

Agenda

Community Focus Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Thursday, 22 June 2023 at 6:30 pm
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes, FY8 1LW
Committee members:	<p>Councillor Vince Settle (Chairman) Councillor Frank Andrews (Vice-Chairman)</p> <p>Councillors Peter Anthony, Julie Brickles, Damian Buckley, Edward Collins, Martin Evans, Gail Goodman JP, Gavin Harrison, Paul Hodgson, John Kirkham, Michael Withers.</p>

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1	<p>Declarations of Interest: Declarations of interest, and the responsibility for declaring the same, are matters for elected members. Members are able to obtain advice, in writing, in advance of meetings. This should only be sought via the Council's Monitoring Officer. However, it should be noted that no advice on interests sought less than one working day prior to any meeting will be provided.</p>	1
2	<p>Substitute Members: Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 23(c).</p>	1
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Contact: Democratic - Telephone: (01253) 658546 – Email: democracy@fylde.gov.uk

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<http://fylde.cmis.uk.com/fylde/DocumentsandInformation/PublicDocumentsandInformation.aspx>

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SCRUTINY ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	COMMUNITY FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	22 JUNE 2023	3
AGE UK LANCASHIRE – ANNUAL REPORT			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The Council has a Service Level Agreement in place with Age UK Lancashire to provide an information and advice service in Fylde. As part of this agreement, Age UK provides a report to committee each year, summarising its performance over the previous year.

SOURCE OF REFERRAL FOR SCRUTINY

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/lancashire>

RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Fylde Borough Council Annual Report from Age UK Lancashire covering the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 is attached.

WHY IS THIS MATTER BEING PLACED BEFORE COMMITTEE FOR SCRUTINY?

Age UK Lancashire is identified as one of the Council’s key formal partnerships. There is a service level agreement in place where the Council pays a grant of £12,000 per annum for the information and advice service. The annual report produced by Age UK Lancashire provides an opportunity for councillors to ensure that the council is receiving value for money.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Edyta Paxton (01253 658447) or Zoe Wiggins, Age UK Lancashire.



Fylde Borough Council Annual Report

Period covered: 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

Compiled by: Zoe Wiggins, Information & Advice Service Manager

General Update

Age UK Lancashire continues to deliver a high quality, confidential Information & Advice service across Lancashire for people of State Pension age and their carers. Support from Fylde Borough Council contributes towards our Information and Advice team based in our St Annes office, as well as face-to-face community delivery in the area.

Two teams contribute towards the Information and Advice (I&A) delivery; our 0300 Call Handling Team and our community focussed I&A Team. The I&A Team offer home visits, surgery appointments and telephone support, depending on the needs of the client.

The first point of contact into the service is usually our 0300 number where our call handlers can help immediately with a simple enquiry or triage clients appropriately. In this reporting period, 1080 people from Fylde contacted us this way. This route, alongside our internal services acting as referral agents, enabled 117 people to be referred for more detailed advice support.

Since April 2022, 40 Fylde residents received full welfare benefit checks, and we supported 74 clients with completing claim forms. We continue to see an average of 8 clients per week at drop in sessions – these may be given information or signposted to other services, or may result in an appointment being arranged with one of our advisers.

Our Information and Advice service moved to telephone appointments only during the covid-19 pandemic. This proved to be an efficient use of time, and for many clients, a much easier way of receiving help. Because of this, we are continuing to use telephone appointments wherever we can. The method used to deliver our service is agreed with our clients taking their needs into account.

Regardless of the method of service delivery, all clients can expect that their enquiry is fully explored, and they will receive comprehensive advice followed up with a confirmation of advice letter with details of the information and advice we have given and any steps they should take to achieve the desired outcome.

Since April in Fylde Borough, we delivered the following services:

- Information & Advice including case work
- Hospital Aftercare – practical support for people discharged from hospital
- Home Help service – providing cleaning, shopping and other errands
- Removing Barriers – supporting veterans
- Good Day Calls – regular chats and ‘check-ins’ for clients who are lonely and/or isolated (set up in response to Covid-19)
- Art of Isolation and Veterans Art of Isolation projects – encouraging individuals to submit examples of creativity during the pandemic
- Scams Awareness – one-to-one advice sessions to enable client to be able to spot potential scams, deal with scammers, and take action in the event of being scammed.

Information & Advice

Age UK Lancashire provides a comprehensive Information & Advice service to clients of pension age and their carers throughout the Fylde area. This is a free, one-to-one service supporting, informing and advising older people and their carers, often at the most vulnerable times in their life. Our services include: signposting and referral to other agencies, providing information and advice, form filling and casework.

During appointments we explore topic areas such as welfare benefit entitlements and income maximisation, access to social care and the assessment process, housing options for older people. This year we have expanded our service offer to include information on local and government support schemes relating to the cost of living crisis, in particular any help which may be available for soaring energy costs. We have also taken on a 2 year Scams Prevention and Awareness project. We consider the client's circumstances on an individual basis and can then tailor our service as needed.

As part of our holistic service we extend our service to the immediate family and carers of our clients where appropriate.

We support all enquiries that are within our area of expertise and will actively refer to other specialist advice services where appropriate such as Citizen's Advice for debt advice and Welfare Rights for benefit appeals.

Our Customer Services service is well established, offering older people and their carers a contact point for information or signposting. The team can also refer into our services as required.

Our most common enquiries usually include:

- Welfare Benefits
- Travel and leisure (including Blue Badge applications)
- Local services and activities
- Community and social care
- Housing options

The service can usually be accessed by calling in to the Age UK Lancashire office in St George's Rd, St Anne's, by telephone, email, letter, referral from other community services or via one of Age UK Lancashire's other services. Home visits are occasionally provided for people unable to access the office, complex cases and lengthy form-filling. Our telephone and email service operates Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm (via our 0300 303 1234 number) with an out of hours answerphone facility which gives the customer the option of ringing the Age UK National Advice Line for support out of hours (open 8am-7pm, 365 days per year).

The service works in partnership with a number of local key partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions, Welfare Rights, Pension Wise, Disability Information, Community Mental Health Team, Extensive Care Team, New Fylde Housing, Fylde CA, Care & Repair, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service,

Hospital Discharge Team, Trinity Hospice, Social Services, Stroke Association, Alzheimer's Association, Parkinson's Society, Alzheimer's Society and Lytham Hospital Dementia services.

The service provided by Age UK Lancashire during this 6-month period has identified £2,612,754.15 per annum in unclaimed benefits across the county, with £420,186.15 of that figure being for Fylde residents of State Pension age. This money is most often spent in the local economy.

Further Background

Our countywide I&A team currently consists of 2 full time advisers, 1 part time adviser, 1 scams awareness officer, one part time administrator, and we have recently recruited a volunteer who will also be based in the Fylde office.

Age UK Lancashire has a comprehensive mandatory training plan for both staff and volunteers. We have invested in a high quality online training resource via ME Learning which enables many more staff and volunteers to access up-to-date training and undertake courses at their convenience. Regular meetings are usually held with all the volunteers to update them and provide general support. We make sure they are familiar with the standards, policies and procedures set by the Information and Advice Quality Standard. Training includes Basic Life Support, Safeguarding Adults level one, Safeguarding Children level one, Dementia Awareness, Information Governance, Mental Capacity Act, and Fire Safety Awareness. We have recently updated our mandatory training to include LGBTQ Awareness, PREVENT, and Infection Control, as well as further training on safeguarding adults who may be at risk of self-harm.

The Information and Advice staff also undertake training on Pension Age Welfare benefits, Social/Community Care, Housing, Charity Log (in house Database), Information & Advice Quality Program training meetings, The Care Act, and General Data Protection Regulation.

Quality

We continue to hold the nationally recognized Age UK Information and Advice Quality Programme (IAQP) which was successfully renewed in April 2021, and the Advice Quality Standard which are rigorous and robust processes to ensure we are delivering a service that meets all their requirements. We are in the process of renewing this accreditation. We also hold the ISO 9001 and the Age UK organisational standard.

Promotion and Engagement

We continue to support the Older People's Forum and the FAB group and we keep in contact with the social groups in the area. We participate in fortnightly Dementia Hub zoom meetings, and we continue to refer people to Just Good Friends in St Annes, Lancashire Carers, Carers Count and Alzheimer's Singing For The Brain.

The team have delivered group awareness talks at Freckleton Library, various sheltered accommodations, and other locations as required. We have outreach sessions planned for St Annes Library and have offered our services to Ansdell Library and Lytham Library. We are currently focusing these sessions on cost of living support, though of course we welcome all enquiries. Our Scams Awareness project, in particular, is seeing much demand for group awareness sessions.

At Age UK Lancashire we aim to celebrate the diversity of older people, staff and volunteers and to support everyone to overcome the barriers to their full inclusion and participation in society. Our recent Equality and Diversity and Inclusivity Survey has informed future work to increase staff understanding of neurodiversity and increase confidence in use of positive language relating to race. 17% of respondents had disability. The survey highlighted useful areas of development for the organisation to focus on, including diversity within the workforce and attracting employee’s representative of the Lancashire communities.

Appendices

Appendix A – Case Study – to follow when signed consent received

Appendix B - Profile Data for Fylde April 2022 – March 2023

TOPIC OF ENQUIRY	NUMBER OF ENQUIRIES
Age UK Services	2
Benefits	315
Community Care	38
Consumer	124
Health Conditions	2
Health Services	0
Housing	2
Legal	0
Leisure and Social Activities	1
Residential Care	22
Other money	37
Nationality and Immigration	0
Grand Total	549

Client feedback

Our clients are issued with a feedback form at the end of their service. The results of these during this reporting period are that:

Your benefit claim was successful – 100 % agreed

Your general wellbeing has improved – 75 % agreed

You feel more independent or less isolated – 67 % agreed

Your knowledge of where to go for advice has increased - 75 % agreed

You were satisfied with the service and would recommend it to others - 100 % agreed

Average score 1-5

Staff were friendly and knowledgeable – 5/5

I was treated with respect – 5/5

My privacy and confidentiality were ensured - 5/5

The service met my expectations – 5/5

I received the service at the right time for me – 5/5

How likely are you to recommend our service? – 5/5

Client comments

“Please excuse the delay in answering. Paula was more than helpful and has made me aware of other services eg scams prevention awareness. I have also been able to point someone else in the right direction.”

“I found Paula so very helpful. She is very kind, considerate and efficient in her position. Excellent!”

“I have today been advised that I am entitled to Attendance Allowance. I should like to thank Age UK for the excellent assistance they've given me, particularly Paula Fisher who has been a great help and support.”

“Thank you for all your help. When we needed help and advice you and your staff have been most helpful. “

“I just want to say how kind and helpful Zoe was and to say thank you for all the information you have sent me.”

“Fantastic, couldn't ask for anything more and recommend to everybody.”

“Paula was extremely helpful and cut through a load of potentially confusing stuff. Thank you.”

SCRUTINY ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	COMMUNITY FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	22 JUNE 2023	4
CITIZENS ADVICE FYLDE - ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual summary to the Committee on the work of the Citizens Advice Fylde. This is in accordance with the requirements of the CAB's agreement with the Council. Members are reminded that Fylde Council is the funding body for the Fylde Citizens Advice service through the provision of an annual grant.

SOURCE OF REFERRAL FOR SCRUTINY

chiefofficer@fylde.cabnet.org.uk

RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Citizens Advice Fylde Annual Report, attached, has been prepared by Natalie Reeves, the Fylde Citizens Advice Chief Executive.

WHY IS THIS MATTER BEING PLACED BEFORE COMMITTEE FOR SCRUTINY?

This information is provided to enable the committee to have an overview of the performance of the Citizen Advice Fylde in the last financial year and scrutinise its service to Fylde residents.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Edyta Paxton, Health and Wellbeing Officer; Tel 01253 658447; e-mail: edyta.paxton@fylde.gov.uk



Fylde

Annual Report 2022/23

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Recruitment and Training	9
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Overview

This report concentrates, for statistical purposes, on the year April 2022/March 2023. However, it also includes some information on developments since April 2023, along with our plans for the future.

At present we operate an Adviceline Service and telephone advice from our main office in Kirkham between 9am and 4pm Mon-Fri. We offer face to face appointments on Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays at the Kirkham office.

We also provide outreach services at the Town Hall in St Annes , a drop-in service on Wednesdays and appointments on Fridays. Appointments can be booked through our Adviceline telephone service.

Our Aims:

To provide the best possible advice to the citizens of Fylde in order that they can deal with the problems they face.

To train, encourage and enable local people to volunteer to provide advice to fellow citizens.

To enable and assist volunteers currently out of work to acquire skills and gain confidence so that they can return to the workplace.

Each Citizens Advice Office is separately registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Our Financial Registration Number is **617610**.

Staffing

Our core staff at the end of this reporting period was: Natalie Traynor (previously Reeves), Chief Executive Officer and Lisa Bolton, Advice Service Manager - along with Andrea Clay, Session Supervisor and Oleg Melehovs Administrator.

Susie McCormick left her position of Volunteers Manager in December 2022 and Lisa Bolton returned to take on the position of Advice Service Manager, amalgamating the roles of Volunteers Manager and Projects Manager.

We have 20 Advice volunteers, including 9 trained Adviceline Assessors, 7 trained Full Advisors and 4 advice volunteers in training. We also have volunteers performing admin duties, computer maintenance and IT upgrades, as well as acting as Trustees.

We are continuing to prioritise the recruitment of volunteers to fully cover Adviceline and to allow staff development to the Full Adviser role if desired.

The pandemic caused significant problems with the training of volunteers due to trainees being unable to sit with trained assessors to shadow them. There was a significant drop in Volunteers during COVID, however, this is now improving and we have initiated a recruitment drive to increase our numbers.

We offer training courses for our paid staff and volunteers using Citizens Advice Training modules and training courses provided through external sources such as Shelter and Lancashire County Council. We also develop in-house courses and work with other Citizens Advice Offices to provide training specific to our needs.

Citizens Advice Fylde uses the national Performance Quality Framework process to ensure quality of advice, customer satisfaction, and effective leadership. A sample of cases is audited each month. We will continue to be visited 3 yearly for Management/Finance compliance in order to maintain our AQS (Advice Quality Standard) Mark of 'General Help with Casework'. Our last Leadership Self-Assessment in January 2022 resulted in confirmation that we were exceeding the required Citizens Advice standard in all aspects of governance, management and planning.

Generalist Service Report - April 2022 – March 2023

Performance Reports are provided as an appendix at the end of this report.

To access our service, people of Fylde have a number of options.

- Telephone, using our Adviceline number, with voicemail facility.
- Email our Advice email address,
- Through the website,
- Complete a form and put it in the box in our foyer.

All of these access points are treated equally. Once contact is made the client is contacted and either provided with information or if the client requires more in-depth help then an appointment will be made for them, either for telephone advice or face to face if required.

We have face to face appointments in the office. These appointments are in high demand and we are utilising our resources as efficiently as possible.

We also provide a drop-in service at St Annes Town Hall every Wednesday morning, as well as a full appointment service on Friday mornings. This allows us to cater for clients who have difficulties travelling to Kirkham.

In this reporting period we helped **1194** clients with **2884** separate issues.

The government-backed **Pensionwise** service was also delivered by phone in this period. Clients who are over 50 and have personal or workplace pensions can receive free guidance on their options as they plan for retirement.

We continue to explore ways of increasing our levels of service to the whole of the Fylde. We have updated and simplified our website, enabling the public to find us easily and to access general Citizens Advice information through a link to www.citizensadvice.org.uk. Links are also provided from here to other useful websites.

Partnership Working

We are a referral agent for **Fylde Foodbank** who share the lower floor of our building and operate from the Kirkham premises on a Monday and a Friday.

We attend the **Fylde Cost Of Living Focus Group** and provide statistics on Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits to Fylde Council as requested. We work closely with Fylde Housing department, particularly with the housing and homelessness officers. We distribute the Household Support Fund on behalf of Fylde Council to people struggling with the Cost of Living Crisis.

We attend **MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)** as a representative for Fylde.

We have held talks with AFC Fylde Community Foundation to look for potential group working.

We also continue to develop a good community network throughout Fylde which will benefit clients through increased service awareness and referral procedures.

Specialist Services

Rosemary

This project began in January 2017 and was initially funded by The Allen Lane Foundation for one year. It is currently funded by National Lottery for one day per week.

It involves the specialist training and provision of a Domestic Violence worker for Fylde. Andrea Clay is the project worker; she is qualified as an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA). Andrea also participates in the Fylde and Wyre Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

Andrea initiated 118 interventions in the reporting period.

At Home

This project was previously funded by United Utilities for three years for the provision of a home visiting service for one day a week. It is currently funded by Citizens Advice Cost of Living Fund.

The project provide advice to those unable to visit the office or St Annes, while at the same time helping to combat social isolation. Lucinda Ball is the project worker.

Lucinda has initiated 239 interventions in the reporting period. This includes benefit forms, debt, Blue Badge applications as well as benefit appeals. Referrals into the project has to be restricted to ensure those in need receive the home visiting service first due to the demand for the service.

Fylde Money

Fylde Money is a debt and budgeting project set up in 2022 in response to the Cost of Living Crisis. It offers debt and budgeting options to clients. The Project Worker is Sharon Christian.

Sharon has initiated 268 interventions in the reporting period. This is mainly casework as she directs people through the debt process.

Household Support Fund

Since December 2021 Citizens Advice Fylde has been distributing the Household Support Fund on behalf of Fylde Council to financially assist clients who are vulnerable due the Cost of Living Crisis .

Citizens Advice Fylde provided financial assistance with energy and water debt and bills. In the reporting period we distributed over £250,000 of funds to those most in need. We offered a holistic approach giving debt, benefits and energy advice as well as financial assistance.

Client Satisfaction

We are part of a National Citizens Advice Initiative called the Customer Experience Survey. We ask our clients if they are happy to be contacted by Citizens Advice directly to give feedback on the service they have received.

