

From: The Minister

Craig Mealey
Belfast City Council
Legal and Civic Services Department
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS

Via email: MealeyC@belfastcity.gov.uk

Dear Mr Mealey

Hardship Programme Funding

Thank you for your letter dated 16 February 2026.

The Hardship funding provided by my Department in 2022/23 was non-recurrent and councils were advised that funding in future years would not be available.

As previously noted in my letter to your Chief Executive, Mr John Walsh, I will continue to remain committed to providing services that help people who have fallen on hard times through initiatives such as the Social Supermarket Scheme, Discretionary Support Scheme, Affordable Warmth Scheme as well as the Winter Fuel Payments to those who are eligible.

My Department does not have any responsibility for taxation, including energy company profits.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Lyons', written in a cursive style.

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities