

## Scottish Legal Aid Board Grant Funding Project Profile

**Funding Stream:** Tackling Money Worries

**Project Name:** Family Friendly Money Advice

**Lead Agency:** Granton Information Centre

Granton Information Centre and its partner organisations aim to maximise the income and reduce the indebtedness of some of the most vulnerable families in North Edinburgh, particularly through supporting pregnant women and families with children.

Family Friendly Money Advice will provide direct and accessible welfare and debt advice, tailored to the needs of vulnerable women and families, to maximise household resources and develop long-term financial capability.

Working with its partners including NHS Lothian, the project will aim to ensure that families are able to fully access both general sources of support, such as the Scottish Welfare Fund, in addition to tailored support for families, such as the Healthy Start programme. The project aims to ensure that families are able to claim their full financial entitlements, some of which they may not have previously been aware of.

The wide range of linked partner organisations, and the prospect of co-locating welfare and debt advice within these, is designed to extend uptake of financial advice to those families who may not have accessed support through NHS referral alone. This partnership approach also chimes strongly with one of the Scottish Government's Child Poverty Strategy 'pillars,' which prioritises partnership working between public services.


Grant funding for Granton Information Centre and its partners will make a significant difference to their capacity to support families after the birth of a child. For example, a drop-in service for young mothers at the Citadel Youth Centre will benefit immensely from the provision of expert welfare and debt advice, and enable Edinburgh Community Food to expand its financial capability work centred around healthy cooking on a budget.

Ultimately, the partners in this project have predicted that in the first year of the project alone, the total financial gain for families may be up to £250,000, making a significant difference to families affected by the birth of a child.

Roddy Samson, Advice Service Manager of the Granton Information Centre, the lead organisation for the project, said that linking up services which provide support to families around the birth of a child will be invaluable for addressing the financial difficulties that many families face.

"The range of financial assistance that is available following the birth of a child can be extremely confusing to access as different entitlements are administered by different agencies at different times.

"The additional expense of young children can also exacerbate existing financial difficulties, so being able to provide a money advice service within existing agencies that are supporting families will mean that many more families in need of advice and assistance will be able to access it at an early stage."



Roddy said that in addition to the provision of a dedicated money advisor, the project will also provide families with assistance in basic life skills such as cooking, shopping and budgeting skills.

“These services will be provided through the Edinburgh Community Food (ECF). ECF provides a range of services and activities promoting healthy eating and tackling health inequalities across the city, particularly with people on low incomes, in poor communities and with marginalised communities of interest. A key element of the food and health development work is the cooking and nutrition courses which include eating healthily on a budget.”

Graham McKenzie, Public Health Consultant with NHS Lothian, said that the funding is great news for pregnant women and families from the Leith area.

“Midwives, health visitors, nurseries and community workers in the area have been supporting families living in poverty to access money advice, but many families still struggle to access such services. Providing this service in family friendly settings will allow us to support many more families.”