The latest report shows that for the overall client experience of using our service, 84% thought the service had helped them find a way forward.

89% had an overall positive experience and 90% of clients said that they would be likely or very likely to recommend our services to friends and family.

Recruitment and Training

Recruitment remains a priority to fully staff Adviceline and to support those wishing to transfer from Adviceline to full Advice.

We do have a number of volunteers who come to us and work with us to help us but also to improve their skills. These volunteers have been very successful in subsequently gaining employment. As we come out of lockdown we are increasing our recruitment drive.

We are actively recruiting from minority groups in the area and have been successful in recruiting Ukrainian Refugees.

Funding New Projects

We are constantly exploring avenues of funding; particularly concentrating on opportunities where deprivation does not need to be high and that would benefit our Fylde demographic. We continue to explore these opportunities both as an individual office and in partnership with other Citizens Advice offices throughout Lancashire. We are also speaking to SME's in the local area who are keen to support their local community.

The Future

We have already initiated changes to improve the service to the people of Fylde. We will no longer be part of the National Adviceline service, rather we will have our own dedicated telephone Adviceline service for the people of Fylde. This will improve accessibility and call wait times.

We have employed an Adviceline Assessor to ensure calls are answered or clients called back in a timely manner.

In June 2023 we start a Macmillan Benefits Advice service, to ensure people who receive a cancer diagnosis have access to benefits and financial advice.

We also will employ a full time debt and budgeting adviser to ensure people suffering financial hardship, or in debt have the best advice in their options and a way forward.

In turn this will help with mental health issues associated with debt.

We will continue to work closely with Fylde Council and other voluntary agencies in Fylde to provide a holistic approach to our clients' issues. We will strive to source new funding and partnership working in order to meet demand. We will use the resources provided by our national membership of Citizens Advice to support our strategic planning for the future, drawing on regional networks in order to learn from good practice elsewhere, and participating in new initiatives if appropriate opportunities arise.

Citizens Advice Fylde is committed to continuous improvement of its practices and procedures in order to ensure provision of, and access to, its core services for all Fylde residents. This includes actively looking to increase our accessibility through our outreach provision.

Contact Details



Adviceline 0808 278 7881



Website <https://www.citizensadvicefylde.org.uk>



Twitter @FyldeCAB



Facebook Citizens Advice Fylde



Email Advice@fylde.cabnet.org.uk

Graph of issues or clients with an issue

If showing clients the charts are stacked showing all client with each issue (not the total number of unique clients)



Clients by Ward

01/04/2022 31/03/2023

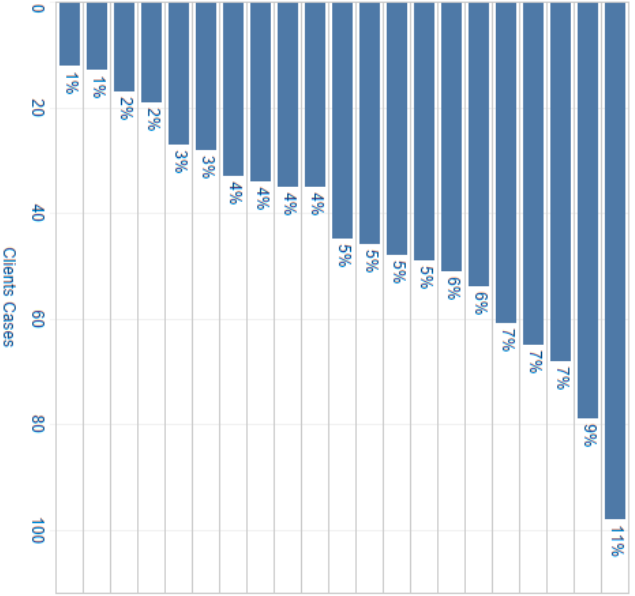


Clients (set minimum number to display)
From 1

You can click on the data picker to set the minimum number of clients seen (this will filter out wards with lower numbers of clients and allow you to focus on the areas with the highest volumes)

Ward

Local Authority Ward	Local Authority	
Warton and Westby	Fylde	98
Medlar-with-Westham	Fylde	79
Central	Fylde	68
Kirkham North	Fylde	65
Park	Fylde	61
Ashton	Fylde	54
Kirkham South	Fylde	51
Heyhouses	Fylde	49
St Leonards	Fylde	48
Kilnhouse	Fylde	46
Freckleton East	Fylde	45
Ansdel	Fylde	35
Fairhaven	Fylde	35
Clifton	Fylde	34
St Johns	Fylde	33
Newton and Treales	Fylde	28
Freckleton West	Fylde	27
Staining and Weeton	Fylde	19
Elswick and Little Eccleston	Fylde	17
Ribby-with-Wrea	Fylde	13
Singleton and Greenhalgh	Fylde	12



