622 between 10.00am to 1.30pm, Monday to Friday

For clients who are unable to telephone between 10.00am and 1.30pm

**Telephone:** 01279 446777

**Fax:** 01279 446599

**Email:** admin@hwra.org.uk

**Website:** <http://www.hwra.org.uk>

### **Family Law** (*separation/divorce/child custody/ division of marital assets/ Adoption*)

Family law is an area of the law that deals with family-related issues and domestic relations including:

- Separation
- Divorce
- Child custody
- Division of marital assets
- Adoption

### **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

**Contact:** Harlow Solicitors (Legal Aided)

L D Law Limited, 1 West Walk, Harlow,  
Essex, CM20 1LR

**Telephone:** 01279 441266 | DX: 40501 Harlow

**Fax:** 01279 444440

**Contact:** Barnes and Partners

5 West Square, The High, Harlow,  
Essex, CM20 1JJ

**Telephone:** 01279 418601 | DX: 40500 Harlow

**Fax:** 01279 450552

### **Legal Aid**

Legal aid can be applied for to help with the costs of legal advice if these criteria are met:

- There must be a reasonable and timely chance of winning the case
- The type of legal problem must be covered (civil legal case – dispute with a person, company or other organization/ home/relationships - separating or divorcing/money)
- Income (If claiming income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance or the guarantee credit of Pension Credit, can be considered to have an income within the limits to qualify for the green form scheme/if not receiving income support, income-based jobseeker's allowance or the guarantee credit of Pension Credit, eligibility will depend on disposable income (Disposable income is the amount of income after deductions have been made for national insurance, tax and dependants' allowances. A deduction will be made from weekly income for any dependent partner or children living in your household. To qualify for the green form scheme, your disposable monthly income cannot be more than £621)/Partner's income and capital may also be taken into account, except where this is inappropriate, for example, where there is a conflict of interest between partners) and capital (not eligible for help under the green form scheme if have capital over £3,000)

### **Mediation**

Mediation is a negotiation to resolve differences; it is conducted by some impartial party who intervenes for the purpose of bringing about a settlement. It is a voluntary process conducted in a neutral safe environment. It helps those involved in family breakdown or conflict to reach their own decisions about the future and to communicate better. Some mediators charge on a sliding scale according to each person's ability to pay. A detailed assessment will have to be done to determine how much you will have to pay for each session. This is dependant upon; income, benefits, etc.

**Contact:** Essex Mediation

Harlow Enterprise Hub, Edinburgh Way, Harlow, CM20 2NQ

**Telephone:** 01279 311431

**Email:** [harlow@essexmediation.co.uk](mailto:harlow@essexmediation.co.uk)

## **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

### **Fact sheet 4 Other useful services**

**Domestic Abuse** Contact Safer Places (new name for Harlow & Broxbourne Women's Aid). Safer Places has a mission to ensure the safety, improve the quality of life and reduce repeat victimization for the survivors of domestic abuse.

The services include:

- Refuge accommodation in Harlow, Broxbourne and Southend
- Community based support in Harlow, Epping Forest District, East Herts, Broxbourne and Southend
- Drop-in services in Harlow and Broxbourne
- Learning and Development, including employability and life skills
- Services for men experiencing Domestic Abuse

**Telephone:** 24hr Emergency 0845 0177 669

**Email:** [info@womensroom.org](mailto:info@womensroom.org)

### **Family Holiday Association**

The Family Holiday Association was set up in 1975 to help struggling families take the break they need. It is only able to accept applications for a break via a welfare agent (e.g. someone who knows the family circumstances, for instance a health visitor, teacher or social worker).

The services include:

- Direct Grants: a one off contribution towards any type of break
- Short Breaks: 3-4 nights self catering accommodation at selected UK holiday parks
- Holiday Center Breaks: working with Butlins and Haven, providing self catering breaks in chalets and caravans
- Last minute breaks: occasionally travel companies offer breaks at short notice in the UK or abroad
- Group breaks: a one off contribution towards breaks or day trips, organised by the client's welfare agent.

*All holiday payments are made to the welfare agent, who assists the family with the application, holiday preparations and completing feedback forms.*

**Contact:** The Family Holiday Association

16 Mortimer Street, London, W1T 3JL

Charity number: 800262

Company number: 02301337

**Telephone:** 0207 436 3304

**Web:** [www.FamilyHolidayAssociation.org.uk](http://www.FamilyHolidayAssociation.org.uk)

(Applications for 2011 can be downloaded from the website)

### **Housing**

When housing security is an issue contact Harlow District Council/ Housing Services/ Housing Needs.

**Contact:** Housing Options & Advice

Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1WG

**Telephone:** 01279 446685

**Email:** [contact@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:contact@harlow.gov.uk)

### **Appendix 3 Project Information leaflet (continued)**

#### **Police**

Non-emergency enquiries

**Telephone:** 0300 333 4444

Neighbourhood Policing Teams for areas of Harlow

**Telephone:** 0300 333 4444 ext 20603 or 20611



Item	Income Description/Method	Already receiving ✓ or ✗	Amount Currently Received (weekly) £	New claim ✓ or ✗	Estimated (weekly) amount of new claim £	Increase to current claim ✓ or ✗	Estimated (weekly) amount of increased claim	Estimated amount of any lump sum (including backdating)	Overpayment of benefit write – off lump sum
15	Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (Including Mortgage Interest Payments/Housing costs)								
16	Free School Meals								
17	Health Service Benefits								
18	Housing Benefit								
19	Incapacity Benefit								
20	Incapacity Benefit (non contributory)								
21	Income Support (Including Mortgage Interest Payments/Housing costs)								
22	Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit								
23	Jobseekers Allowance (contribution-based)								
24	Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based) (Including Mortgage Interest Payments/Housing costs)								
25	Maternity Allowance								

Item	Income Description/Method	Already receiving ✓ or ✗	Amount Currently Received (weekly) £	New claim ✓ or ✗	Estimated (weekly) amount of new claim £	Increase to current claim ✓ or ✗	Estimated (weekly) amount of increased claim	Estimated amount of any lump sum (including backdating)	Overpayment of benefit write – off lump sum
26	Pension Guarantee Credit (Including Mortgage Interest Payments/Housing costs)								
27	Pension Savings Credit								
28	Severe Disablement Allowance								
29	Statutory Adoption Pay								
30	Statutory Maternity Pay								
31	Statutory Paternity Pay								
32	Statutory Sick Pay								
33	Social Fund - Community Care Grants								
34	Social Fund (Regulated) Sure Start Maternity Payment/ Funeral Payment/Cold Weather payment								
35	Vehicle Excise Duty								
36	War Pensions Scheme/ Armed Forces Compensation Scheme								
37	Working Tax Credit								
38	<b>Other</b> – please specify i.e. housing grant for deposit/rent,								

**Notes on benefit gains/outcomes**

- Where someone is helped to claim **IS, JSA (ib) or ESA, or PGC** it is assumed that along with that estimated benefit gain, there would be further estimated gains of **max HB** (where applicable) and/or **max CTB** because these benefits automatically passport clients to these forms of help. The amounts would be based on actual liability or average where it's not known. See below re average CTB/HB.
- In addition, these claims above would also generate **maximum CTC** where appropriate as well as FSM etc – see below.
- **Free School meals** (average based on charges across Essex) - £1.85 x 5 school days = **£9.25pw** which equates to lump sum (of **38 weeks**) or **£351.50 pa** – per **child**. Also can assume this flows from claims for above benefits as well as CTC where annual income is less than relevant threshold i.e. 2010/2011 £16190.
- **Council Tax Benefit £27.36 pw** to be regarded as average and used for estimated CTB where liability not known. Discounts/disregards also based on this figure
- **Housing Benefit** – relevant **LHA for district** would be used to calculate estimated HB gain and where accommodation is **RSL/LA average rent of £75 pw** where liability not known to be used and HB would be based on this
- **Social Fund Funeral Payment** average of **£1000** as a lump sum
- **Vehicle Excise Duty** – average based on Road Tax costs for range of cars and applicable to any claims for HRMob DLA = **£176.67 pa** entered as lump sum.
- **Blue Badge** - **£2.00** per week is assumed as gain for each person we advise to apply for Blue Badge

**Debt outcomes i.e. partial or complete write off of debts**

Weekly payment	Lump sum	Reduction	

**Non monetary outcomes**

Issue	Outcome

**Appendix 5 a**

Letter sent to parent with the Education Success Indicator form (*Appendix 5b*)

Dear Parent,

As part of our evaluation of our pilot, one of our outcomes is educational. I am enclosing a form that I would ask that you would give to your child's form tutor to complete and return in the stamped address envelope provided as soon as possible.

If you do not wish for the school to complete this form can you state your reasons why and return it in the envelope provided.

Many thanks and kind regards

Michelle Kilford.  
Team leader  
Child Poverty Pilot

## Appendix 5 b

### Education Success Indicator form

The pupil named below has received support through a pilot project in Harlow. As part of the project it is important to identify any changes noticed within the school environment. I would therefore ask that this proforma be completed **within 3 weeks** and returned to Michelle Kilford, Team Leader, Family Support Co-ordination Service, Harlow Welfare Rights Advice Centre, 2 East Gate, Harlow, CM20 1ND or email [michelle.kilford@womensroom.org.uk](mailto:michelle.kilford@womensroom.org.uk).

Thank you for your co-operation.

The period the pupil (and/ or his family) has received support is between ..... And .....

<b>Name of pupil</b>		
<b>School</b>		
<b>Brief description of behaviour before</b>		
<b>Brief description of behaviour after</b>		
<b>Has the pupil's attendance remained the same/ improved or deteriorated</b>	<i>Please give any hard evidence where available (e.g. was 75% now 85%)</i>	
<b>Has the pupil's attitude to learning remained the same/ improved or deteriorated</b>		
<b>Details of attainment where available (in particular English/ Maths/ Science) before and after the period of support</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
<b>Any other teacher/ tutor comments</b> (e.g. <i>appears happier/ more willing to talk...</i> )		
<b>Pupil views</b>		

*(This has been shared with schools through Harlow Education Consortium)*

**Appendix 6a**

FSCS Initial Assessment form (4 pages)

**Assessment**  
FSCS staff only

**Dependent Children(s) Details** case Id no. \_\_\_\_\_

Forename	Last Name	Gender	D.O.B.	School.	Yr group	Special needs/ disability

**High risk = 2 + children/ Medium risk = 1 child/ low risk = 0**  
**(Please delete appropriately) RISK: HIGH/ MEDIUM/LOW**

<b><u>Problems experienced by client/family</u></b>	
Contact between parents: daily <input type="checkbox"/> once a week <input type="checkbox"/> once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/> Less often <input type="checkbox"/>	
Would you consider this to be: A great concern (3) <input type="checkbox"/> A little concern (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no concern (0) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Total</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Contact between Non resident partner children: daily <input type="checkbox"/> once a week <input type="checkbox"/> once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/> less often <input type="checkbox"/>	
Would you consider this to be: A great concern (3) <input type="checkbox"/> A little concern (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no concern (0) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Total</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Child maintenance: in place and working well (0) <input type="checkbox"/>	
In place but not working well (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no arrangements (3) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Total</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Physical health of one or more children: Of great concern (3) <input type="checkbox"/> of little concern (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no concern (0) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Total</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health of one or more children: Of great concern (3) <input type="checkbox"/> of little concern (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no concern (0) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Total</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional Health Of one or more children: Of great concern (3) <input type="checkbox"/> of little concern (2) <input type="checkbox"/> no concern (0) <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Total</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant Information:	
<b>Over all total</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Score range High risk = 13-24 / Medium risk = 7-12 / low risk = 0-6**

**(Please delete appropriately) RISK: HIGH/ MEDIUM/ LOW**

## **Employment**

Employment Status:

Working full time (0)  Working Part-time (1)  Looking for Work (2)   
Looking after family (2)  Sick/disabled (3)  other (1)

