

Cash Wise Evaluation

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WDH

delivering promises, improving lives



About WDH



- **31,000+** homes provided and managed by WDH, representing approximately **21%** of housing in Wakefield.



- **£1bn** invested in Wakefield alone.
- **£138m** turnover a year and over **£37m** capital programme.



- **1,400+** employees including a multi-tasked and highly skilled in-house maintenance team.



Big Lottery Bid



- Improving Financial Confidence funding.
- £585,000 over three years from 2013 to 2016.
- Work intensively with 750 social housing tenants and prospective tenants.
- £30k for monitoring and evaluation.



LOTTERY FUNDED

- Social housing tenants develop financial capability skills assisting them to manage their household budget and tenancy effectively.
- Financial capability will develop more confident young social housing tenants, better access to financial products and employment opportunities, and better integrated into their local communities.
- Young social housing tenants will report a positive effect on their lifestyles and wellbeing due to increased financial confidence.
- To break the intergenerational cycle and ensure that young social housing tenants and wider family members of participants continue to benefit from the skills learned, long into the future.

Objectives of the Research



The overall aim of the research was to:

Evaluate the impact of the Cash Wise project on the participants and the organisations involved in its delivery.

The programme outcomes of the Improving Financial Confidence project:

- Social housing residents have greater access to appropriate and affordable financial services and products;
- Social housing residents have increased skills and confidence to use financial products and services and will continue to apply these skills and confidence; and
- Social housing providers engage most in need residents to enable them to understand the relevance of financial inclusion and capability services.

Business reasons for delivering Cash Wise

- Increasing levels of rent arrears.
- Rise in tenancy terminations for financial reasons.
- Rising cost of living and issues such as fuel poverty.
- Increased usage of high interest pay day lenders.

Evaluation

- Internal evaluation – commissioned York Consulting, based in Leeds



- National evaluation led by Ecorys UK and the University of Bristol.



Quantitative data analysis – from three sources

Qualitative data – generated through:

- consultations with the delivery team;
- observation of sessions;
- consultation with stakeholders;
- focus groups with participants; and
- one to one interviews with participants.

Stakeholder Views



“Some of our clients are very vulnerable and without this help they would be at risk of losing their tenancy, which for some of these people would leave them in a very difficult position.” (Vulnerable Adults Service)

“I think it’s a brilliant programme, it’s something that we can take out to people in the community and promote and it definitely helps bring in the harder to reach families.” (Children’s Centre Manager)

“Many of these families live very isolated lives and lack the confidence to live independently, this programmes gives them those skills which are so important.” (Children’s Centre Manager)

Views on the Course Content



“The way the course is structured, it’s informal which means that you want to come.”

“How to manage your home and what’s your responsibility and what’s theirs’ (landlord) was most helpful for me.”

“Everything in it was just right, all the help with DIY, cooking, and budgeting, I didn’t know any of it.”

“We did a session on how to shop wisely, like looking out for two for one deals and since then I’ve changed how I shop.”

Case Study Findings



The case studies undertaken have revealed the extent of need.

- Mental health, disabilities, learning needs, poverty, homelessness, low self esteem confidence.
- Differing degrees of isolation.
- Lack of family networks of support.
- Very limited finances available.
- Constant need to balance finances against need.
- Inexperience and lack of confidence in with dealing with debt and agencies.

Max was recently divorced and had to return home to his parents' house as he had nowhere else to live. He lived there for six months, sleeping on the sofa as there was no spare bedroom. Max said he felt that he was 'putting on' his parents and decided to leave without securing anywhere to live. Max spent three months living on the streets of Wakefield but working at a take-away restaurant at the same time.

"I wasn't unclean or anything, I'd go to the [name of voluntary service] in the morning and shower and then take myself to work."
(Max)

However, Max also suffered from some mental ill health and struggled to cope and often felt frightened on the streets. When he found out about the Wakefield Hub he put his name down for social housing and was housed very quickly.

"It was brilliant, I couldn't believe they got me a flat so quick." (Max)

Once Max was accessing support from Wakefield Hub he found out about the programme and thought it was just what he needed.

“I hadn’t had a house before, I didn’t have a clue how to organise myself and needed help” (Max).

Max benefitted from Cash Wise in a number of ways:

- received white goods, a wardrobe and carpets;
- learned how to manage his budget; and
- received employment support.

Max was claiming Employment Support Allowance due to his mental ill health but was feeling ready to start work again. The delivery officer helped Max in finding and applying for a job and gave him considerable support in preparing for his interview and in helping him secure enough hours so that the employment was viable.

“Max is so keen to get back in to employment but we need to make sure that the employer is going to guarantee him enough hours so he can afford to take it.” (Delivery Officer).

