

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Communities and Culture Committee

Financial inclusion and the impact  
of financial education: plain English  
summary and recommendations

November 2010



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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## **The Communities and Culture Committee: who are we?**

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government<sup>1</sup> to account.

The Communities and Culture Committee is a group of politicians set up by the National Assembly for Wales to ask the Welsh Government tough questions about its work to improve Community Safety, Community Inclusion,<sup>2</sup> Housing, the Welsh Language, Sport and Culture.

Sometimes we do this work by holding an investigation on a particular issue. This involves us speaking with lots of different people to help us learn about an issue, and then taking their ideas to the Welsh Government, both to ask them tough questions about the issue, and to suggest ideas on how the Government could do a better job.

Our report 'Financial Inclusion and the impact of Financial Education' describes one of these investigations.

We were set up on 26 June 2007, as one of the National Assembly for Wales' scrutiny committees. We are not part of the Welsh Government. You can find out more about our work, and the National Assembly for Wales, at [www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org)

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<sup>1</sup> The Welsh Government is separate from the UK Government. The Welsh Government has the power to write laws and decide what will be done in Wales about some subjects (for example- health, education and the environment). The Welsh Government includes the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and Welsh Ministers, and is based in Wales. However, the UK Government (including the Prime Minister, David Cameron, and UK Ministers) still has the power to decide what will be done in Wales about other subjects (the amount of money spent on 'Defence' for example).

<sup>2</sup> 'Community Inclusion' is about making sure that people are fully accepted by other people in their communities, and are able to get to all community resources (like money products, libraries, parks, etc.) and are able to take part in all aspects of community life.

## Committee membership



**Sandy Mewies  
(Chair)**  
Delyn  
Labour



**Mohammad Asghar**  
South Wales East  
Welsh Conservative Party



**Eleanor Burnham**  
North Wales  
Welsh Liberal Democrats



**Alun Davies**  
Mid and West Wales  
Labour



**Mark Isherwood**  
North Wales  
Welsh Conservative Party



**Bethan Jenkins**  
South Wales West  
Plaid Cymru



**Dai Lloyd**  
South Wales West  
Plaid Cymru



**Lynne Neagle**  
Torfaen  
Labour



**Joyce Watson**  
Mid and West Wales  
Labour



# Contents

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<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Glossary of terms used in this report</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>What is ‘financial inclusion and financial education?’</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Why did we want to do an inquiry into financial inclusion and financial education?</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>How did we find out about ‘Financial Inclusion and the impact of Financial Education’ in Wales?</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>What did we find out?</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Chances to get a financial education .....	10
Financial education in the local community .....	10
Financial education in schools .....	12
A media campaign .....	13
Financial inclusion .....	14
Being too embarrassed, ashamed or scared to ask for help .....	15
Making the most of our money .....	16
Illegal money lending .....	16
<b>Our Recommendations</b> .....	<b>18</b>



## Introduction

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Thank you for reading this summary of the Communities and Culture Committee's report on 'Financial Inclusion and the impact of Financial Education.'

We could not have produced this report without the help of a lot of people who helped us in this investigation. We would like to say a big thank you to all the people who helped us with our work.

Money worries can make peoples' lives miserable. In our report we made 13 recommendations to try to make sure that more people in Wales have the chance to learn about how to manage their money through 'financial education.' The Welsh Government will decide whether to accept these recommendations by January 2011.

Our report, and the Welsh Government's response to it, is available on our web-pages: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-ccc-home.htm>.

Sandy Mewies, Chair  
Communities and Culture Committee

## Glossary of terms used in this report

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**Agencies:** A public organisation that delivers government services, according to a government's policies, but isn't directly controlled by the government on a day-to-day basis. Jobcentre Plus is an agency, for example. Both the UK Government and Welsh Government have agencies.

**Basic bank accounts:** a bank account which can have wages, a pension, benefits or tax credits paid into. Cheques or cash can also be paid into a basic bank account free of charge, and 'direct debits' can be set up, to make the basic bank account pay regular bills automatically. With a basic bank account you get a cash card which you can use at a bank machine to withdraw cash. Some also offer a 'debit card' that you can pay for items with, and get 'cashback'; but with a basic account these will only work if there's enough money in your account. You don't get a cheque book with a basic bank account, and you can't take out more money than is in the account ('go overdrawn'). For this reason basic bank accounts are useful for anyone worried about accidentally overspending.