**Total**

Employability: Would you consider this to be:

of a great concern (3)  of a little concern (2)  of no concern (0)

**Total**

Job security: Would you consider this to be:

of a great concern (3)  of a little concern (2)  of no concern (0)

**Would the client like to retrain for employment or further their qualifications?** If so please give details and any other relevant information:

**Over all total**

**Score range High risk = 6-9 / Medium risk = 3-5 / low risk = 0-2**

*(Please delete appropriately)*

**RISK: HIGH/ MEDIUM/ LOW**

## **Housing**

Tenure: Owner occupier (1)  Private renting (2)  Social Housing (2)

Living with friends/ family (3)  homeless (3)  temporary (3)  other

**Total**

If homeless what was your tenure before separation:

Housing Security: Would you consider this to be,

A great concern (3)  A little concern (2)  no concern (0)

**Total**

Relevant information:

**Over all total**

**Score range High risk = 5-6/ Medium risk = 3-4/ low risk = 0-2**

*(Please delete appropriately)*

**RISK: HIGH/ MEDIUM/ LOW**

## Income

Benefits: Yes (1)  No (0)  If yes please specify below:

Total

Income support  Child benefit  Child tax credits   
Working tax credits  Disability living allowance

Incapacity benefit  Job seekers allowance:

Total

Income: £0 - £10K (3)  £10K - £20K (2)  £20K and above (0)

Total

Disposable income: Would you consider this to be,

A great concern (3)  A little concern (2)  no concern (0)

Total

Debt: If yes would you consider this to be,

A great concern (3)  A little concern (2)  no concern (0)

Total

Relevant information:

Over all total

**Score range High risk = 10-17/ Medium risk = 3-10 / low risk = 0-3**

**(Please delete appropriately)**

**RISK: HIGH/ MEDIUM/ LOW**

## Health

Mental Health Problems:

If yes would you consider this to be:

A great concern (3)  little concern (2)  no concern (0)

Total

Physical Health Problems:

If yes would you consider this to be:

A great concern (0)  little concern (2)  no concern (0)

Total

Emotional Health: Would you consider this to be,

A great concern (3)  A little concern (2)  no concern (0)

Total

Domestic violence: history of violence (3)

perceived risk of violence (2)  No perceived risk (0)

Total

Alcohol Abuse: (3) Yes  No

Total

Substance Abuse: (3) Yes  No

Total

Learning difficulties: (3) Yes  No

Total

Relevant information:

Over all total

**Score range High risk = 9-21 / Medium risk = 3-9/ low risk = 0-3**

**(Please delete appropriately)**

**RISK: HIGH/ MEDIUM/ LOW**

Agency name	Contact details

**Any other relevant information**

Advice requested:

Mediation/conflict Resolution  Contact arrangements   
 Counselling for parents  counselling for children  Financial/debt advice   
 Benefits advice  Legal/court advice  Parenting support  Housing advice   
 Employment concerns  Childcare issues   
 Dealing with Domestic Violence  Fathering support   
 Educational support for children  other associated issues  please specify below.

Ethnicity:

White British  White Irish  White other  Black British  Black Caribbean   
 Black African  Black other  Asian British  Asian Indian  Asian Pakistani   
 Asian Bangladeshi  Asian other  Mixed/Dual Background White/Black Caribbean   
 White/Black African  White/Asian  Other Mixed background  Chinese  Any other ethnic group  Not given

**Outcome of referral:**

- Level 1: Appointment made with HWRA or signposted
- Level 2: Next appointment made, and agreement to be signed
- Level 3: Next appointment made, and agreement to be signed
- Signposted only as not in our area, by whom:
- Client informed verbally of confidentiality agreement/policies?
- Tavistock letter given/advised?
- Opted in  Opted out

## Appendix 6b

### FSCS Service User Final Questionnaire

By filling out this questionnaire you are helping The Family Support Coordination Service to evaluate the quality of the service given to clients. If you wish, Support staff will assist you in filling out the form.