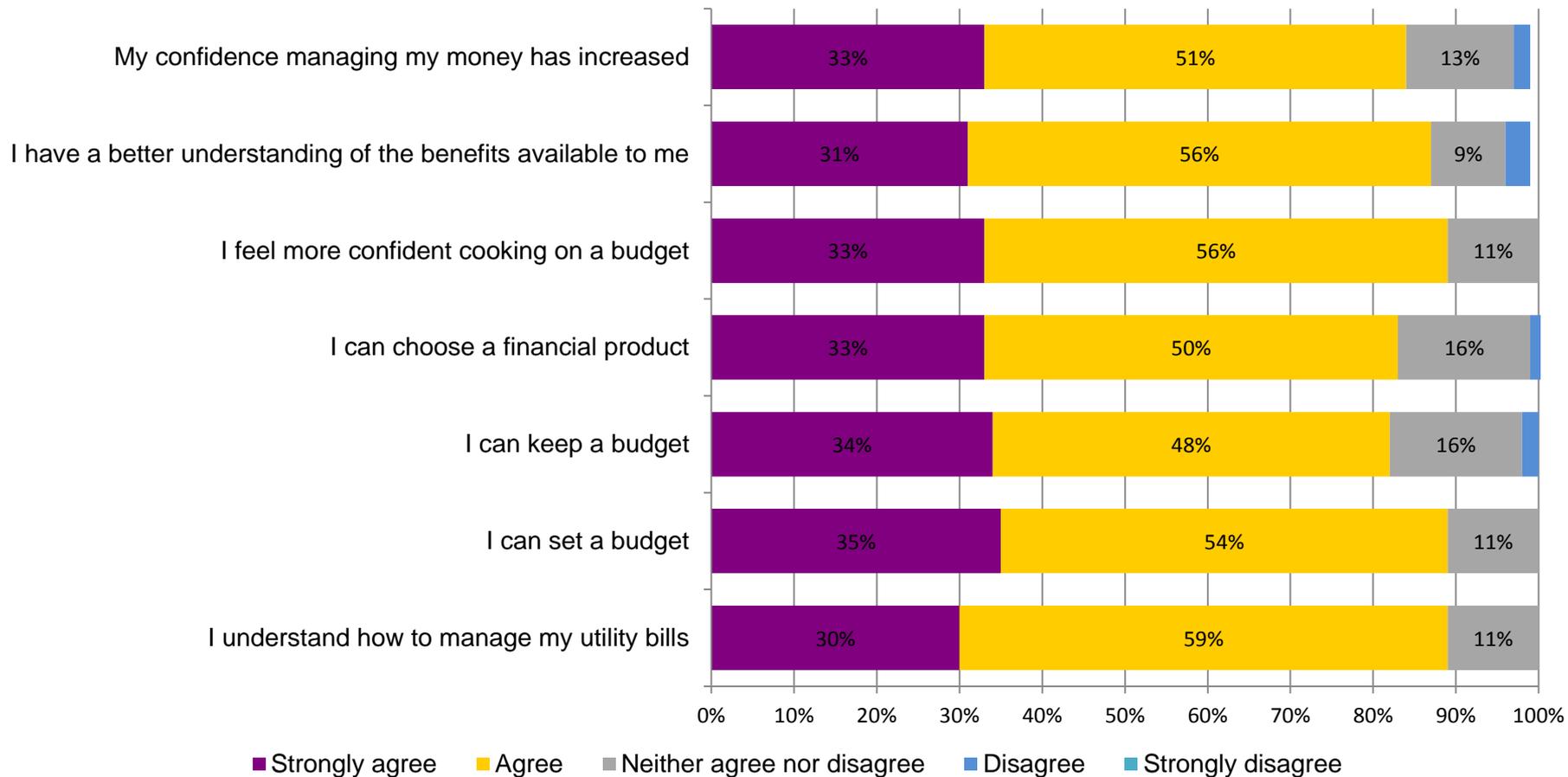
Max accepted the job and is continuing to work as a security officer. When asked what he thought about the support he had received from Cash Wise, he had this to say.

“I honestly don’t know where I would be without it, I don’t have anyone that can help me in the way that [name of worker] has. It’s been absolutely brilliant.” (Max)

Max also learned the importance of organising his money so that he could balance what he needed to buy with all the other necessities. This was going to be increasingly important for him as he moved off welfare and into work.

“I don’t know how it’s going to work, but at least I know how to do it...I’ve got my budget sheet and that I know how to shop to save money on food. I’ve just got to be ultra careful.” (Max)

Impact Data



Attendance Figures



	Count	Percent
0 to 25%	54	11.4%
25 to 50%	78	16.5%
50 to 75%	97	20.6%
75 to 99%	29	6.1%
100%	214	45.3%
	472	100%

Impact of the Project



- Provided intensive support for 812 people.
- Engaged with an additional 498 people at Community Events.
- Delivered 375 engaging workshops and 1,639 home visits.
- Full financial health check for all tenants and prospective tenants.



