

Ms Suzanne Wylie
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Voluntary and Community Division
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Date: 16 December 2016

Dear Ms Wylie,

Re: Community Support Programme 2016-17: Letter of Variance – Frontline Advice Services.

I am pleased to advise you that the Voluntary and Community Division (VCD) has secured an additional £160k for the Community Support Programme in 2016/17. This funding is ring-fenced for the delivery of any or all of the objectives outlined at **Annex A** to enable front line advice organisations to secure support functions directly.

The funding is in year and must be spent by the 31 March 2017. Councils are not required to match this additional funding which much be used to meet the specific objectives referred to above. Additional funding will not be extended into the next financial year.

If you are unable to make use of this additional funding for the purposes outlined, and within the financial year, please alert me as soon as possible. This may allow the Department to re-allocate funds to community support welfare reforms advice provision in other council areas.

If you have any queries about the purpose of these additional funds please contact either:

Donna-Marie Hancock (Donna-Marie.Hancock@communities-ni.gov.uk Tel 028 90829406), or
Pauline Murray (Pauline.murray@communities-ni.gov.uk or Tel 028 90829402).

Yours sincerely

Elaine Downey
Advice Services and Programme Delivery Team
Voluntary and Community Division

Objectives for CSP Delivery of Frontline Advice Services

Management Information Systems

- Provide training identified at a local level for frontline advice service staff and volunteers to support the delivery of the Advice Strategy (Excludes Welfare Reform Training).
- Ensure ongoing training in relation to all aspects of case recording and Management Information Systems.

Training

- Provide general training.
- Provide range of other training initiatives.

Sustainability

- Explore the potential for frontline advice offices to become more sustainable, through options such as social enterprise or development of new services.

IT/Digital

- Promote the availability of information and move towards advice tools which are online and or have a web presence.

Local Signposting and Referrals

- Ensure signposting/referral guides are updated, distributed and in use.

Local Merger Support

- Further develop effective collaborative processes to support mergers, consortiums and other forms of collaborative working.

Local Publications and Awareness

- Develop local guides in line with the Northern Ireland Advice Quality Standard.