



DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	5 JANUARY 2021	6
SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE (COVID-19)			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

At the Council meeting in October a fully funded budget increase of £74,154.55 was agreed to the 2020/21 budget to enable a grant scheme to be rolled out with immediate effect to support local vulnerable residents as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. The grant had been provided by government to Lancashire County Council for support measures to be put in place to support residents with food and assistance as a result of the pandemic. In turn, Lancashire County Council had passported an element of the funding to districts with Fylde Council share of this being just over 74k.

This report aims to provide an update on the distribution of this grant, together with a more general update on the work of the Fylde Community Hub, which was established in March 2020 to support the vulnerable throughout the course of the pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the report
2. To record thanks to the Council for Voluntary Services and Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau for their support in ensuring that vulnerable people have been supported as a result of government funding
3. To record thanks to the Fylde Foodbanks who have been unstinting in their support of vulnerable people throughout the pandemic
4. To record thanks to all agencies and volunteers who have supported the work of the Fylde Community Hub throughout the pandemic.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Council - 19 October 2020:

1. That £74,154.55 be added as a fully funded budget increase to the 2020/21 budget to enable a grant scheme to be rolled out with immediate effect to support vulnerable people during the pandemic.
2. That the Director of Resources be authorised to award the grants in accordance with the principles set out within this report both with respect to food and essential supplies.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	✓

REPORT

1. Introduction

The Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies was awarded to Lancashire County Council (LCC) by government and LCC subsequently passported an element of the funding to Fylde Council. The grant is to be used to support people across Lancashire who are struggling to afford food and essentials due to the COVID-19 pandemic. LCC allocated £74,154.55 to Fylde Council as a part of this grant provision to support local people up until 31st March 2021. This amount has been provided based on population weighted by a proxy of need through the Index of Multiple Deprivation. The grant must be expended by 31 March 2021.

At the October Council meeting it was agreed that the funding was to be granted using the principles set out within the report which involved working with the voluntary and community sector.

Throughout the pandemic, the community has also been supporting vulnerable individuals through its Fylde Community Hub. The Hub was established at the latter end of March as the pandemic took a grip of the country and it has continued to offer support throughout the pandemic.

2. Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies

The guiding principles of the funding are:

- *Use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need*
- *Use the funding to meet the immediate need and help those who are struggling to afford food and essentials due to COVID-19*
- *Use the funding for existing schemes and other support which deliver the same outcomes and where the need is greatest*
- *Work together with other local authorities to provide support and ensure the funding meets its objectives*

In terms of the food aspect of the grant, the council has an established relationship with the Food Banks within the Fylde who provide high-quality food parcels to those in need. A dialogue with the Food Banks has resulted in them confirming their ability to continue to meet demand for food and its willingness to receive more referrals. If demand for food peaks, the Emergency Assistance Grant will be used to offer financial support to the Food Banks to ensure their supply of food is maintained. At the time of writing this report, no requests have been made for financial support from the Food Banks. However, support was requested from the Food Banks in distributing some of its parcels to those who struggled travelling into urban areas to access the

food banks, and support has been provided through the Health and Well-Being Officer, together with community volunteers associated with the work of the Community Hub, in distributing an average of 15 food parcels per week across the Borough on behalf of the Food Banks.

Thanks, must be recorded to the Fylde Food Banks for their unstinting support to the vulnerable during the pandemic.

Turning to the essential supplies' aspect of the grant, DEFRA did not prescribe how authorities should spend this grant and it was left to the discretion of local authorities, on the basis that they understand their local communities the best. The key point was to avoid duplicating other forms of support where possible. For this reason, it is thought that by working with the existing successful partnership established through the Community Hub, not only in terms of food provision in partnership with the Food Banks, but also in terms of essential services that this would ensure the right support was offered through the most appropriate means.