#### Section 1 - Services Provided (All service users to complete)

1. **How long were you receiving support from FSCS?**  
03 weeks/ 3-6 weeks/ 6+ weeks
2. **Overall how would you rate the service you received?**  
Excellent/ Very good/ Good/ Poor
3. **How easy was it to access the service?**  
Easy/ Not very easy/ Difficult
4. **Did you have to wait before accessing the service?** Yes/No
5. **Were you made to feel welcomed by the staff?** Yes/No
6. **How would you rate the FSCS facilities?**  
Excellent/ Very good/ Good/ Poor
7. **If you used a solicitor at FSCS how would you rate their service?**  
Excellent/ Very good/ Good/ Poor
8. **Were your cultural and religious needs respected?** Yes/No
9. **Were you given a copy of the Statement of Service?** Yes/No
10. **Were you given a copy of the Complaints Procedure?** Yes/No
11. **Did you have any complaints?** Yes/No
12. **If yes, how were they dealt with and by whom?**
13. **Were you satisfied with the outcome?** Yes/No
14. **Were you made aware of FSCS Confidentiality Policy?** Yes/No
15. **Do you think any part of this service could be improved?** Yes/No
16. **If yes how?**
17. **Would you use this service again should the need arise?** Yes/No
18. **Would you recommend this service to others?** Yes/No
19. **Do you have any other comments?**
20. **What were you first looking for when you contacted us?**  
**Advice about:**
  - a) **Domestic violence?** Yes/No  
Did you get the information you needed? Yes/No
  - b) **Housing** Yes/No  
Did you get the information you needed? Yes/No
  - c) **Debt** Yes/No  
Did you get the information you needed? Yes/No
  - d) **Employment** Yes/No  
Did you get the information you needed? Yes/No
  - e) **Benefits** Yes/No  
Did you get the information you needed? Yes/No
  - f) **Family Law** Yes/No  
Did you get the information you needed? Yes/No
  - g) **Behavioural problems** Yes/No  
Did you get the information you needed? Yes/No
21. **Were you asked about education and training?** Yes/No
22. **Once accessing FSCS, how easy was it to find out what services were available to you?**  
Very easy/ Easy/ Not easy/ Difficult
23. **Was a member of staff able to help with the information you required for question 20?**  
Yes/No/Don't know
24. **Did you get the correct information from the staff for question 20?** Yes/No/Don't know
25. **Did the member of staff check that you received all the information you needed?**  
Yes/No/Don't know

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form. Your views are valuable in helping the FSCS to improve our services. If you wish to make any additional comments please use the next page to do so.

## **Appendix 7**

### Eligibility criteria

The family would need to meet the following criteria to enter the Child Poverty Pilot Project:

1. Parents who are considering separation or have separated within the last six months;
2. Circumstance where the separation or the separating process has or will result in the parent being in a state of poverty (a state of not having enough money to take care of basic needs such as food, clothing or housing), or has or could result in mental health issues that impair or impact their ability to provide this basic provision;
3. Parent has one or more dependant children (0-18 or 0-25 if disabled) where the parent is in receipt of, or could be considered eligible to receive child benefit;
4. Parent is eligible, or maybe eligible for income support and/or means tested benefits, and/or low income tax credit.

## Appendix 8 Case Studies

### 8a Case Study on the family supported by the Family Intervention Programme

The family was referred to the FIP in July 2010. The family consists of Mother and 5 children aged between 2 and 12. The family live in a council house to which Mother has a secure tenancy and at the time of referral the tenancy was not at risk due to anti-social behaviour although there had been some complaints from neighbours about some of the children's behaviour in the local community. One of the children in particular was displaying extremely violent and aggressive behaviour on a regular basis. The children's fathers have some but not extensive involvement in the children's lives and do not appear to support the mother adequately.

Presenting problems at the time of referral were the children's poor behaviour at home and in the community; poor behaviour at school for some of the children and a lack of positive engagement with services. The mother presented as being unable to cope with her children and appeared to have 'lost control' of her family. Staff visiting the home witnessed the children's unruly and unacceptable behaviour and the mother appeared not to address this appropriately. There appeared to be a distinct lack of parental control, insufficient guidance; no boundaries and few/no sanctions for unacceptable behaviour. The home was sparsely furnished and Mother reported converting the dining room into a bedroom for herself so that there was more space upstairs for her children to sleep. The upstairs of the home was untidy.

A whole family assessment was undertaken over a period of weeks and the needs of each individual taken into consideration. A multi agency FIP referral meeting was held and an action plan was tabled and agreed by everyone present. The meeting was attended by the family's newly appointed Social Worker following a referral being made by one of the children's schools. As a result of Childrens Social Care (CSC) involvement a Case Conference was planned.

In the meantime the FIP Key Worker communicated with the mother on a regular basis and visited the home several times a week. Support has been given by the Key Worker to improve positive parenting; establish routines and appropriate boundaries; assign chores to the older children and the Key Worker has assisted in getting one of the children to school regularly as she was at risk of becoming a school refuser. The Key Worker has also accompanied the mother to appointments etc. and has supported her in addressing her debts and learning how to manage her finances more effectively. Particular attention is being given to the needs of the child who repeatedly displays aggressive and violent behaviour and alternative education provision is being considered.

Positive outcomes are that the mother is feeling more confident about her parenting ability; some routines have been established – in particular bedtime routines for the younger children; the upstairs of the home is more tidy and organized; the mother reports spending the family finances more wisely. Local Police Community Support Officer's have been linked with the family and they visit the local area and family home regularly to monitor the older children's behaviour and give support to the mother.

## **Appendix 8 Case Studies (continued)**

The parent's ability to parent the children appropriately will be assessed. Mother has also been re-referred for Counselling at Sure Start as she found these sessions beneficial when she attended previously. The children will attend support sessions with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to address their emotional needs.

Support from Families Together was brought in by Children's Social Care to help the family.

The FIP Key Worker works collaboratively with all other agencies involved and continues to have regular contact with the family. The Key Worker provides direct practical support to the Mother ensuring that services from Families Together are not duplicated.

The eldest child was referred to Young Concern for Counselling and the Key Worker accompanied her to three sessions, but she has now refused to attend further. The Key Worker also registered this child with a local youth club and accompanied her to the first two sessions which she seemed to enjoy.

The Mother has demonstrated that she is learning how to discipline and control the children better. The house appears calmer. The house is tidier and more organised. There have been no neighbour complaints or further complaints about the children's behaviour in the community since the FIP became involved with the family.

### **8b Family Support Co-ordination Service case studies**

#### **Case Study 1**

A 39 year old mother of 2 children aged between 5 and 8, recently separated from her husband presented at assessment with concerns over the emotional health of herself and her two children, domestic violence, benefit and housing advice and legal advice re child contact. She was allocated Level 2 support

As a result a referral was made to the Alcohol and Drugs Advisory Service and both mother and 2 children were offered counselling sessions. The mother finished her 3 sessions but support for the children is still ongoing. The family was fast tracked to Harlow Welfare Rights Advice for housing advice and referrals were made to Safer Places and a solicitor. After receiving the interventions the client received a follow up phone call and completed a final questionnaire. The client indicated that the children were much more settled and she had received satisfactory housing and legal advice and support from her support worker at court. Appropriate benefits were applied for and the family was referred to the Family Holiday Association and subsequently received a 7 night break at Butlins Minehead. The client felt very happy with the service from the Family Support Co-ordination Service and has no further concerns or issues.

## **Appendix 8 Case Studies (continued)**

### **Case Study 2**

A 29 year old mother of 2 children aged between 5 and 7 recently separated from her husband presented at assessment with concerns over emotional health of one of her children, debt, and housing advice and her own emotional well being. The client was allocated Level 2 support. As a result the child's school was contacted and it was agreed that counselling/ mentoring type support would be provided by the school. The family was also fast tracked for debt and housing advice and the mother was referred to Relate. She was offered 6 counselling sessions with Relate but felt no need to continue after the 5<sup>th</sup> session as she was feeling emotionally stronger.

The client also received debt and housing advice and was currently involved in a debt management programme.