Impact of the Project



- Partnerships with local financial organisations and delivery partners.



- Worked closely with Community Employment Advisors to get people back into work or training



- SROI £1 to £2.31.



- Provide volunteering opportunities for Cash Wise Champions.

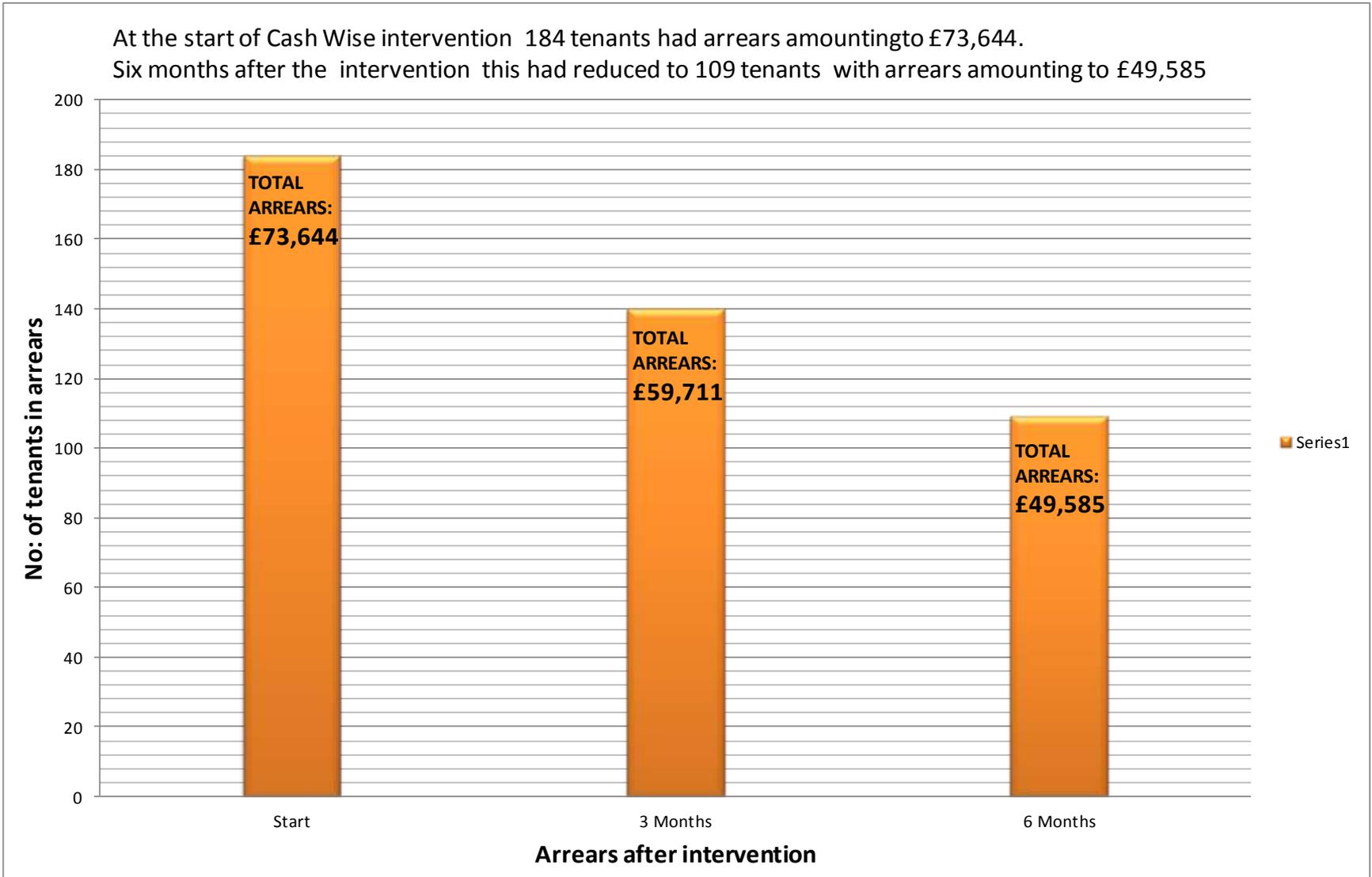


Impact on the Business



At the start of Cash Wise intervention 184 tenants had arrears amounting to £73,644.

