

YFS Connect Financial Hub

The YFS Financial Capability and Wellbeing Hub strives to support individuals and families to navigate financial crises and build financial wellbeing, capability and resilience. The Hub is comprised of a number of financial related services provided by YFS and funded by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Communities and AGL.



Background

In 2017, we re-visited what 'first contact' with YFS should look like. Given the prevalence of financial issues across presenting clients, we decided to move towards a more intentional collaboration between our intake, assessment and referral team and our financial counselling and capability team in order to streamline processes and offer clients immediate access to the right type and intensity of financial support (on a continuum from emergency relief to capability development and counselling).

Our approach

The Hub provides a one-stop-shop for vulnerable people with financial issues in Logan and surrounds. Our model seamlessly moves people from first contact to ongoing case work if required, allowing for responses to be tailored to each individual's needs. It maximises engagement by working with people from the point of contact, responding to presenting issues and encouraging people to build capacity to avoid future crises.

Services provided

- budgeting
- payment plans
- negotiating with creditors
- counselling
- assistance with bankruptcy
- advocacy
- financial literacy
- community education
- information and referral.

Changes in practice, systems and culture

Transitioning towards a 'wrap-around' model of service delivery required a number of changes in practice, systems and culture.

Changes made

- engaging an external facilitator to inform and support the change
- recruiting a new Hub Manager to oversee the transition and manage the day-to-day
- combining team meetings and coordination functions
- building a shared team identity based on mutual understanding, trust and respect
- establishing shared data collection tools to measure collective impact
- co-locating the combined team to facilitate team functioning.





Efficiency and effectiveness



The integrated hub model has led to greater efficiency and effectiveness, resulting in improved outcomes for clients.

There is a shorter waiting time for clients to get financial counselling appointments. Previously they might have to wait two weeks for an appointment – that could make the difference between them being evicted or not. We are better able to capitalise on the momentum when clients present and address issues when there are most pertinent – in crisis (e.g. if they don't have electricity).

This benefits the clients in terms of better outcomes.

Combined impact 2018-19

83% improved their immediate financial crisis

83% increased financial resilience

74% increased material wellbeing

58% increased financial literacy

58% budget developed

39% payment plans developed / adjusted

15% savings plan developed

\$672,195 of debt relief negotiated

Key learnings - requirements for successful integration

- clarification of **roles and responsibilities** – so that functions are complementary and staff are enabled to do what they do best
- workforce **flexibility and agility** to switch between roles and functions as required
- establishing the right **processes and systems** to support information sharing and collaborative work
- factoring in enough time for **learning and adaptation**, as unforeseeable issues emerge
- ongoing **change management** to address any barriers and reinforce desired practices
- **supporting staff** throughout the change process
- **investing resources** of time, money and leadership to free up staff to 'do what it takes' without compromising existing contracts or overburdening staff
- **aiming high** – seeking better outcomes requires a shift in emphasis from 'overcoming adversity' to 'thriving'.

For more information contact communications@yfs.org.au