**Compulsory:** something that has to happen

**Consumer Financial Education Body:** A UK Government agency, set up to help consumers understand financial services in the UK and manage their finances better

**Devolve:** To make the Welsh Government responsible for something, rather than the UK Government.

**Estyn:** An agency responsible for inspecting education and training in Wales.

**Evidence:** Things which different people tell us (by writing, speaking or using other forms of communication) that try to describe what they think is happening.

**Financial Education:** the chances that people in Wales have to learn about how to manage their money well: both in terms of choosing the right money products and services, and to budget their money

**Financial Inclusion:** everybody being able to get the money products and services (like basic bank accounts) that allow them to manage their money. Financial Inclusion happens when *everyone* is able to do this, regardless of whether they had lots of money coming in or very little, whether they were from a rich or poor background

**Financial organisations:** Organisations that provide people with products or services that help them manage their money ( for example, banks)

**Home contents insurance:** insurance that will pay for the costs of replacing things in a person's house (e.g. their television, computer, DVD collection, clothes) in the event that they were burgled and rooms were vandalised, or there was a fire, a flood, etc.

**Illegal money lending:** An illegal money lender (commonly known as a loan shark) is someone who lends money without the licence required by the Consumer Credit Act 1974. Typically such lenders charge very high interest rates.

**Local authorities:** There are 22 local authorities in Wales. Each is responsible for providing local government services in their local area, including education, social work and roads services.

**National Assembly for Wales:** the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

**Recommendation:** A strong suggestion that something is done.

**Wales Financial Education Unit (WFEU):** The WFEU is a unit of the Welsh Government. It is currently responsible for providing advice and support for the planning and delivery of financial education for 7 to 19-year-olds in schools in Wales.

**Welsh Government:** Has the power to write laws and decide what will be done in Wales about some subjects (for example- health, education and the environment). The Welsh Government includes the First Minister, Carwyn Jones, and Welsh Ministers, and is based in Wales.

**Welsh Ministers:** The different elected politicians that make up the Welsh Government.

**Welsh Language Commissioner:** At the time of this report's publication, there is no Welsh Language Commissioner, but we think there will be one quite soon. The Welsh Language Commissioner will be a 'champion' for the Welsh Language. The Commissioner will be created by a law that has been proposed by the Welsh Government called that 'Welsh Language Measure.' At the time of this report's publication, the Measure was being considered by the National Assembly for Wales

## What is ‘financial inclusion and financial education?’

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*“Those individuals who are excluded know what it feels like if a bank has no interest whatsoever in helping them.”*

1. The Welsh Government described ‘financial inclusion’ as being about everybody in Wales being able to get money products and services (for example: bank accounts, reasonable loans) that helped them to manage their money well. The Welsh Government said that ‘financial inclusion’ happened when all people could get these things, whether they had lots of money coming in or very little, whether they were from a rich or poor background.<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this investigation, we decided to use the Welsh Government’s idea of what ‘financial inclusion’ means.
2. We also decided that ‘financial education’ meant the chances that people in Wales have to learn about how to manage their money well: both in terms of choosing the right money products and services, and how to budget their money.

## Why did we want to do an inquiry into financial inclusion and financial education?

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3. We decided that it was important to do an inquiry into this subject for lots of reasons. Money worries can lead to stress, arguments, ill health, families breaking up, businesses suffering because their employees are thinking about their personal problems and poverty.
4. Interestingly, lots of other people also thought that this was an important investigation, particularly because it was taking place at a time when many people did not have much money. For example, Carl Sargeant, who is the Welsh Government’s Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, welcomed the inquiry and said that:

“This is an important inquiry; it is important to the committee, but it is also important to the Welsh Assembly Government— financial inclusion is one of our strands, and we believe that it is extremely important.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Record of Proceedings of the National Assembly for Wales (RoP), Communities and Culture Committee, 10 June 2010, Paragraph (Para) 12

<sup>2</sup> Welsh Government, Taking everyone into account: Financial Inclusion Strategy for Wales

<sup>3</sup> RoP, Communities and Culture Committee, 8 July 2010, Para 100.