Key Statistics

Fylde (member)

01/04/2022 - 31/03/2023



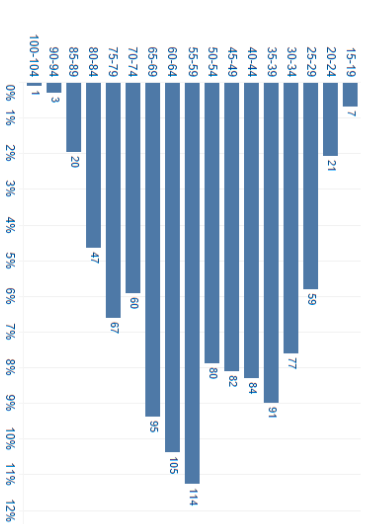
Summary

Clients	1,194
Quick client contacts	216
Issues	2,884
Activities	4,670
Cases	1,182
Outcomes	
Income gain	£149,325
Re-imbursements, services, loans	£7,010
Debts written off	£33,558
Other	£3,960

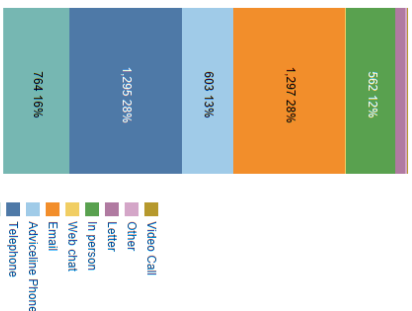
Issues

Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	788
Benefits Universal Credit	158
Charitable Support & Food Ban	218
Consumer goods & services	106
Debt	351
Education	15
Employment	110
Financial services & capability	52
GVA & Hate Crime	31
Health & community care	88
Housing	333
Immigration & asylum	59
Legal	124
Other	38
Relationships & family	176
Tax	13
Travel & transport	67
Utilities & communications	157
Grand Total	2,884

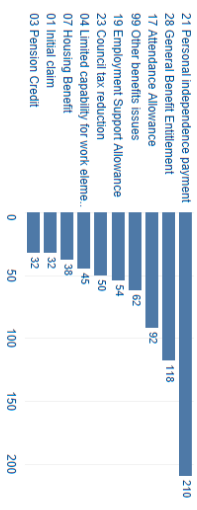
Age



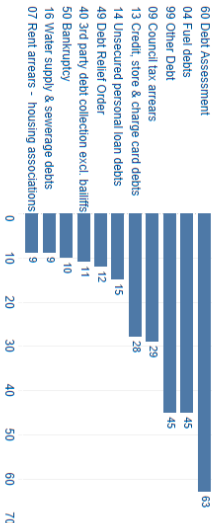
Channel



Top benefit issues



Top debt issues



Gender



Disability / Long-term health



Ethnicity



SCRUTINY ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	COMMUNITY FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	22 JUNE 2023	5

COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The Fylde Community Projects Funds awards grants between £300 to £2000 for groups which are based in Fylde or work exclusively with people who live in the Borough. The fund supports projects which promote or enhance the environment, encourage cohesive communities, or promote the economy.

£20k per annum is provided each year for this fund as a part of the annual budget setting process. Each year a summary report is made to this committee outlining the awards made in the previous financial year. This report outlines awards made during 2022/23.

SOURCE OF REFERRAL FOR SCRUTINY

Deputy Chief Executive, Tracy Manning

WHY IS THIS MATTER BEING PLACED BEFORE COMMITTEE FOR SCRUTINY?

The Committee, at its November 2018 meeting, resolved to receive an annual report in awards made from the fund.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Tracy Manning, tracy.manning@fylde.gov.uk

INFORMATION NOTE

COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND 2022/23

1. In 2022/23 the council allocated £20k to the Community Projects Fund.
2. The Community Projects Fund comprises two amounts, a larger fund for bids from £300-£2000, with bidding usually split over three rounds and a smaller fund with bids up to £300.
3. Bids from the larger fund are usually awarded following a meeting of a Panel comprising the Mayor of Fylde with police and community representatives together with the Deputy Chief Executive. The smaller fund is determined through electronic discussion and agreement. However, during the coronavirus pandemic all bids received were reviewed electronically which had the advantage of a freer flowing process for applications, and as a result has continued.
4. Of the £20,000, £14,215 was allocated to the larger fund against a projected budget of £16,500 and £2,644 was allocated to the smaller fund against a projected budget of £3,500. However, there is flexibility across both funds to ensure that as many organisations as possible are offered support and if the smaller fund proves to be more popular again in the current financial year, there may be an adjustment of the allocation across both funds with a lesser amount allocated to the larger fund, and an increased amount to the smaller fund. All applications must provide an equal amount of match funding in cash or in-kind.
5. There will be a publicity campaigns to promote the fund during the year including more generic promotions and also others focusing on successful applicants to generate interest from other community organisations. The Community Development Officer will also promote the fund to organisations within the community.
6. The successful bids for the larger fund in 2022/23 are shown below:

Name of Group	Project	Amount
Lytham St Annes YMCA Football Club	Purchase of equipment to run weekly sessions	1000
Elswick in Bloom	Planting	2000
Heartbeat North West Cardiac Care	Defibrillator	450
Mythop Road Allotment Associatin	New fence and hedging for the East Side	975
Laugh Live Love	Warm hub equipment	1932
STEP	Container for huts	1551
Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Gardens	Art mural for the gardens – equipment	550
St Annes Land Yachting Club	Equipment, mini yachts, helmets, gloves, goggles and waterproofs	1940
St Annes Kite Surfing Club	Equipment, lockers, surfing kites, helmets, wetsuits etc	1912
LSA Photographic Society	Laptop	405
Lytham in Bloom	Planting and equipment	1500
Total		£14215.00

7. The successful bids for the smaller fund in 2022/23 are shown below:

Name of Group	Project	Amount
Friends of Newton Community Park	Creation of picnic area	300
Freckleton Football Club	Barriers for pitch safety	300
Friends of Squires Gate Station	Purchase of two black intermediate bulk containers	294
8 th Lytham St Annes Scouting Group	Tents and pioneering equipment	300
Lytham Heritage Group	Prizes and art vouchers	300
Lytham Performing Arts	Identification lanyards	300
Ansdell in Bloom	Obelisks for the large planters in Ansdell	300
Warton Street Coronation Street Party	Contribution towards road closure	250
Friends of St Annes Station	Photos for 150 th anniversary	300
Total		£2644

8. For the larger fund, monitoring forms are sent out after 6 months asking for feedback on how the money was spent and what difference it has made. For the vast majority of the projects, it is too early to have heard back from the groups, however historically many of the comments received is that the funding makes a big difference to the community groups in achieving delivery of their projects.

FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM

Contact Jo Collins, joanne.collins@fylde.gov.uk

SCRUTINY ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	COMMUNITY FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	22 JUNE 2023	6
HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

The report provides details of further government grant funding for Household Support. This is the fourth round of Household Support Funding intended to support vulnerable households with essential goods and services in response to the cost-of-living crisis. The latest fund is a further £842 million pounds allocated to upper tier authorities to provide support in the period up to 31 March 2024.

Fylde Council was been notified by Lancashire County Council (LCC) that we will receive a further £540,000 from the fund to support low-income families using similar approaches applied for the previous three rounds of Household Support Fund. This funding was received using urgent decision-making powers due to there being no council meeting in proximity to the funding being received, and the urgency in passporting this to support residents. The Chief Executive used his urgent decision making powers, in consultation with the then Chairman of Environmental Health and Housing Committee together with the Leader of the Council, to prevent loss of continuity with the funding.

As this is a large amount of funding this report is brought before scrutiny in order that it can be appraised of the funding stream, and its use.

SOURCE OF REFERRAL FOR SCRUTINY

Edyta Paxton, Health and Wellbeing Officer

LINK TO RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

[Finance & Democracy 24th January 2022](#) – Approval of a revenue budget increase of up to £150,000 in 2021/22, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant (Round 1).

[Full Council 4th July 2022](#) - Approval of fully funded budget increase in the sum of £270,000 in 2022/23, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant (Round 2).

[Full Council 5th December 2022](#) - Approval of fully funded budget increase in the sum of £270,00 in 2022/23, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant (Round 3).

WHY IS THIS MATTER BEING PLACED BEFORE COMMITTEE FOR SCRUTINY?

