



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

# Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 24 March 2026

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## Welfare and Financial Advice Team Update – review of activities 1 October to 31 December 2025

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with an update regarding the support issued as part of the Household Support Fund during the period 1 October - 31 December 2025 and the wrap around support provided by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team.

### Recommendations

#### The Committee is asked to:

1. Note the report and is invited to ask questions regarding its content.

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Enabling economic opportunities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

## **1. Implications**

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

### ***Finance and Procurement***

- 1.1 The report sets out the specific schemes that are being implemented to support residents with the cost of living – both statutory and national initiatives. The Household Support Fund scheme identified in the report is not directly funded by the Council. The Welfare and Financial Advice team was added to the permanent staffing structure from 1 April 2025, and the work priorities will reflect both local and national issues that are facing the community.

*Completed by: Richard Wyles Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer*

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 There are no specific governance implications connected with this report. Decision-making associated with financial support schemes should follow an agreed process and should demonstrate strong governance arrangements to support their implementation.

*Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager*

### ***Human Resources***

- 1.3 The increasing impact of low economic activity continues to affect mental health and emotional wellbeing of employees. The Welfare and Financial Advice Team workplan will therefore link closely with the internal Wellbeing Group to support colleagues.

*Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Head of HR)*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 to ensuring healthy and strong communities and being a high performing council. This report, and the service provided through the Council's Welfare and Financial Advice Team strives to deliver these priorities.

- 2.2. The third Welfare and Financial Advice report was presented to this committee on 10 December 2025, which can be found here at item 36: [Agenda for Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, 10th December, 2025, 10.00 am | South Kesteven District Council](#)
- 2.3 Previous Cost of Living reports have been present prior to this date. These reports have provided background regarding the responsibilities of the team, the allocation of Household Support Fund (HSF) funding across the county and the development of the Household Support Fund.

### Household Support Fund – 1 October 2025 to 31 December 2025

- 2.4 The total amount of funding for SKDC (2025-26) is £458,452. The district funding could be subject to change as the year progresses if districts within Lincolnshire are unable to allocate their funding. This is monitored regularly and if this occurs, there will be a re-distribution to the remaining districts by Lincolnshire County Council. SKDC will not be redistributing any of their funding – it is anticipated all funding will be distributed (£441,100) with £17,352 required for administrative costs.

District area	% of District allocation	Approx Allocation (£)
East Lindsey	24%	£785,917
Boston	10%	£327,465
South Holland	12%	£392,958
Lincoln	16%	£204,379
North Kesteven	11%	£360,212
<b>South Kesteven</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>£458,452</b>
West Lindsey	13%	£425,705
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£9,631,345</b>

### Delivery plan and funding distribution for SKDC Residents

- 2.5 The delivery plan and funding distribution as of 31 December 2025 is detailed below:

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Q3 Update	Q3 value awarded (£)
1	£9,000	2%	Lincolnshire Community	Contribution towards Warm Packs for 2025 –	Winter pack scheme started	<b>£9,000</b> <b>On track</b>

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Q3 Update	Q3 value awarded (£)
			Foundation (LCF)	as part of county-wide 'Warm welcome' working group  This will be removed at source with LCC making payment direct to LCF	in November 2025. Charis account was set up with £8,000 to enable purchase of winter packs by 3 <sup>rd</sup> party Organisations within the district. £1000 was put towards the upkeep of the warm space hub.	
2	£22,922	5%	SKDC Administration + Preventative Measures	Various administration costs of the scheme – such as printing and posting of vouchers + costs towards Preventative measures workshops.	This is ongoing with various spend throughout the administration of HSF  April 2025 to March 2026	<b>£5,731</b>  <b>On track</b>
3	£45,845	10%	3 <sup>rd</sup> party Referrers	This will be set aside for referrals that have come from 3 <sup>rd</sup> party organisations distributed throughout the year.	Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed October to December 2025  This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.7 and 2.8	
4	£59,598	13%	Outreach Work/ Pensioners	Vouchers will be distributed as an outcome of outreach visits depending on the needs.  Priority will be given to pensioners.	Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed October to December 2025  This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.7 and 2.8	

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Q3 Update	Q3 value awarded (£)
5	£91,690	20%	HSF7 Vouchers – Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)	Support for residents not in receipt of an income related Benefit that are struggling financially. The payment will be made in two instalments in July and December.	Round 1 funding has been issued to LCF (£45,845)  Referrals opened 4 August and will close on 26 September  Second round funding (£45,845) has been issued for spend between January to March 2026 referrals	<b>£45,845 issued in Round 1</b>  <b>£45,845 Issued in Round 2</b>
6	£229,236	50%	SKDC HSF7 Vouchers – Welfare & Financial Advice Team	Support for those specifically in receipt of an income related benefit that are struggling. This will be split over 2 intensive periods.	Target for distribution from 4 August to 26 September 2025 (Round 1) is £114,618  Target for distribution from January to March 2026 (Round 2) is £114,618	<b>£118,369 issued in Round 1</b>  <b>£75,560 issued in round 2 (13 January to 28 February 2026)</b>

