

# Communities & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Report of: Lyndsey Sims (Chief Executive, Hyndburn Leisure)  
Aisha Brotherton (Business Development Manager, Hyndburn Leisure)

## SUBJECT

Household Support Fund

## PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present an update report on the Household Support Fund

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the content of the report is noted

## 1.0 Introduction

The objective of the Household Support Fund is to provide support to households who are experiencing financial hardship and do not have enough resources to meet their immediate short-term needs.

Over £2 million has been allocated to Hyndburn across five rounds, to provide essential support to residents between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The breakdown per round is as follows; an allocation of £270k in Round 1, £360k in Round 2 & 3, £720k in Round 4 and £349k in Round 5.

## 2.0 Lead delivery organisation

Hyndburn Leisure was identified as best placed to lead on this fund on behalf of Hyndburn Borough Council.

Hyndburn Leisure set up and delivered the Hyndburn Hub service for the Council since the beginning of the pandemic. During this time several central Government grants and services have been delivered by the Trust and many Hyndburn residents have received essential support.

An 8% administration fee is paid to Hyndburn Leisure to deliver the fund for round 5, previously 10% for all other rounds. This covers employee time and other costs associated with the administration of the fund.

Hyndburn Leisure is a not-for-profit charity that has been serving the residents of Hyndburn for over 20 years and has developed over recent years from a Leisure & Culture Facility Management organisation to a key provider of health and wellbeing services in the area.

## 3.0 Alignment to other hardship funds & services

In order to maximise the effectiveness of this fund, part of the triage and data gathering process for all applicants includes identifying other funding options available to them alongside the Household Support Fund, supporting applications to other funds and services such as:

- Financial advice including advice for Universal Credit applications
- Discretionary Housing Payments administered by Hyndburn Borough Council
- United Utilities discretionary schemes
- Food Solutions network support
- Hyndburn Hub webpage: [Support Hub Form \(hyndburnbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.hyndburnbc.gov.uk/support-hub-form)

## 4.0 Eligibility criteria for the scheme

To be eligible for the Hyndburn scheme you must be:

- Age 16 years or over
- A resident of the Hyndburn area
- Experiencing financial hardship and not have enough resources to meet your immediate short-term needs

Residents do not need to be in receipt of benefits to apply for the Household Support Fund, it is however expected that applicants provide evidence of financial hardship.

## 5.0 Application process

Applications into the fund can be by self-referral or agency referral.

. Referral partners include:

- Hyndburn Borough Council (including Elected Members)
- LCC – various teams
- NHS
- Schools
- Carers Link Lancashire
- Community Solutions NW
- 1<sup>st</sup> Call
- Aawaz
- Lancashire Women
- Salvation Army
- Maundy Relief
- Veterans in Communities
- One Church
- Citizens Advice East Lancashire

Applications are logged centrally on the Hub system and processed by a small team of Hub Agents. Client permission is obtained before client details, evidence of hardship and need are recorded on a secure system. All data is removed at the end of every round.

## 6.0 Priority applicants

The fund has evolved since round one and as with Round 4, in Round 5 there are six different target groups that the fund prioritises.

Fund administrators are not required to reach all six target groups, but in Hyndburn we have aimed to do this. The target groups are:

- Households with children
- Households with pensioners
- Households with disabilities
- Households with other
- Households with unpaid carers
- Households with care leavers

Hyndburn were the first Lancashire district to work with the LCC Care leavers team to set up a direct referral process, enabling LCC to refer clients directly to the HSF for support. We shared this process and learning with all other districts, which has led to the process being rolled out across the County.

Hyndburn also worked closely with Carers Link Lancashire to set up a direct referral process for unpaid carers, helping people that they support to access the fund.

## **7.0 Support provided**

Each District had the option to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food, or issuing grants to third parties. In Round 1-3 the fund could not be used to provide financial advice. However, in Round 3, the Trust, working with partners across the Hyndburn Way secured Integrated Care Board (ICB) funding to commission Lancashire Women and Citizens Advice East Lancashire to deliver this service. In Round 4 the fund guidelines changed, enabling resource from the HSF to be allocated to provide financial advice, this has continued into Round 5. Further ICB investment was passported to 1<sup>st</sup> Call, Community Solutions NW and to a range of charities and groups providing food and other support, direct to residents.

### **7.1 Food**

We provide eligible residents with Supermarket food vouchers (Aldi or Tesco). We also provide information about the local Food Solutions network. We recognise that while there may be risks associated with allocating supermarket vouchers, this gives dignity and freedom to residents.

In each round we have also distributed an allocation of funding and vouchers to the community, voluntary and faith network.

### **7.2 Energy and Water**

We make bill payments for energy and water directly to suppliers. We also provide pre-payment cards for prepayment energy meters.

### **7.3 Essentials linked to energy and water**

In earlier rounds (1 + 2) support was provided to purchase white goods, smaller appliances and other household essentials. In more recent rounds, this support has moved to 'wider essentials'.

### **7.4 Wider Essentials**

In earlier rounds (1 + 2) support was available to help to pay other essential household bills e.g. broadband. In later rounds this area of support also includes small appliances.

### **7.5 Housing costs**

From Round 5 additional resource has been allocated from the fund to the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments fund (£20,000).

### **7.6 Advice services**

Following the trial of financial advice in Round 3 (funded through ICB investment) and changes to HSF guidelines from Round 4, support is provided by specialist practitioners from Lancashire Women and Citizens Advice East Lancashire to residents as part of the application/award process on the main scheme.

## 7.7 Grants to Community, Voluntary, Faith Sector organisations

Our Community, Voluntary and Faith sector provide regular support to many of our most vulnerable residents. A grant scheme has been delivered in each round of the fund. A total of £390,250 has been distributed so far. See table 1 below for the breakdown of funding.

**Table 1: Grant funding awarded from Round 1 - 5 of the Household Support Fund**

Organisation	Funding awarded							
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4a	Round 4b	Round 4c	Round 5	Total
Hyndburn Food Parlour	£10,000	£3,500	£5,000	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£37,500</b>
Maundy Relief	£10,000	£3,500	£5,000	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£37,500</b>
Awaaz	£5,000	£3,500	£5,000	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£32,500</b>
Bahja Initiative	£5,000							<b>£5,000</b>
Trinity Community Church	£5,000							<b>£5,000</b>
Lancashire Women	£5,000		£5,000	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£29,000</b>
Brave Church	£3,750	£3,500	£5,000	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£31,250</b>
Union Road Church	£5,000	£3,500	£5,000	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£32,500</b>
Snow Drop Doula	£5,000	£3,500						<b>£8,500</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Call		£3,500	£5,000	£4,000	£4,750	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£28,250</b>
The Burrow		£3,500						<b>£3,500</b>
St Peter's & St Paul's		£3,500	£5,000	£3,500	£3,500	£2,500		<b>£18,000</b>
Community Solutions		£3,500	£5,000	£4,000	£4,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£27,500</b>
Accrington Christian's Together					£4,000		£6,000	<b>£10,000</b>
Clayton Baptist Church				£2,000	£2,000	£3,000	£6,000	<b>£13,000</b>
One Church				£4,000	£5,000	£5,000	£6,000	<b>£20,000</b>
Adventure Hyndburn			£5,000	£4,000	£4,750			<b>£13,750</b>
Spring into Action			£5,000	£2,500				<b>£7,500</b>
Citizens Advice				£3,000	£3,000		£3,000	<b>£9,000</b>
Carers Link						£4,000	£4,000	<b>£8,000</b>
Our Food Bank					£4,000		£4,000	<b>£8,000</b>
Antley Road Church			£5,000					<b>£5,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£53,750</b>	<b>£35,000</b>	<b>£60,000</b>	<b>£51,000</b>	<b>£59,000</b>	<b>£54,500</b>	<b>£77,000</b>	<b>£390,250</b>

## 8.0 Evaluation

Hyndburn Leisure maintain accurate and up to date monitoring records and complete data returns to Lancashire County Council (LCC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The fund has also been audited by Hyndburn BC.

Tables 2-4 below show the allocated grants and breakdown of funding distributed to Hyndburn households.