As this is a large amount of funding this report is brought before scrutiny in order that it can be appraised of the funding stream, and its use.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Edyta Paxton, Health and Wellbeing Officer; Tel 01253 658447; e-mail: edyta.paxton@fylde.gov.uk

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUNDING

1. In September 2021, the government announced that vulnerable households across the country would be able to access a £500 million support fund to help them with essentials over the winter period. This funding was provided to LCC with £150,000 allocated to Fylde Council. The grant was to directly help residents who needed it most based on various criteria around income, family size etc. with funds distributed through small payments that supported vulnerable households meet daily costs such as food, clothing, and utilities. The funding was available to individuals and families irrespective of age. The Environmental, Health and Housing Committee has received updated information on the programme expenditure and outcomes.
2. In July 2022, Fylde Council received a further £270,000 from the Household Support Fund through LCC which was to be more targeted at support for the elderly.
3. In October 2022 a third round of Household Support Fund grant was allocated to Fylde council through LCC, a further £270,000 was made available to support households in need up to March 31, 2023, this was allocated on a similar basis to the first round of funding made in September 2021.
4. A fourth round of Household Support Fund grant has been announced by the government with £842 million provided to upper tier authorities to cover the period up to 31 March 2024. Fylde Council was been notified by Lancashire County Council that it would receive a further £540,00 to provide support to vulnerable households for the period running to 31st March 2024. The funds should be spent or committed by 31st March 2024 and should not be carried forward for future use.
5. The Household Support Fund is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions to support those most in need. This fund can be used to help households with children, households with pensioners and other households towards the cost of:
 - a. *Food*
 - b. *Energy / water needs*
 - c. *Essentials linked to energy and water*
 - d. *Wider essentials, where appropriate, such as housing costs and other essential bills*
6. The funding should be used to meet the immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and related essentials. Authorities can use the funding to support households who are struggling to afford other essentials and in exceptional cases of emergency, the funding can be used to meet housing costs.
7. Authorities have been encouraged to work in partnership with third party organisations to identify individuals and families where there is greatest need. Fylde has taken this approach when allocating the first three rounds of Household Support Fund working with local charities (CAB, Food Bank, Homestart etc) community groups (Well Church, Hope Church, YMCA etc) and Lancashire County Council as well as other neighbouring authorities on initiatives.
8. Appendix 1 to the report provides details of the indicative schemes that the fund will support, many of the initiatives are tried and tested in Fylde from earlier funding rounds. The target population is well known and well informed.
9. Scrutiny members will be provided an update on outcomes of the funding support in six months' time and the guidance of members will be sought on the allocation of future funds should further funding rounds be announced.

Appendix 1 - Allocation of Household Support Fund Round 4 (to 31st March 2024)

- **CAB:** energy bills support through applications £273,000-£289,000
- **CAB:** advisory role, and advice training for leaders of community volunteer groups £53,000
- **Foodbanks:** community support through vouchers and food parcels £60,000-£80,000
- **Homestart:** white goods purchases through signposting / referrals from professionals and partners £10,000
- **Community Cars:** help with transport that can be accessed through referral partners £5,000-£10,000
- Targeted support to disability groups, the elderly and carers would through sign posting and referrals from **One Fylde, Disability first, Empowerment, Age UK**, schools, and the volunteer sector. These groups could signpost directly to CAB, Foodbanks and Homestart start for help.
- **The Housing Service:** multiple schemes as set out below.

£5,000– Aldi vouchers

The fund has been used previously for providing Aldi Vouchers. Payments of £10 or £20 for a single person and £50 for a family have supported clients to purchase food when the food bank is not open usually in an emergency. This scheme has had the biggest impact where households are in B&B prior to going into temporary self-contained accommodation in St Annes, the vouchers have assisted with the extra costs of providing food.

£5,000 – Argos Vouchers

The fund has been used to provide household support packs which included cutlery, bedding, toasters, kettles etc. The provision of such items has been essential when clients move into new accommodation. The use of vouchers to provide household items essential for everyday living has been very successful in previous funding rounds with demand still evident.

£20,000 – white goods and carpets

The ability to assist clients with up to £400 towards cooker/fridge/carpets made a significant difference to households moving into accommodation along with the smaller items support scheme.

£30,000 – Top up Rent in Advance and Bond/RIA for households in employment

The Housing service currently has a high number of households in temporary accommodation whose options for social housing are affected by the lack of turnover in housing stock and private rental levels being unaffordable given their present circumstances. Households in receipt of HB can apply for rent bond or rent in advance from DHP and Vickers Relief. Many can source accommodation slightly above LHA rates, concerns around affordability after 6 months results in applications to DHP and Fylde Council Help 2 Rent scheme being refused. The additional funding has been used to fund a top up from HB levels for 6 months' rent in advance enabling the move into independent accommodation out of temporary accommodation. For households in employment the options for rent bond or RIA are limited to Vicars Relief Charity as they are not eligible for DHP funding. The additional funding would be used to assist these households into independent accommodation and based on affordability would cover the rent bond and rent in advance.