## **How did we find out about ‘Financial Inclusion and the impact of Financial Education’ in Wales?**

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5. We began our investigation by writing to lots of different organisations to ask them questions about what the Welsh Government was doing about Financial Inclusion and Financial Education, and what more could be done.
6. We also made a questionnaire to find out what the general public thought about financial inclusion and financial education. We made this available on our webpage and gave the questionnaire to people at different events.
7. We then invited lots of different people and organisations to speak with us in our meetings, between 22 April and 8 July 2010. By doing this, we got to ask people for ideas about how financial inclusion and financial education could be made better in Wales. These people included:
  - the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government;
  - Financial Capability Forums;
  - the UK’s Department of Work and Pensions Financial Inclusion Champion for Wales;
  - the Financial Services Authority (FSA) and Consumer Financial Education Body (CFEB);
  - the Association of British Credit Unions;
  - Shelter Cymru;
  - Community Housing Cymru (CHC);
  - Citizens Advice Cymru.
8. We also went on lots of visits to places in Wales that were currently providing financial education. This meant that we were able to speak with people who were learning about how to manage their money better, and to find out what was working well. These places included:
  - a workplace based seminar by the UK Consumer Financial Education Body (CFEB) on ‘making the most of your money’ at the Garnlydan Information Shop;
  - a school helping pupils to study for the Institute of Financial Services’ School of Finance’s qualifications (Ysgol y Berwyn);

- a school which had started a Credit Union for First Savers (Ysgol Bryn Gwalia in partnership with Communities First Bryn Gwalia and the All- Flintshire Credit Union);
- a citizens' advice bureau with experience of delivering financial education both in schools and in the wider community (Swansea Citizens' Advice Bureau).

## What did we find out?

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9. Following our nine-month investigation, we made 13 recommendations to the Welsh Government to help give more people in Wales the chance to manage their money better. You can read a list of these recommendations at the end of this summary.

### Chances to get a financial education

10. Many people told us that they learned how to manage their money 'the hard way,' such as by going through a period of time when they had too much debt. For example, people filling in our questionnaire told us that they had received their financial education through "life, learning the hard way... [and] painful experience."<sup>4</sup>

11. However, people also told us about different ways that people could learn how to manage their money well, such as through:

- their local community;
- their school;
- a media campaign.

### Financial education in the local community

12. We heard about examples of successful projects providing financial education in the community, like:

- financial education talks at peoples' workplaces;
- money skills programmes, provided by banks;
- housing associations' financial education strategies.

13. For example, we heard about the UK's Consumer Financial Education Body's *Moneymadeclear* service. This service lets people get free advice from a money expert, who is not connected to any banks. The service is only available in some parts of Wales at the moment (Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr Tydfil), but the Consumer Financial Education Body told us there were plans to make it available all over

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<sup>4</sup> Responses to our Financial Education questionnaire.

Wales in the future, depending on whether it got enough money from the UK Government. We recommended that the Welsh Government talk to the UK Government, to try to make sure it gave enough money to the Consumer Financial Education Body to make the *MoneyMadcLEAR* service available all over Wales.

14. We also heard that people can talk to a *MoneyMadcLEAR* money expert over the phone. The Consumer Financial Education Body's website says:

***“Got a question about money?”***

Our trained staff are here to help you work out what's right for you. Whatever your question we're here to help and, if we don't know the answer, we will point you in the right direction to someone who does. No problem or question is too small – try us and see.

**Call us**

Monday to Friday – 8am to 8pm (excluding Bank Holidays)

- Telephone – **0300 500 5000\***
- Typetalk – **18001 0300 500 5000\***
- From overseas – **+44 20 7943 0500** (main switchboard)

\* Whatever tariff you're on, the cost of an 0300 number is the same as calling a normal phone number. If your calls are free, then it's free, even from mobiles.

**Call you back**

If you prefer we can [call you back](#) during our opening hours. Just fill in this form and we'll call you back – there's no charge. We're committed to providing you with a quality service, so calls may be recorded or monitored for training purposes. We won't try to sell you anything and we don't recommend specific products or providers.”<sup>5</sup>

15. Several people told us they were worried that not enough money advice was made available in the Welsh language or other languages.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.moneymadeclear.org.uk/about\\_us/contact\\_us.html](http://www.moneymadeclear.org.uk/about_us/contact_us.html)

<sup>6</sup> CC(3) FI 09

We recommended that the Welsh Government ask the Welsh Language Commissioner<sup>7</sup> to look at this issue.

