

Appendix 2 – IncomeMax

What is the Nesta Rapid Recovery Challenge?

As part of our work on Social Mobility, Think Communities have become engaged with the NESTA Rapid Recovery Challenge. The Rapid Recovery Challenge aims to accelerate innovations that will support people across the UK negatively impacted by COVID-19 to access jobs and money.

Six organisations have been selected to be part of a final challenge to provide support to 10,000 people. The tools provided by these organisations are already available to the public. More information on each of the tools is at <https://rapidrecovery.challenges.org/blog/rrc-finalists-scaling/>

This approach to providing personal support at scale echoes with our developing approach to work in the social mobility field. To that end we are in discussions with two of the NESTA challenge finalists about how their services might support those most in need across the County. Discussions are most advanced with a company called IncomeMax

Who are IncomeMax?

IncomeMax are a social enterprise with a long track record of providing income maximisation services, debt, and finance management support. To do so they are commissioned by a range of organisations such as utility and financial services who refer customers in need/debt to IncomeMax. Such support is usually provided 1:1 over the telephone.

More on IncomeMax can be found at <https://www.incomemax.org.uk/>

Their approach to the NESTA challenge is the IncomeMax Bounce Back Campaign

What is the Bounce Back Campaign?

The Bounce Back campaign will provide support to people who need help managing their finances and overcoming debt.

People who sign up will receive a self-help guide to income maximisation. The information they provide as part of the sign-up process will be assessed and those who are most in need will receive expert support from an advisor. This will be via their preferred channel – SMS, phone, or email. From July this will include their new IncomeMax Messenger.

The support will be ongoing rather than one-off, so IncomeMax will also send out regular updates, tips, and alerts (e.g. availability of new grants or income sources) to those who have signed up.

CCC Partnership with Income Max

This service is live, and members of the public are free to sign up to it.

The initial aim of our partnership with IncomeMax is simply to direct as many customers as possible to the service between now and 8th August (as part of the NESTA challenge).

There are many potential routes by which we might signpost Cambridgeshire residents to IncomeMax.

Given one of the most significant risk factors for poverty is having children, asking schools to mail out an agreed text relating to the IncomeMax offer will build on approach to other support offers such as the COVID support grant and Free School Meals offers. Schools could be asked to mail the offer to families in receipt of FSM or the offer could be made to all parents. Whichever is chosen, there is likely to be the need to stagger the promotion of the offer to smooth the demand felt by IncomeMax.

This will need to be flexed depending on take up rates of the offer. The geographical sequencing of that demand will also depend on the level of engagement we are able to achieve with district council partners. This is because part of the IncomeMax service will relate to their understanding the sources of grants and discretionary payments at this level.

Next steps

While sending out the IncomeMax offer via schools should be a relatively quick and easy win for the County Council, it does not have to be the only distribution channel for this offer. For example, the service may be particularly valuable to those suffering debts such as rent or Council Tax arrears.

Further potential routes may also be identified by other partners. We are discussing with IncomeMax how we might best monitor sign-ups from different sources, possibly by using different URLs that all go to the same landing page for sign-up.

(Information current as of 15/6/21)