2.6 The distribution for **method 1 (warm packs)** has changed for 2025. The packs will be produced by Charis Grants Ltd. who will send the pack directly to the resident. The pack will be requested by an approved referral partner within the district, there are currently 33 from various organisations, including SKDC. Referrals are limited to a £100 spend limit to ensure the fund is managed effectively. Items available for purchase are heated throws, rechargeable hot water bottles, heated underblanket, self-heated mattress topper, 15 tog duvet, heated bodywarmers, heat the home pack (light bulbs, insulation tape , radiator heat reflector panels, winter warmth bundles (fleece blanket (non-electric), water

bottle, hat, scarf and gloves) and complete warmth pack (energy efficient light bulbs, Insulation tape, radiator heat reflector panels, thermos flask and heated throw).

- 2.7 For HSF round 1, a total of **961 vouchers** has been issued during the 7 week period from 4 August 2025 to 22 September 2025, to the **value of £170,364**.
- 2.8 Whilst it is appreciated this is an update for Q3 2025/26, HSF round 2 opened on 13 January 2026 and closed 28 February 2026. It is important to update the committee regarding the support provided during round 2. A total of **740 vouchers** have been issued, to the value of **£99,160** so far.
- 2.9 Open applications closed on the 28 February 2026 to enable processing of the 220 outstanding applications before 31 March 2026. The expected amount to be awarded will be £37,000. Applications awaiting vouchers to be issued are **80 with an expected value of £12,000**.
- 2.10 Applications will continue to be received from third party trusted partners and teams within the council up to 31 March 2026. The details for distribution are as follow in methods 3, 5 and 6.
- 2.11 **Method 3:** Third Party Organisations have requested the following vouchers which have been administered by SKDC's Welfare and Financial Advice Team.

Category	Number	Value
Food	102	£11,800
Energy	0	£0
Wider Household Essentials	0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>£11,800</b>
<b>Total funding available</b>		<b>£45,845</b>
<b>Remaining funding to 31 March 2026</b>		<b>£34,045</b>

- 2.12 **Method 5:** Lincolnshire Community Foundation have issued the following vouchers.

Category	Number	Value
Food	420	£69,445
Energy	0	£0
Wider Household Essentials	0	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>£69,445</b>
<b>Total funding available</b>		<b>£91,690</b>
<b>Remaining funding to 31 March 2026</b>		<b>£22,245</b>

2.13 **Method 6:** SKDCs Welfare and Financial Advice Team has issued the following vouchers.

Category	Number	Value
Food	1,184	£189,300
Energy	6	£353
Wider Household Essentials	37	£4,276
<b>Total issued</b>	<b>585</b>	<b>£193,929</b>
<b>Total funding available</b>		<b>£229,236</b>
<b>Remaining funding to 31 March 2026</b>		<b>£35,307</b>

### Timeline for voucher distribution

2.14 The timeline for voucher distribution has been:

- October 2025 to December 2025 - open for third party referrals from support agencies and low-income pensioners.
- 13 January 2026 to 28 February 2026 - open to public applications.
- March 2026 – applications will continue to be received from trusted organisations until 31 March 2026. Assistance will be predominantly by supermarket vouchers and Energy Vouchers.

### Welfare and Financial Advice Team – additional wrap around support (up to end Q3 2025/26) - £101,075

2.15 The team received and processed **418** referrals, with **£26,750** of financial support provided.

2.16 From 1 April 2025 to 31 December 2025, the team received and processed **1,608 referrals**. The total value of financial support identified and awarded was **£101,075**.

2.17 Each referral requires an initial 30 to 60 minute appointment with the resident to discuss their personal and household financial circumstances, to determine whether they are receiving all support available to them.

2.18 Following this, the officer will undertake further appointments and identify the wrap around support which is available – this can take the form of:

- Charity grants
- Council Tax Support
- Discretionary Council Tax and Housing Payments
- Foodbank vouchers
- White Goods

- 2.19 The team will also liaise with tenancy support (if they are an SKDC tenant, they will be referred into the Tenancy Support Team) and other wider support such as referrals into Citizens Advice. The support provided is in-depth and is always tailored to the individual's needs.
- 2.20 Once the referral has been completed and the triage discussion has been undertaken with the resident, details are then passed to the HSF Officer (within the Welfare and Financial Advice Team) who will process the HSF voucher. The vouchers are processed in bulk and issued on a weekly basis (unless urgent need has been established).

### **Action plan – 2025/26**

- 2.21 The action plan for additional activities to be undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26 is detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.22 The plan continues to be monitored throughout 2025/26. An updated plan will be developed for 2026/27 and will be presented to this committee at the next meeting in May 2026.

## **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. Member of Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.
- 3.2. It is recommended to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Welfare and Financial Advice Team continue to review the financial impacts of cost of living and implement activities within the action plan to support residents of South Kesteven.

## **4. Reasons for the Recommendations**

- 4.1 The recommendation will ensure Members are aware of the advice and financial support available to all residents of South Kesteven.

## **5. Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 – Welfare and Financial Advice Team action plan (2025/26)