16. Several people also told us that they were worried that the amount financial education available in different parts of Wales was not the same. They said that this was because not enough work was done to link up the different financial education projects going on. For example, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales suggested that current services were not sufficiently “joined up.”<sup>8</sup>

17. The making of the Wales Financial Education Unit (WFEU) was seen by many people as a good move in helping the Welsh Government to join up services. We thought the WFEU was doing a good job, and recommended that the Welsh Government should develop the unit to help more with the delivery of financial education in schools and in the wider community.

18. We also recommended that the Welsh Government should develop a central information point on the different financial education projects already taking place in Wales, to help people share good ideas. We also thought this could help schools to find projects in their local area that were also delivering financial education, to help them with planning financial education lessons.

19. We also recommended that the Welsh Government should talk to financial organisations (like banks) about putting money into financial education projects, and should encourage other organisations to let their staff take part in workplace based financial education seminars.

20. Finally, we asked the Welsh Government to speak with local authorities and tell them to have senior people in charge of getting the different financial education projects in their local areas to work together.

### **Financial education in schools**

21. Many of the people we spoke with told us that financial education has recently become part of the national curriculum for 7 to 16 year olds in schools in Wales. Some financial education is included in GCSE mathematics and the Personal and Social Education (PSE) framework

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<sup>7</sup> At the time of this report’s publication, there is no Welsh Language Commissioner, but we think there will be one quite soon. The Welsh Language Commissioner will be a ‘champion’ for the Welsh Language. The Commissioner will be created by a law that has been proposed by the Welsh Government called that ‘Welsh Language Measure.’ At the time of this report’s publication, the Measure was being considered by the National Assembly for Wales

<sup>8</sup> CC(3) FI 05

for 7 to 19 year olds.<sup>9</sup> For example, the Financial Services Authority told us that:

“in Wales—unlike England, I am sad to say—financial education is now embedded in the curriculum. I suspect that that is because the profile of financial education in schools has been raised. That has been adopted by the Welsh Assembly Government as something that it is important to ensure that all children receive consistently across Wales.”<sup>10</sup>

22. However, a number of people were worried that although financial education was in the curriculum, this didn’t mean that teachers would always spend much time on it. For example, Shelter Cymru told us that:

“The current PSE framework in schools does provide opportunities to teach young people about financial issues but it’s not compulsory for teachers to address every single element of the framework.”<sup>11</sup>

23. We know that teachers have to teach lots of different things in PSE. However we believe that it’s very important that children can learn how to manage money well, so we’ve asked the Welsh Government to keep an eye on how much time teachers spend on financial education, as part of the PSE curriculum. We’ve also suggested that the Welsh Government could ask school inspectors to keep an eye on what is being taught in financial education lessons, particularly if people from outside schools (like banks) are coming in to help with the teaching.

### **A media campaign**

24. Quite a lot of the people we spoke with suggested that a media campaign would get people thinking about financial education more (in the same way that there are drink-driving campaigns). For example, the North Wales Financial Capability Forum co-ordinator said that:

“We need people to see it on the television, in the newspapers and on the radio. We need them to pick up on images, straplines and buzzwords about money, and how, if you manage it, you get a much better deal, and, if you do not

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<sup>9</sup> CC(3) FI 30

<sup>10</sup> RoP, 20 May 2010, Para 163

<sup>11</sup> CC(3) FI 12

manage it, something nasty might happen but you are not on your own. There are a lot of people out there who can help you with little bits of it, from the FSA to your next-door neighbour. If financial capability is going to work in the long term, it has to be embedded, particularly on our social housing estates... we also need to put it into a context whereby people feel comfortable talking to anyone about money, just like they talk about football.”<sup>12</sup>

25. The Department of Work and Pensions’ Financial Inclusion Champion for Wales agreed that financial education was needed by everyone, saying that:

“people who are seen to be haves, as opposed to have-nots, often end up being have-nots because they cannot manage their money properly... they end up on a lower income than people who might be seen as have-nots.”<sup>13</sup>

26. We agreed with these people, and told the Welsh Government that we also felt that a media campaign could help to increase knowledge about the meanings of the jargon often used in financial advertising. Less than a third of people completing our questionnaire said that they were confident that they knew what terms like ‘APR’ and ‘AER’ actually meant.

### **Financial inclusion**

27. Although our inquiry was mainly looking at financial education, lots of the people we spoke with pointed out that there was not much point in helping people to have the skills to manage money well, and to choose financial products that were right for them, if they were not able to get those products.

