Background: Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF)

- Discretionary Assistance Fund - payments or in kind support for two purposes:
  - Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP) - Provide assistance in an emergency or when there is an immediate threat to health or wellbeing
  - Individual Assistance Payment (IAP) - Enable independent living or continued independent living, preventing the need for institutional care
- Payments available to people who do not have alternative means of paying for what they need and do not need to be paid back
- One-off needs rather than on-going expenses
- Provides a national eligibility criteria and delivery model
- DAF was developed using consultation feedback
Emergency Assistance Payments (EAP)

- Designed to help people when their or their families health or wellbeing are at risk, or serious damage may occur to their home:
  - In an emergency
  - If they have experienced a disaster

- A ‘disaster’ is defined as:
  - A serious flood or fire causing large amounts of damage, loss or destruction to the property and/or possessions
  - Loss of money due to burglary or robbery
  - Breakdown in the family circumstances, e.g. someone is fleeing the family home due to domestic violence
  - Being stranded away from home with no money or means of getting back
EAPs: Eligibility Criteria

People are **eligible** if they are:

- In need of immediate short term assistance due to an emergency or experiencing a disaster
- Aged 16 or over
- At risk if they do not receive the requested EAP

People are **not eligible** if they:

- Live in a care home, institution or hospital and are not planning on going home within the next 2 weeks
- In prison or released from prison on a permanent licence on bail pending a court hearing
- A student and can access other income (e.g. top-up loans)
- A member of a religious order responsible for their upkeep
- Sanctioned by DWP reducing their benefit
- Able to access their own money, or access money or support from a friend or relative
Individual Assistance Payments (IAP)

- Designed to help vulnerable people live as independently a life as possible in their communities

To be **eligible** people must be in receipt of the below benefits:

- Income Support
- Income related Jobseeker’s Allowance or Employment Support Allowance
- Pension credit

- Or, they must be likely to qualify for one of the above benefits, where the person applying will be leaving an institution or care home within 6 weeks

- They must have **no other means** of getting the support applied for
- The award will be **reduced on a pound for pound basis** for any **savings or capital over £500** (£1,000 if the applicant or partner is over pensionable age)
IAP: Eligibility Criteria

People are **eligible** to apply if they, or someone they care for:

- Are leaving a care home, institution or hospital within the next 6 weeks, after having lived there for 3 consecutive months or more
- Are moving into the community as part of a planned resettlement - e.g. after a period of homelessness or for young people leaving supported accommodation
- Need help to prevent admittance to an intuition where the IAP grant would stop this from happening
- Need help in exceptional circumstances to ease urgent pressures, e.g. as a result of fleeing domestic violence, or increased needs in a family member due to disability, chronic illness or an accident
- Need help with one-off or short term travelling expenses, where this is deemed essential to maintaining their independence in the community

- **Members of religious orders responsible for their upkeep are not eligible**
Delivery Team - credentials

- Northgate has 10,000 staff and 48 major offices
  - 100% of local authorities and police forces in Wales
  - Systems in every NHS hospital as national programmes
  - Half of all fire brigades and ambulance trusts
  - Central Government

- Family Fund is the UK's largest grant making charity and for nearly 40 years Family Fund has administered £33m of grant funds for the four governments

- Wrexham County Borough Council is the pilot authority in Wales for Single Fraud Investigation Service and will be keen to ensure equitable use of the fund for all. Wrexham is also one of the Universal Credit Processing sites.
Delivery Model

- **Partner Network for joined up working**
- **Bi-lingual service through Public Web Site, Telephony, Face-to-Face & Post**
- **Two Business Centres for processing & administration**
- **Fulfilment by vouchers, goods or cash through Family Fund Partnership**

- **A system to administer the Discretionary Assistance Fund**
- **Secure access and housing of data delivered through GCSx and the cloud**
- **An Independent Appeals Process**
- **Pan Wales database integrated with DWP system**
Customer Journey
Individual Assistance Payment

1. The Applicant makes an application

2. Application arrives at DAF team in Wrexham

3. Decision is made to Approve or Decline
   a. Declined
   b. Approved

4. Advised by phone, email or letter, signposted to other places for help

5. Family Fund advised by Northgate, then Family Fund advise the retailer e.g. Argos, Euronics, Park Retail

6. Payment Card or Authorising Letter sent to Applicant
Emergency Assistance Payment

1. The Applicant makes an application

2. Application arrives at DAF team in Wrexham

3. Decision is made to Approve or Decline
   a. Declined
   b. Approved

4. Advised by phone, email or letter, signposted to other places for help

5. Applicant advised of approval for payment. Signposted to other places for help

6. Family Fund advised by Northgate, then Family Fund advise Pay Point

7. Pay Point send barcode or unique reference number to applicant mobile

8. Applicant goes to Pay Point outlet (newsagents etc) shows retailer the code and cash is given
First two weeks

- Intense
  - New service for clients
  - 40 new staff
  - New guidelines for new fund
  - New software system
  - New telephone system
  - New public web site
  - >700 calls

- Learning from Day 1 / Week 1
  - Telephony changes required
  - Profile of calls needed different resource patterns
  - Ongoing discussion with DWP / national directive
  - DWP providing training / support to new recruits
Profile

- Turn around times from a submitted application
  - EAP within 24 hours
  - IAP 5 to 10 days

- Majority of calls are from clients experiencing change through DWP

- In Week 1 Majority of calls were EAP
- In Week 2 Majority of calls were IAP

- Online applications approximately 3%

- People not meeting eligibility are encouraged to telephone in order to give fullest circumstances to the team
Questions

- PayPoint
  - Minority unaware
  - Specific versus national (simple payment / cash out)
  - Calling retailers
  - Phase 2

- Partner codes
  - Distributed imminently
  - Used for MI purposes
  - Support to replicate
Review Process

- Reviews can be requested if:
  - No award given due to criteria not being met
  - No award given but further information or change in circumstances
  - Not enough grant awarded
  - Item awarded not what was expected

- Two stage process
  - Internal review by Northgate Public Services
  - External review by Family Fund Trading Ltd

- Review can be requested within 20 days of original decision
  - Via e-mail, writing, Fax and you can request a review of an EAP over the telephone on 0800 859 5924
  - Decisions will be made within 24 hours for EAP, 15 days for IAP
Compliment, Comment or Complaint

- Can be submitted by:
  - Telephone
  - Email
  - Writing
  - On-line form
  - By yourself or on behalf of someone else

- Three stage process
  - Informal resolution
  - Investigation
  - Reviewing the complaint

- If dissatisfied with the way the complaint is dealt with it can be referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

- Short form version will be available on the Money Made Clear website
“Let’s make change work”