



NIACRO works to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

Amelia House  
4 Amelia Street,  
Belfast, BT2 7GS

Tel: (028) 9032 0157  
Email: niacro@niacro.co.uk  
www.niacro.co.uk

## **Paper Exploring the Viability of Upscaling the Money Supporter Pilot Training Programme**

### **Introduction**

NIACRO has completed delivery of its Working Age Pathfinder Money Supporter Pilot, (New Parents) training programme.

Funded by the Money and Pensions Service, the Pilot was originally scheduled to run from January 2020 ending in June 2020 but was extended by agreement until the end of October 2020 due to delays caused by COVID-19. The overall objective of the Money Supporter Pilot was to *'provide training for practitioners who are already engaged with the target populations to give them the confidence, knowledge and skills to deliver money guidance alongside their existing support services. The aim is to embed money guidance in existing services.'*

When planning the delivery of our Money Supporter Pilot (MSP), we projected that 12 NIACRO Children and Family Service staff practitioners and 36 parents would participate in and complete the training programme. By September we managed to support 24 NIACRO staff, 21 parents and 10 staff from external organisations to commence training with 35 candidates (23 NIACRO/7 parents/5 external) completing all elements of the training. 33 candidates submitted assessments to the Open College Network (23 NIACRO/5 parents/5 external) for OCN accreditation.

### **Background**

Collaboration and co-design were features of the Money Supporter Pilot offered through NIACRO.

From the outset we were determined that participants, both professional staff and parents would be consulted and given the opportunity to have an input into the design and content of the programme. Two such events were arranged with staff on 13 February 2020, co-facilitated by NIACRO and Advice NI and St. Giles Trust met with a sub-group of parents on the 3 March to explore their concerns and expectations and build in safeguards to make the experience safe, enjoyable and beneficial<sup>1</sup>. Feedback from both these sessions was used to inform the training offering. Further collaboration with Advice NI and the Open College Network (NI) secured the accreditation of the course materials for those participants who wished to have their achievement recognised.

Finally, we worked closely through the lifespan of the Money Supporter Pilot with the Money and Pensions Service and with RSM, the project's evaluator to ensure that the Pilot design and the delivery approach were fit for purpose to achieve agreed objectives.

Training was originally intended to be completed in one working day (or 2 half days), delivered face-to-face by training facilitators commencing in March 2020. This plan was put on hold due to concerns for participant safety amid the emerging onset of COVID-19 and the decision to go into lockdown in mid-March. Wanting to continue with the Pilot we discussed options with Advice NI, our training partner, who remodelled and moved the training content, consisting of recorded presentations, audio-slides, tutorials, quizzes, workbooks, onto an online delivery platform using the 'Moodle App'.

<sup>1</sup> Co-production for client training element of the NIACRO Money Support Pilot in Northern Ireland, Meredew, T, St Giles Trust 2020



NIACRO

Recognised by the HMRC as a charity XN 48280 Company Limited by Guarantee No. N.I 18121  
Charity Commission NIC 101599

Chairman: S McDowell: Chief Executive: O Lvner: Chairman Finance Committee: T Glover





NIACRO works to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

Amelia House  
4 Amelia Street,  
Belfast, BT2 7GS

Tel: (028) 9032 0157  
Email: [niacro@niacro.co.uk](mailto:niacro@niacro.co.uk)  
[www.niacro.co.uk](http://www.niacro.co.uk)

## What we Learned

NIACRO received the contact details of 68 parents who were approached with an invitation to take part in the MSP. Of the 68 parents, 29 expressed an interest in taking part. 20 parents declined to take up the offer at the outset. We had difficulty getting in contact with the remaining 19 parents who either refused to respond to us, or the telephone number we received was incorrect/obsolete. Of the 29 parents who agreed to take part, 21 or 72% commenced the training. Reasons parents gave for not completing the training included recent bereavement, IT difficulties, personal difficulties, and Wi-Fi availability.