28. For example, we heard that in some bank branches there is no information about basic bank accounts in public areas. The Department for Work and Pensions’ National Financial Inclusion Champion for Wales told us that:

“There are still difficulties in obtaining basic bank accounts. We are trying to monitor that centrally, via the financial inclusion champion initiative. There are several problems with this... the banks really need to take their responsibilities on board, and

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<sup>12</sup> RoP, 22 April 2010, Para 46-47

<sup>13</sup> RoP, 20 May 2010, Para 47

we are working on high-level policy on this matter over the border.”<sup>14</sup>

29. Similarly, the Citizens’ Advice Cymru told us that banks:

“also have a duty to ensure that their services are available to everyone; credit unions are very good at that and some of the banks are very bad at it. Basic bank accounts are supposed to be available to everyone, but some of our clients continue to experience difficulties in opening a basic bank account.”<sup>15</sup>

30. Barclays told us that it has over 800,000 customers using its Basic Bank Account, and almost 50,000 of these are in less well off parts of the UK. However, Barclays also told us that its basic bank account was “one of only two accounts available on the high street that is open to undischarged bankrupts and therefore accessible to anyone without a history of fraud.”<sup>16</sup>

31. We think it is good that banks like Barclays provide basic bank accounts. However, we told the Welsh Government that it should ask other major banks to actively promote similar services in their local branches.

### **Being too embarrassed, ashamed or scared to ask for help**

“Don’t know who to ask. Do not want to admit it to family and friends... I was too embarrassed to ask for help: I felt that I 'should' know how to manage my money. It would have been a bit like saying I didn't have any common sense. I learnt from my mistakes in silence.”<sup>17</sup>

32. Several people told us that part of the reason why financial education does not always get to the people who need it the most is because they are too embarrassed or ashamed to admit that they need help with managing their money.<sup>18</sup> They said that many people seemed to think that ‘everyone’ knew how to manage their money, when really most people could do with some help. The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government told us that:

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<sup>14</sup> RoP, 20 May 2010, Para 55

<sup>15</sup> RoP, 24 June 2010, Para 121

<sup>16</sup> CC(3) FI 11

<sup>17</sup> Responses to our Financial Education questionnaire. Notably, despite 57.1% of respondents to our questionnaire stating that they had experienced money problems, 67.7% of respondents stated that they had never asked for help in managing their money.

<sup>18</sup> CC(3) FI 06

“sometimes, people may think that it is silly to ask a certain question, but the answer might make a huge difference to their lives”<sup>19</sup>

33. Some people told us that this feeling of embarrassment could make banks and other financial institutions appear scary or intimidating to people in need of financial education. The Mid, South and West Wales Financial Capability Forum Co-ordinator commented that:

“a lot of the people we were working with felt intimidated and would not even want to walk through the door of a bank or a financial institution. They felt that they were too poor to use these services, that they would not know the correct questions to ask, that they would feel intimidated by the staff and that they did not have a driving licence or a passport, or whatever they would need.”<sup>20</sup>

34. We are worried that this feeling of embarrassment or shame can stop people getting the financial services they need or gaining a financial education. We think that by getting financial education into schools and the media, the myth that most people know how to manage their money well can be challenged, and people will feel more comfortable in asking for help.

### **Making the most of our money**

35. Many of the people we spoke with gave us specific ideas on how people could be helped to make the most of their money: for example, by claiming any benefits they are entitled to. We know that that the Welsh Government has previously done work to try to make sure that people know what benefits they are entitled to, and we recommended that the Welsh Government continue this work.

### **Illegal money lending**

36. Many of the people we spoke with felt that financial education would help to stop people from being exploited by illegal money lending.<sup>21</sup> For example, one pupil from Ysgol y Bryn Gwalia told us that “we won’t borrow from loan sharks.”<sup>22</sup> The work of the Wales

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<sup>19</sup> RoP, 8 July 2010, Paras 133 and 144

<sup>20</sup> RoP, 10 June 2010, Para 136

<sup>21</sup> 92.7% of respondents to the Committee’s questionnaire considered that a financial education would make people less likely to borrow money from loan sharks.