After receiving the interventions the client received a follow up call and completed a final questionnaire. The client indicated that her child was much happier at home and school and the mother had no further concerns about her emotional health. She was extremely happy with the service she received and was very pleased to receive cinema tickets. The family attended the Christmas party organised by FSCS. She had no outstanding concerns at present.

### **Case Study 3**

A 25 year old mother of 1 child aged 1 year, separated from her partner presented at assessment with concerns over her mental health, housing, court issues, and domestic violence. She was allocated Level 3 support. As a result a referral was made to Relate and 6 sessions were offered but only attended one as she said it was too traumatic at this present time to continue but she was given the option of deferring the sessions for up to 2 months. The client was then referred to the CAMHS workers for assessment and fast tracked to Harlow Welfare Rights Advice for housing advice and legal issues. Also a referral was made to safer places.

The client received £30 in Tesco vouchers from the spot purchasing budget for food and three weeks worth of food parcels from the food bank were agreed. The Family Holiday Association arranged for the client and her family to have a family holiday at Butlins in Minehead and gave them £103 spending money.

After receiving the interventions, the client received a follow up call and completed a final questionnaire. The client was more than happy with the service and all her issues have been resolved.

### **Case Study 4**

A 22 year old mother of one child aged 2 years old recently separated from her partner presented at assessment with concerns over her physical and mental health, lack of child support, domestic violence and legal aid issues. She was allocated Level 3 support.

## **Appendix 8 Case Studies (continued)**

As a result a referral was made to safer places and she was offered 6 counselling sessions with Relate. She was admitted and discharged from hospital due to a physical assault and was fast tracked through Harlow Welfare Rights Advice to a solicitor for legal advice and an injunction was served on the respondent. The child support agency was contacted and her application is currently being dealt with. The client and her family are also booked in for a holiday in April at Haven Coombe Holiday site and they are very much looking forward to this.

After receiving these interventions the client received a follow up phone call and completed a final questionnaire, the client indicated that she felt a lot happier in herself both physically and mentally and both she and her mother expressed what a tremendous service the FSCS provided and they have no outstanding concerns.

### **Case Study 5**

A 53 year old male with one 8 year old child recently separated from his partner presented at assessment with concerns over the mental health of his son and housing. He was allocated Level 3 support. As a result an emergency referral was made to social services and subsequently his son was placed permanently in his care. A fast track referral was made through Harlow Welfare Rights Advice for housing advice following which long term accommodation was agreed by Harlow Council.

The client received £350 through the spot purchasing budget which enabled him to continue working and to support his son. The client also received vouchers and the family enjoyed a night out.

After receiving these interventions, the client received a follow up call and completed a final questionnaire. The client spoke highly of the service received from the Family Support Co-ordination Service and stated that his and his sons lives had changed for the better as a result of FSCS support. The client had no outstanding concerns.

## **8c Child and Adolescent Mental Health case study**

### **Case Study 1**

A 41 year old female client was recently asked to leave the family home with her 4 children aged in between 4 and 16 as the tenancy was in her partner's name. She presented herself to the Family Support Co-ordination Service (FSCS) as being homeless and having emotional concerns over her 14 year old daughter who was experiencing signs of withdrawal, anxiety and aggression towards her father due to him having an affair with someone known to her.

The client and her children moved in to temporary accommodation but after an electrical fire they were then re-housed in further temporary accommodation away from the children's school and their friends.

## **Appendix 8 Case Studies (continued)**

The 14 year old daughter was having difficulty accepting her father's relationship and feeling isolated from her friends and is due to be seen weekly in school by a CAMHS worker over the next 6 weeks to help her to deal with her feelings and emotions.

At this stage the client has advised FSCS that she is happy that her daughter has agreed to work with CAMHS to try to resolve some of her issues.