In order to ensure that there is a fair and transparent process for awarding support to people, and make sure funding finds its way to those in the greatest need of support, the essential supplies element of the grant has been administered through the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS), in a partnership formed between both Fylde and Wyre Councils. This also meets another aim of the funding in working together with other councils to ensure that the funding meets its objectives. Similar successful partnerships between other councils have also been established, and others in Lancashire are now also following what has been established on the Fylde Coast. £40k of the funding has been provided to CVS to run this programme of support.

The CVS have operated a round of grants, on a rolling basis, to community and voluntary organisations in order that they can provide direct support to vulnerable people. Round one of the grant allocations is shown below and an update on the second round of funding awards will be made verbally at the meeting.

Organisation	Council	Application Amount (£)	Fylde Amount (£)	Details of application
Streetwise Lancashire	Fylde	5000		To supply fresh essential nutritional foods on a weekly basis to as many families in need as possible: Also to provide essential sanitary and household necessities such as toilet rolls, nappies, cleaning products
Hope Church Lytham	Both 50-50 Fylde and Wyre	2436	2436	To provide targeted, practical support to help significantly improve the quality of a children's environment through the provision of practical items which could be anything from household furniture to bedding
Headway B,F & W	Both 50-50 Fylde and Wyre	2500	2500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X6 tablet devices for the use of their most vulnerable and isolated membership – allowing for joining in with zoom meetings with our staff and also their peer group (membership), brain stimulating games and apps, access to apply for benefits etc. online. • Staffing costs for 3 months to enable Zoom

				workshops and garden visits
St Peter's Church, Lytham	Fylde	3500		<p>To open the church hall to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow people to engage together socially over free tea and coffee • be a centre distributing clothing/bedding/towels • offer access to computers and the internet for job search etc • receive food parcels • to offer soup, sandwiches and food parcels for those in need • provide a safe space for toddlers and their carers with provision of educational toys/books/clothing etc • be a place that can signpost people to the help they need <p>The hall is a centre of community and is inclusive of all people.</p>
Park View 4U	Both Wyre and Fylde 50- 50 Wyre or Fylde	1000	1000	To deliver Exploring the Wild Edges programme – to engage with women who have struggled with their mental wellbeing, social isolation and losing confidence during the Covid-19 pandemic. We aim to offer outside sessions around a campfire for groups of women to learn new skills including whittling, campfire cooking, using tools, foraging, and more
Salvation Army Fleetwood	Wyre and Fylde	750	750	Arabic speaking interpreter and materials to assist with online learning, activities and support for the Syrian Refugee Programme.

Thanks, should also be extended to the Council for Voluntary Services for its administration of the scheme which has been very successful. At the time of writing this report, the Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Group had also requested to join in with this grant scheme and had pledged further funding for the programme.

3. Work with Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau

Following attendance by the Director of Resources at a Local Government Association workshop on support for the vulnerable and effective use of the grant provision, discussions have also subsequently taken place with the Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau to consider if it could be engaged to support need. As a result, two programmes of support have also been agreed in order to ensure that the grant is expended to support the vulnerable.

£6,000 has been given to help clients in fuel poverty by providing prepayment top ups and energy debt payments. This runs alongside the CAB's Fylde Energy Project which assists clients with all aspects of energy related issues including energy tariff checks, help with energy saving devices and advice, problems with energy suppliers, debt and budgeting.

£2,500 has also been given, with a view to further funding being released, to assist clients in debt (pending evaluation of the initial phase of the project). The debt is due to redundancy; income

reduction and debt increases. Financial assistance is offered to clients to provide assistance as a part of the debt process to help people who are no longer able to make payments and need to apply for debt resolution such as debt relief orders. The grant is to be used to pay for the debt relief order costs, therefore assisting the vulnerable manage their debts in order that they can afford food and essential supplies.

4. Fylde Community Hub Update

The Community Hub has continued to be the focal point in supporting many individuals across the Fylde. In the first wave of the pandemic support was offered to those who were shielding due to age and medical conditions as well as to individuals who were vulnerable and required support in general. During the second wave a number of individuals were contacted by the Department of Health and advised that they were classified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) by government and the Community Hub was again requested to reach out to these individuals to offer support. A letter is attached as an appendix which was sent to over 3000 individuals in the Fylde area. Many other organisations and charities have also assisted in supporting the CEVs and the range of support is illustrated in the letter to the CEVs.

