



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Advice Services: Volunteer Training

Date: 22 February 2011

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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	In December 2009 the Development Committee approved a proposal from CAB to increase the capacity of the Belfast Advice consortia by providing Debt relief training. As a result 30 Advice volunteers from across the 5 consortia received the training. This helped the Advice organisations to both clear the previous backlog of debt enquiries and help grow the capacity of the organisations to cope with the ongoing level of debt enquiries that have resulted from the latest economic downturn.
1.2	The economic situation has failed to show any significant improvement with high numbers of debt related enquires still being received by all advice providers within the consortiums.
1.3	The initial training courses were over subscribed and given the continued high level of need and the clear benefit of the course. To help meet this demand and to further enhance the consortiums capacity, CAB and the independent Advice organisations propose to run another debt relief training course for a further 20 volunteers.

2	Key Issues
2.1	This training will further enhance the Advice organisations/consortia to meet the continued demand for advice on debt relief.
2.2	The training will include volunteers from all 5 Advice consortiums, offered initially on an equal basis per consortia with any places not realized being offered to other consortia.
2.3	A variance exercise has identified potential slippage within the Advice and Information grant programme monies of £13,880. The DSD grant is restricted to expenditure in relation to Advice sector support.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	From within existing Advice and Information grant budget stream 2010/11

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	The training will be offered initially on an equal basis per consortia with any places not realized being offered to other consortia.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that funding up to a maximum of £14,000 thousand pounds is made available to CAB to coordinate and enable the training of Advice services volunteers from across the 5 consortiums in debt relief.

6	Decision Tracking
John Nelson will action committee decision March 2011	

7	Key to Abbreviations
CAB – Citizens Advice Belfast	

8	Documents Attached
Appendix 1: CAB proposal	