Six months after the intervention this had reduced to 109 tenants with arrears amounting to £49,585

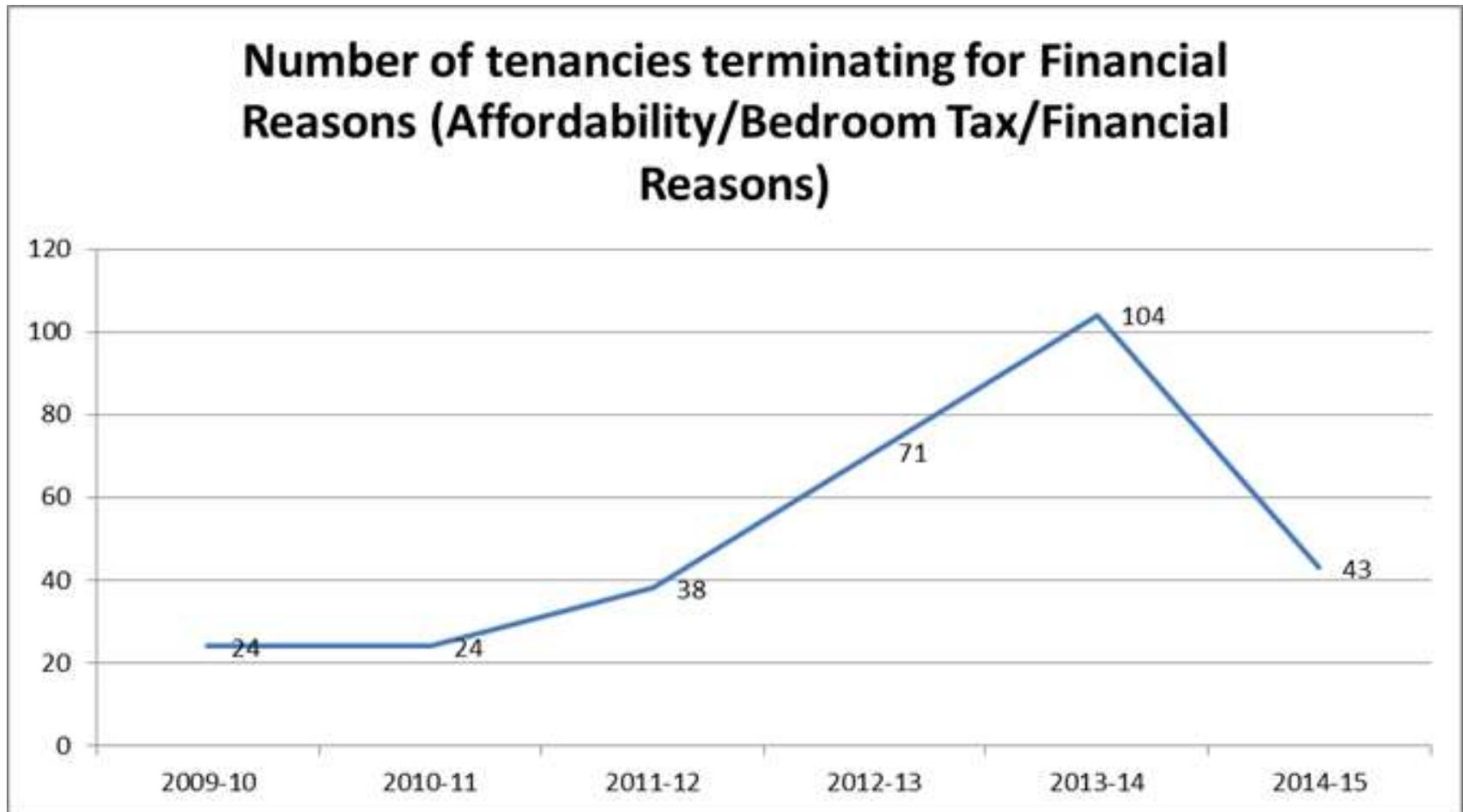


Impact on the Business



- Gained £68,813 of unclaimed benefits for tenants.
- Accessed £40,352 of grants to improve the financial situation of tenants.
- Sustained tenancies.
- Business profile and wider partnerships.
- Highly commended at the BITC Responsible Business Awards!

Reduction in terminations for financial reasons



Test and learn

- One size doesn't fit all – flexibility.
- Impact of Welfare Reform legislation.
- Low levels of basic financial awareness.
- Intervention often uncover far more complex issues.
- Widening the criteria.
- Digital exclusion.
- Cash Wise is a tested model for financial capability and we have passed on our learning to other projects.

Main Findings and the Future



- Due to the impact of Cash Wise Project WDH has made the Cash Wise Team permanent and the team has been expanded.
- Universal Credit will be a major challenge across the district.
- Qualitative evidence revealed a high level of need among participants for support with their financial situation and housing.
- All participants gave accounts of the benefits of the programme, in particular their ability to live independently and to manage their finances.
- Recommendation to improve our data collection methods!



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