During the pandemic, the Fylde Community Hub has strengthened established partnership working to support the community. Many of these organisations supporting the work of the Community Hub come under the umbrella of the Council for Voluntary Services and they have all worked alongside the Hub. As well as being supported by key workers from the council, the Community Hub has also benefited from the support of over 100 volunteers and this combined effort has enabled us to support the wider community's needs.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The Council, at its October meeting, agreed a revenue budget increase of £74k fully funded from a government grant passported to Fylde Council from LCC to enable a grant scheme to be rolled out with immediate effect to support local vulnerable residents. There are no further financial implications arising from this report.
Legal	Legal agreement entered into with LCC
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		None

APPENDIX 1

Dear «PatientFirstName» «PatientSurname»

SUPPORT FOR CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

«PatientFirstName» «PatientSurname»
«PatientAddress_Line1»
«PatientAddress_Line2»
«PatientAddress_Line3»
«PatientAddress_Line4» «PatientAddress_PostCode»

Our Ref: REF/01

Your Ref:

Please Ask For: Tracy Manning

Telephone: 01253 658448

Email: listening@fylde.gov.uk

Date: 22 December 2020

I write further to correspondence sent out to you recently by the Department of Health and Social Care.

The letter sent to you by the government provided guidance on a range of different activities during the lockdown period including socialising, work, education, travel, shopping, medicines, registering and accessing care and support.

Whilst you are encouraged to use your friends and family network, we want to reassure you there is other help available should you require it. We recognise in challenging times it is important that help and support is offered and to provide reassurance that you are not alone in responding to the challenges you may face.

Fylde Council, during the first wave of the pandemic, established a **Community Hub** to provide support which has remained operating throughout. We are working with a wide range of partners, and volunteers, to ensure that if you do not have an existing support network that we can offer you support through our Hub to make this period as comfortable and stress free as possible for you.

Please find attached a guidance sheet which outlines the range of support available.

Thank you for your time and patience on this matter, keep well and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,



TRACY MANNING

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON BEHALF OF FYLDE COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY HUB

Fylde Council's Community Hub **Guidance Notes on Support**

The guidance to support the clinically extremely vulnerable in protecting themselves from exposure to coronavirus has been updated. Many new measures have been put in place including the rule of 6, COVID-secure workplaces, and the widespread use of face coverings; all of which have reduced the need for such restrictive advice.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

We understand that help may still be required, and we are working together with local partners to ensure our most vulnerable residents continue to receive the support they need, especially those without friends, family or neighbours to assist them.

If you need help

If you have a support network such as family, friends or neighbours, then we urge you to seek their assistance in the first instance.

If you continue to require practical help, support or advice please contact the team who will put you in touch with Fylde's well-established local neighbourhood support structures and voluntary groups.

You can call us on 01253 658448 from 9am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday, email us at listening@fylde.gov.uk or direct message us on www.facebook.com/fylde or www.twitter.com/fyldecouncil

Help with shopping

Shop local

Many local bakers, butchers, chemists and more offer home deliveries. You should contact them directly to ask about availability.

Register an online account with your local supermarket

If you need to shop online and book a delivery slot, the process will be much quicker if you already have an account set up.

www.learnmyway.com/courses/online-shopping

Support for shopping

- **Contact the NHS Volunteer Responders** – support can be provided for shopping, picking up your prescriptions or for a regular friendly telephone call

www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk



Tel: 0808 196 3646

Well-being

Well-being is always important for everyone, however more so than ever at the moment. Self-isolation can be lonely and unvaried, and the information in the news and on social media can make you feel worried or fed-up.

Below is some useful information to help you stay busy and in touch with the world whilst isolating.

Stay connected with others

Maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing.

Think about ways to stay in touch with friends and family if you or they must stay at home – by phone, messaging, video calls or social media.