24 NIACRO staff and 10 staff from external organisations also participated in the Money Supporter Pilot.

An aspect of the MSP was that all learners were asked to complete pre- and post- training evaluations. Feedback from those surveyed revealed that:

- staff practitioners reported an average increase of 30% across knowledge, skills, competency, and confidence as a result of completing the training
- Parents showed an average increase of knowledge, skills, competency and confidence, of 20% as a result of the training
- External Organisation Staff Practitioners showed an average increase of knowledge, skills, competency and confidence, of 30% as a result of the training.

Though comments were sought relatively shortly after having participated in the training, it is clear that staff practitioners derived a marginally greater benefit from taking part in the Money Supporter Pilot than the parents who engaged. Yet it is encouraging to note that the parents who responded indicated that having gone through the Money Supporter Pilot, their knowledge, skills and confidence in the areas covered had increased by 20% compared with the pre-course evaluation. This is significant.

*'The training was informative and very practical. It allows the participant to develop a better understanding of the tools available to assist with budgeting and to address and support those in debt'. - staff comment*

*'I enjoyed the course and I learnt a lot it has made me more confident. I know I will be confident in signposting someone to the appropriate agency for their needs'. – parent comment*

*'The course covered topics that are highly valuable to me both in work and personal capacity'. - staff comment*

When the Money Supporter Pilot was pitched to staff and parents it was understood that the training would be delivered in the traditional method in a training suite, lead by a facilitator. With COVID-19 we had a radical re-think and overhaul moving the training to an on-line platform. This provoked mixed reactions from participants. It is evident that training beneficiaries enjoyed and valued the training.



NIACRO  
Recognised by the HMRC as a charity XN 48280 Company Limited by Guarantee No. N.I 18121  
Charity Commission NIC 101599  
Chairman: S McDowell: Chief Executive: O Lvner: Chairman Finance Committee: T Glover





NIACRO works to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

Amelia House  
4 Amelia Street,  
Belfast, BT2 7GS

Tel: (028) 9032 0157  
Email: niacro@niacro.co.uk  
www.niacro.co.uk

## Positives

*'I enjoyed the ability to complete online and being able to access at different time to work around other workload'. - staff comment*

*'It was good being able to pause, relisten, check back on information'. - staff comment*

*'If this had not been offered online and with flexible times to complete I may not have signed up to the course due to competing work'. – staff comment*

*'I enjoyed the 'sign in / sign out' aspect of the training and the fact that I could go back to it when I had time and pick up where I had left off. I liked the variety of information used in the course and the different formats for learning e.g. video presentation, quiz, handbook'. - staff comment*

*'I enjoyed the opportunity to learn something new. I appreciated the opportunity and found it rewarding to complete the course. It was good that despite lockdown it was possible to take part in this'. – parent comment*

*'...working on line although it was a new way to learn for me was exciting and rewarding and I really enjoyed learning and hope that my new knowledge will be able to be used in the future of only to offer info to family or friends' – parent comment*

*'I really enjoyed learning about all those wee tips on saving and improving budgeting skills. Love the way we could just do it at our own pace and the time suited us. Those videos and handbooks were great sources of information'. – parent comment*

*'That you could do the course at your own pace, at a time / times which suited you. The programme was very easy to follow and I liked that there was a checklist format, so that you could tick the box when you had completed various elements within the different sections' – staff comment*

## Needs Improvement

*'I missed the interaction in a group setting and I found that the recorded sessions at times didn't seem to relate to the workbook for each session and also for the questions at the end. This might have worked in normal training were discussion would have taken place with the slides.' - staff comment*

*'Due to the circumstances, I found it a little difficult not being able to ask questions or get clarification on certain questions been asked in workbook. I am sure this would have been completely different with face to face training!' - staff comment*

*'Although being able to learn from home is great it ultimately would be better to be able to do some of the content in person'. – parent comment*

*'The work was hard to do and I only had my phone it would be easier for me in a class so I can ask people for help' – parent comment*



NIACRO

Recognised by the HMRC as a charity XN 48280 Company Limited by Guarantee No. N.I 18121  
Charity Commission NIC 101599

Chairman: S McDowell: Chief Executive: O Lvner: Chairman Finance Committee: T Glover





NIACRO works to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

Amelia House  
4 Amelia Street,  
Belfast, BT2 7GS

Tel: (028) 9032 0157  
Email: niacro@niacro.co.uk  
www.niacro.co.uk

*'... I know due to the pandemic the course had to be run online I feel it would be better in person'* – **parent comment**

*'I find it a bit hard to do as I was very busy at work and it was hard for me to find time to go over training materials and finish all the assignments- I find online training very much time consuming'* **staff comment**

*'I really missed the conversation that usually happened during the training and it would be useful also to have some more complex scenarios, even just given as an example.'* – **staff comment**

Money Supporter Pilot training beneficiaries came up with the following examples of what could be done to mitigate some of the issues they encountered.

*'The training was completed in a remote capacity due to coronavirus, so I do not think it was done the way it usually is. However, I feel it would be better completed in a group capacity as more scenarios could have been practiced in pairs and more potential debt situations reviewed. If it is done remotely in future, maybe integrate a zoom session to allow for question / answers.'* **staff comment**

*'Understandably difficult to arrange but a one-off group session to allow learners to talk and discuss the course content would have been useful.'* – **staff comment**

*'I found it very informative, but there was a lot of information to take in. Having a key person to contact (via phone or email) with any questions and making that known may be beneficial to parents.'* - **staff comment**

*'I think it depends on where the person is starting from – it was a good piece of work and took time. Maybe a run through the workbook to say what is expected from each section.'* – **staff comment**

*'Adding a group zoom session if it is done remotely again to enhance practice skills and allow for group discussion.'* – **staff comment**

*'Individuals will either need to have additional knowledge, use the internet or group support to discuss answers- we discussed areas of confusion within the team but individuals at home will not have this resource.'* – **staff comment**

*'Some parents may have difficulty being able to use a computer/laptop, tablet at home if it is a house where others are using them for schoolwork or other family members working from home.'* – **staff comment**

*'Perhaps a Zoom meeting with the course tutor / co-ordinator / accessor, at the start, to run through expectations, would have been useful.'* – **staff comment**



NIACRO

Recognised by the HMRC as a charity XN 48280 Company Limited by Guarantee No. N.I 18121  
Charity Commission NIC 101599

Chairman: S McDowell: Chief Executive: O Lvner: Chairman Finance Committee: T Glover





NIACRO works to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities

Amelia House  
4 Amelia Street,  
Belfast, BT2 7GS

Tel: (028) 9032 0157  
Email: [niacro@niacro.co.uk](mailto:niacro@niacro.co.uk)  
[www.niacro.co.uk](http://www.niacro.co.uk)

## Conclusion

The Pilot has been an opportunity to experiment, innovate, collaborate and learn.

The training product offered to learners during the Money Supporter Pilot has long-term value for both staff practitioners as they support people using services and for parents in raising awareness about money and debt and embedding good financial capability habits into daily practice. It has potential to be shared wider within the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland. Being online, offers the scope to reach an audience that would be difficult to reach otherwise within the current strictures of remote working and social distancing practice imposed by COVID-19. Incorporating the feedback received from training beneficiaries will improve and strengthen the product. Minor changes that can be easily affected are:

- having a facilitator working closely with learners before the training to navigate learners through use of the online platform, the course content, time needed to complete, and IT considerations
- setting up an online forum for participants to meet in advance of training commencing to chat about their concerns and expectations and to discuss possibility of 'partnering' learners for support during the course
- Setting up regular group check-in with all learners to troubleshoot and offer support with any snags that arise during training
- Potential to move from Moodle App to Live Zoom presentation which might increase appeal and create that learner / facilitator interaction
- Scope to introduce parents who have participated in the training to other training providers to build their self-support capacity

Within this Pilot we reached 34 staff and 21 parents. We see value in offering the Money Supporter Pilot to a wider audience providing training for practitioners already engaged with target populations giving them the confidence, knowledge and skills to deliver money guidance alongside their existing support services and embedding good money guidance into existing services.



NIACRO

Recognised by the HMRC as a charity XN 48280 Company Limited by Guarantee No. N.I 18121  
Charity Commission NIC 101599

Chairman: S McDowell: Chief Executive: O Lvner: Chairman Finance Committee: T Glover

