

Cost-of-Living Hardship Fund 2023/24

Progress Update

The following table provides a short update on delivery across each of the thematic areas of the cost-of-living hardship programme.

Theme	Partner(s)	Funding Agreed	Current Status
1. Support to Children and Families	Schools via Education Authority	£260,380	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 121 schools confirmed following expression of interest process (68%) ▪ Coverage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North 29 (64%) - East 23 (68%) - West 46 (87%) - South 22 (50%) ▪ Projects focussed on food poverty, support with uniform/stationary and period poverty initiatives ▪ All very positive feedback being received from schools ▪ Majority of schools have returned monitoring forms – still working with 28 schools to return monitoring information
	Sponsored/Community Day-Care (Children 0-10 years age / vulnerable children)	£24,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 23 sponsored daycare providers participated in a winter food initiative ▪ Each partner provided warm, nutritious and substantial meals to early years children ▪ 16,042 meals were provided over a 4 month period and 1,187 children benefitted from this service ▪ Feedback from the scheme indicates it was extremely beneficial for children and families and would very much welcome more consistent year round funding of the programme
	Save the Children	£100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hardship funding enhanced delivery of STC's early years grant programme across Belfast. ▪ Delivery commenced on 1st Jan. 2024 ▪ Referrals through 13 referring partners Sure Starts and community referral partners ▪ 276 Family applications to the programme ▪ 913 individuals supported (314 adults & 599 children)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 38 pregnant mothers at the time of application <p>Early data analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 83% lone parent families • 36% of families had 3+ children in the home (largest family 8 children) • 22% families identify as coming from differing ethnicity background or mixed family ethnicity. • 47% reported a health condition/disability. • 70% are in receipt of Universal Credit • 35% unable to work due to illness or disability. • 35% with caring responsibilities for a child or other family member • 16% employed FT/PT • 61% living in social housing • 17% temp accommodation
	Family Support Hubs (network of 11 including Colin)	£175,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ £94,500 spent supporting 793 families. ▪ Supported families provided with a voucher for food or utility costs ▪ 1,271 families benefitted from the support ▪ Feedback very positive – opens the door to families that haven't engaged before who can then access further wraparound support e.g. advice, budgeting
2. Support for Individuals & Families in Immediate (Emergency) Need	SVDP	£75,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported over 1,000 families and funding fully spent by 31 March ▪ Good geographical spread & has complemented existing provision ▪ 3,398 individuals supported - £55 voucher per household for food/meals.
	Age NI	£50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Age NI provided vouchers for food to the value of £100 ▪ Criteria: individual needed to be in receipt of benefits due to income, health, disability or care needs or as a carer or in hardship for other reasons/circumstances ▪ £45k in total supported 445 vulnerable older people supported with all vouchers disbursed by 31 March 2024 ▪ Referrals via Age NI Services (direct care, wellbeing and advice services)
	Generalist Advice Providers	£20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consortium of 5 Belfast Advice Groups provided vouchers to 20 advice providers throughout the city ▪ Consortium covered North, South, East, West & Central Belfast

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 180 £100 fuel vouchers provided to individuals and families in emergency need ▪ Advice workers identified individuals in need and offered support ▪ Good geographical coverage across Belfast supported
	Trussell Trust	£30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivery commenced in December 2023 ▪ North Belfast Foodbank – 1743 individuals received foodbank packages totalling £15,600 ▪ Dundonald Foodbank – 1665 individuals supported totalling £9,233 ▪ Southwest Foodbank – 1,100 individuals supported totalling £10,023 ▪ Three foodbanks across Belfast have delivered the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food Packages delivered (921) - People supported (2295) ▪ Feedback has been very positive but has highlighted increasing demand from residents all year round. Currently, need is outstripping stock in all foodbanks.
	Fareshare	£40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delivered 39 tonnes of food across Jan-March across 40 groups in Belfast ▪ SSM, Food Banks, Asylum, Homelessness Provision, Mindwise, Day Centres, Church Groups, Salvation Army ▪ Retail Value of £80,000 – benefit outweighed the value of funding ▪ 3,565 individuals supported ▪ Good geographical spread across Belfast ▪ Funding very much welcomed
3. Enhance Capacity of Existing Structures & Programmes	Winter Wellbeing Community Programmes	£15,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A range of programmes for children & young people, older people and families have been/are being delivered in 26 Council community centres. ▪ These have included provision of a hot meal or nutritious food/healthy snack. ▪ 7 Independently managed community centres have also received support to deliver programmes. ▪ 2,161 individuals supported, mostly pensioners groups / mother and toddlers groups using the centres as well as period products for centres.
	Warm & Well Programme	£75,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support included gas/electric vouchers to the value of £49, with households able to receive a maximum of two vouchers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New e-voucher scheme launched on 23 January to streamline process ▪ 630 households supported ▪ NEA have enlisted 22 trusted stakeholders to support referrals 																																										
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Social Supermarkets	£165,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 21 SSMs across the city either offering physical supermarket or food vouchers. ▪ Visits to SSMs over last few weeks have provided very positive feedback on the programme and the support that it offers. ▪ SSMs report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rising numbers of users and concern about final migration to Universal Credit. ▪ Number of users is constant; pressure on households is all year round. ▪ Stark increase of those using service that are employed. “in-work poverty” increasing at an alarming rate. ▪ Longer term strategic funding is needed. 																																										
TOTAL	£1,029,380																																											