You can also get in touch with one of the many organisations who offer a telephone friendship service, where you can enjoy chatting with someone over the phone from the comfort of your own home.

www.lancsvp.org.uk/referrals-3/community-support-referral-form

Tel: 01772 416417



www.nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk



Tel: 0808 196 3646

www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services/sign-up-for-telephone-befriending

Tel: 0800 055 6112



www.thesilverline.org.uk

Tel: 0800 470 8090

www.justgoodfriends.org.uk



Tel: Bev Sykes 07557 734233

Talk about your worries

It's normal to feel worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. Remember; it is OK to share your concerns with others you trust, and we would encourage you to do so. You may also find that sharing your concerns may help them too.

If you cannot speak to someone you know or if doing so has not helped, there are plenty of helplines you can try instead.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines

Look after your body

Physical health has a big impact on how we feel. It can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, drink enough water and exercise regularly. Avoid smoking, drugs or drinking too much alcohol.

If you are staying at home, you could try exercising indoors, with lots of free online classes. Or try an easy 10-minute home workout.

www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/10-minute-workouts

Carry on doing the things you enjoy

If you are feeling worried, anxious, lonely or low, you may stop doing things you usually enjoy.

Try to focus on your favourite hobby if it is something you can still do at home. Or start a new hobby; read, write, do crosswords or jigsaws, or try drawing and painting. Whatever it is, find something that works for you.

If you cannot think of anything you like doing, try learning something new at home. There are lots of free tutorials and courses online.

www.lal.ac.uk



You can still stay social at home by joining others online; book clubs, pub quizzes and music concerts are just a few of the things to try.

Do not stay glued to the news

Try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone.

You could set yourself a specific time to read updates or limit yourself to checking a couple of times a day.

Use trustworthy sources – such as www.gov.uk/coronavirus or www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19 - and fact-check information from the news, social media or other people.

Other support and helplines

Foodbank Vouchers

If you are in receipt of a qualifying benefit or are struggling financially, you may be eligible for a foodbank voucher. Please call Fylde Council's Community Hub on 01253 658448 for further guidance.

www.fylde.foodbank.org.uk



Financial Support

To assist people to self-isolate, the government has announced that individuals on low incomes will be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment of £500, if they meet certain criteria, in order to support them through their self-isolation period.

The payments are only available to people who have been told to self-isolate on or after 28th September 2020.

www.fylde.gov.uk/self-isolation-payment

If you live in rented accommodation or your own home, you may be able to claim Housing or Council Tax Benefit.

www.fylde.gov.uk/benefits/housing-benefit-and-council-tax-reduction

If you are on a low or reduced income, we recommend you check with the DWP to see if you're able to claim Universal Credit or any other benefit during this period.

www.gov.uk/universal-credit

Support for Community Organisations

The Council for Voluntary Service Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde (CVSBWF)

The CVS www.cvsbwf.org will operate a round of small grants to Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector organisations in order for them to help support people who are struggling due to COVID-19.

The maximum that can be awarded is £5,000 per organisation and a wide range of bids are being encouraged from a minimum of £300 up to a small number to the £5,000 maximum to fund projects that:

- meet the immediate need of residents who are struggling to afford food and essentials due to COVID-19
- provide advice and information to residents affected by COVID-19 to help them access longer term support they might need, such as benefits, debt advice or employment support
- provide emotional and mental health support
- help address social isolation
- demonstrate how significant numbers of residents most affected by COVID-19 will benefit from these funds and which geographical areas and issues are being addressed

Applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis. The application window for this round of funding will close on Friday 4th December.

www.cvsbwf.org/covidgrants

Keep yourself appraised of what support programmes have been approved by visiting the Council for Voluntary Services' website to see what you might access.

Stay in the know

Keep up to date with the latest COVID guidance and Fylde Council services by following us on social media or subscribing to our newsletter. Any new information will be posted directly through these channels, so if you are following us, you'll be the first to know.

www.fylde.gov.uk/sign-up-to-our-newsletter

www.facebook.com/fylde

www.twitter.com/fyldecouncil