### **8d Relate case studies**

#### **Case Study 1**

Harlow project referred a man for counselling due to imminent marital breakdown. He is disabled and unable to work, but stays at home and looks after their 4 year old son. The woman is threatening to leave them both. Mr 'S' was offered 6 sessions to work through his emotions of shock and grief and to think through how to help his son through this experience. He attended the 6 sessions and expressed his appreciation at the end that he would have struggled without the space offered to talk things through. He finished feeling stronger, his son was starting school full time soon and some offers of (voluntary) work were coming his way.

#### **Case Study 2**

Mrs 'K' was referred for counselling. She was feeling at the end of her tether due to her husband's indolent attitude and behaviour; being out of work long term and not bothering to look for work, not helping around the house and not helping with the children. They were caught up in a cycle of her asking him to look for a job, getting annoyed, breaking down, and him making lots of promises and making an effort for a while but not carrying through. Earlier in the year he had gone off on holiday with another woman. She wanted to finish the relationship but didn't feel she had the strength. She attended 5 sessions and said she felt stronger at the end and had begun to make some choices for herself and to take care of herself. She had also enrolled on a degree course to improve her own career prospects.

## Appendix 8 Case Studies (continued)

### 8eSport Purchases case studies

Date	Request	Amount	Authorised Yes/ No
29/07/2010	Client being evicted, she lost her job, rent arrears of £1k being paid off as under 25. <b>Tesco Vouchers for food and toiletries.</b>	£30.00	Yes
06/08/2010	Client with young child; community care grant applied for as council property is unfurnished but these funds are needed for furniture and white goods. <b>Carpets donated by local company but need to be fitted.</b>	£193.00	Yes
10/08/2010	Client offered a job as a carer but has no transport. Women's Aid paid for 10 driving lessons through back to work scheme, Budgeting loan for £812 has been agreed for her to purchase a car. <b>Client requires funding towards additional driving lessons and test</b>	£20.00	Yes
27/08/2010	Grandmother unexpectedly taken on responsibility for granddaughter. <b>Emergency support need until finances sorted out.</b>	£200.00	Yes
17/09/2010	<b>Taxi fare</b> for disabled client awaiting a mobility car to take young child to Children's Centre (Short term)	£50.00	Yes
28/09/2010	<b>Accommodation in travel lodge for 3 nights</b> (homeless and 8 months pregnant is awaiting workers registration certificate to be able to apply for benefits)	£200.00	Yes
07/10/2010	<b>Enrolment on a course</b> to improve her English so she can secure employment	£35.00	Yes
13/10/2010	Dad had only just got custody of child and had to cut working hours down so not in a financial position to be able to <b>renew his black cab licence</b> (expires 29/10/10)	£309.00	Yes
13/10/2010	<b>School uniform, shoes and bag</b> (immediate place available at new school). Family just won appeal to settle in UK. Child not previously attended school	£70.00	Yes
14/10/2010	<b>Travel cost</b> to Birbeck University, London college (£14.60 per week, two days per week until June 2011). Supporting client towards future employment	£150.00	Yes
13/10/2010	School uniform, shoes and bag – family won appeal to settle in UK so school place offered at very short notice	£70.00	Yes
14/10/2010	Travel costs to college (until June 2011) - is studying but cannot financially continue to pay for transport to University of London	£150.00	Yes
11/11/2010	Beauty Course – Client can't afford child care so can't study during the day and requires open learning which this course leads on to local job placement	£320.00	Yes
30/11/2010	<b>Household Furniture</b> – living in unfurnished property	£250.00	Yes
30/11/2010	<b>Fridge freezer, food, school clothes</b> – husband left with one child and now short fall in rent	£300.00	Yes
15/12/2010	<b>Shoes and winter coats</b> for mother and child	£100.00	Yes
01/12/10	Request for funding to make client bankrupt refused	£400	No

*It should be noted that these clients have received support on Levels 2 or 3 and have engaged regularly with FSCS. All forms of support have been explored with regards to funds via the Department of Work and Pension Social Fund including budgeting loans and Community Care Grants as well as Crisis loans. It is confirmed that there are exceptional circumstances in these cases whereby provision is not available through mainstream services but can be provided via spot purchasing with the timescale and can achieve measurable benefits for the child and family concerned.*

**This booklet is issued by**

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Published March 2011