**Table 2: Grant funding allocated to Hyndburn for Round 1-4 of the Household Support Fund**

Table 2: Total Awards	Spend (£s)			
	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Total amount provided to households	£256,500	£324,000	£324,000	£648,000
Administration costs	£13,500	£36,000	£36,000	£72,000
Total LA spend	£270,000	£360,000	£360,000	£720,000

**Table 3: Funding distributed by household composition**

Table 3: Total Value of Awards split by Household Composition							
	With children	Without children	With Pensioners	With Disability	With Care Leavers	With Unpaid Carers	Total
Round 1	£168,884	£87,616	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	£256,500
Round 2	£65,739	£22,911	£235,350	Not measured	Not measured	Not measured	£324,000
Round 3	£183,066	£48,495	£40,970	£51,469	Not measured	Not measured	£324,000
Round 4	£330,684	£130,229	£62,145	£101,719	£7,853	£15,370	£648,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£748,373</b>	<b>£289,351</b>	<b>£338,465</b>	<b>£153,188</b>	<b>£7,853</b>	<b>£15,370</b>	<b>£1,552,500</b>

**Table 4: Funding distributed by category**

Table 4: Total Value of Awards Split by Category							
	Food	Energy and Water	Essentials (E & W)	Wider Essentials	Housing Costs	Advice Services	Total
Round 1	£107,028	£52,518	£96,643	£311	£0	Not measured	£256,500
Round 2	£186,154	£137,846	£0	£0	£0	Not measured	£324,000
Round 3	£214,200	£83,070	£0	£650	£26,080	Not measured	£324,000
Round 4	£434,181	£64,886	£13,271	£35,662	£28,000	£72,000	£648,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£941,563</b>	<b>£338,320</b>	<b>£109,914</b>	<b>£36,623</b>	<b>£54,080</b>	<b>£72,000</b>	<b>£1,552,500</b>

## 9.0 Community feedback

Fund applicants have helped to shape how the fund is administered, and improvements continue to be made, to ensure that the right support is provided to the right households.

Some of the feedback emailed to the Hub team is as follows:

“Good morning

Thank you so much for your lovely phone call this morning, I am so sorry I was overwhelmed, it's been such a struggle for so long, with so many things, I never honestly expected to receive good news that the Household Support Fund could actually help me with my Gas & Electric bill with So Energy.

I have been trying my best to get the arrears down as much as possible, and the stress and worry has been a lot to cope with and seriously affecting all my health and medical conditions, and I haven't known which way to turn.

This really was my last resort, and I wasn't really holding out much hope.

To say you have 'saved my life' with your kind support is an understatement and genuinely is the truth in my case.

I will never be able to thank you enough, please know how much this truly means to me - thank you”

The case study on page 8 also shows how the fund is supporting people, beyond providing financial support.

Client Age	Presenting Needs
50	Financial, energy and health issues.
Referral received from:	Services Accessed
HSF4	Money/Energy/Therapy
Referral Date:	Exit Date if applicable
01/03/24	
<u>Background</u>	
<p>Client was referred through HSF on conversation there were a number of issues, she was worried about her health in turn impacting her health, her bills and the stress from the work coach, she has damp and worried about putting heating on but her physical health issues meant she needed to stay warm. On initial contact we discussed her benefit situation and asked her to request a sic note from GP and a UC50 form from Job centre so we can apply to have her claimant commitment conditions changed, we also put an internal referral through for both an energy home visit and a therapy referral.</p>	
<u>Support provided:</u>	
<p>On discussion client was struggling financially and emotionally due to health problems, we discussed completing a UC50 form to help and the client chose that I would complete the online application form and print it off to post out to her to sign before posting out. The client is also going to get together any evidence she would like to send off with the application form. During the session we looked at her income and expenditure and applied for reduction in benefits, booked a home visit and supplied her with emergency provision and applied to trust fund to support with the arrears on her utility bill as well as put her on the priority register. She was also issued fuel vouchers for her gas on prepayment meter. Home visit arranged for end of March with the Handy women so they can help as there is a door needing putting back on and curtain pole, plus seals on windows.</p> <p>EDIT: Home visit – turned boiler and TVRS down, hung door and put up curtain pole and washing line, arranged for new washer as client didn't want to mention she was hand washing, left oil filled heater with client. Put in draught proofing on doors and letterbox and some radiator foil. This was a saving off over 700 in energy costs also explained about 30degree washes etc.</p>	
<p>Impact: client was thankful for the immediate support but really grateful for the extra help with the benefits and breathing space and cannot believe so much help was available from contacting the council.</p>	
<u>Client comments:</u>	
<p>I cannot thank you enough I no longer have to actively seek work I have more income and less deductions and my fuel usage is down meaning paying less, the initial help for the first month with food and vouchers from the council supported me but long term I feel happier and I am also now starting CBT – cannot believe the changes in a couple of months – I am so glad I put the form into the council.</p>	