<sup>22</sup> CC(3) AWE 04 Note of Members Rapportuer visit to Ysgol y Bryn Gwalia

Illegal Money Lending Unit was praised many people, with the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government saying that:

“A month or two ago, there was a big crackdown on illegal money-lending in Flintshire... I cannot say enough about the unit; it is really good, I am very supportive of it, and it is doing a good job. However, it could come under threat because of the finances. A partnership approach is being taken, involving trading standards, the police, and funding from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills goes in to support the unit.”<sup>23</sup>

37. We fully support and welcome the range of work undertaken by the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit, and have recommended that the Welsh Government make people aware of what illegal money lending is, and the damage it does to families and communities.

38. If you are a loan shark victim, or think there may be a loan shark operating in your area, please contact the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit on their 24 hour Hotline: **0300 123 3311** (all calls are completely confidential).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> RoP, 8 July 2010, Para 167

<sup>24</sup> It may be helpful to know that borrowing from a loan shark is not a crime, and the Wales Illegal Money Lending Unit will not punish anyone for borrowing money. They can offer advice on debt management though.

## Our Recommendations

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Our recommendations to the Welsh Government are listed below, along with the page numbers that they appear on in our main report.

**Recommendation 1.** We recommend that the Welsh Government engage in dialogue with the UK Government, to emphasise that in the current financial climate, the provision of financial education has an even greater importance, and that finance should be utilised to enable the roll out of the Consumer Financial Education Body's (CFEB) Moneymadeclear service. (Page 20)

**Recommendation 2.** We recommend that the Welsh Government invites the Welsh Language Commissioner (when established by the Welsh Language Measure) to engage with providers of financial education, to encourage them to ensure money advice is provided in Welsh, as well as other languages. (Page 29)

**Recommendation 3.** We recommend that the Welsh Government make a public commitment that it will seek to ensure that the strategic role of the Wales Financial Education Unit is sustained and developed to help improve the provision of financial education both in schools and within the wider community. (Page 32  
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**Recommendation 4.** We recommend that the Welsh Government provide a 'central hub' of information about financial capability projects, and giving monitoring and evaluation guidance for the design and implementation of new projects and services. We anticipate that this would also include a directory of existing resources which it considered suitable for schools to utilise in providing financial education. We anticipate that this would facilitate the sharing of good practice, and would also enable schools to quickly identify and develop links with potential partners for the delivery of financial education in their local areas. (Page 32)

**Recommendation 5.** We recommend that the Welsh Government, through forums such as the financial inclusion steering group, and in association with the UK Government, encourage financial organisations to provide funds for independent organisations to provide financial education programmes. (Page 35)

**Recommendation 6.** We recommend that the Welsh Government engage with both public and private sector employers to encourage them to facilitate the participation of their employees in workplace based financial education seminars, and in receiving financial education resources. (Page 36)

**Recommendation 7.** We recommend that the Welsh Government engage with local authorities across Wales to highlight the cross-cutting value of addressing financial inclusion and financial education as part of their existing statutory responsibilities. We anticipate that as part of this, the Welsh Government would encourage individual local authorities and housing associations to identify senior individuals to have an overarching responsibility for financial inclusion and financial education work, across the authority/association. (Page 39)

**Recommendation 8.** We recommend that the Welsh Government ensures that the provision of financial education is a compulsory element of the PSE framework, and reviews the emphasis placed on financial education on a regular basis. (Page 42)

**Recommendation 9.** We recommend that the Welsh Government invite Estyn to consider whether the standards of financial education delivered in schools, including provision delivered through external agencies, are adequately promoted and monitored. (Page 47)

**Recommendation 10.** We recommend that the Welsh Government consider undertaking a sustained media campaign to help people to understand the benefits of financial inclusion and education, and how they can access support and financial services (including basic bank accounts and home contents insurance) locally, working with stakeholders at local and national levels. (Page 48)

**Recommendation 11.** We recommend that the Welsh Government continue to engage with high street banks to take a more positive approach to the opening of basic bank accounts. (Page 52)

**Recommendation 12.** We recommend that the Welsh Government continue to engage with local authorities and third sector advice services to ensure a proactive approach to enabling benefit take-up. We anticipate this would include ensuring that if people are known to be in rent and/or council tax arrears that they are signposted to information on benefits that they may be entitled to, but are not claiming. (Page 62)

**Recommendation 13.** We recommend that the Welsh Government continues to engage with stakeholders and the UK Government to raise awareness of illegal money lending and the damaging impact it has on families and communities. As part of this, we anticipate that the Welsh Government will continue to engage with partners to ensure that the valuable role of the Illegal Money Lending Unit is sustained and developed. (Page 64)