



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee


Wednesday, 6 May 2026

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran,
Cabinet Member for Housing

Welfare and Financial Advice Team update - review of activities 2025/26

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 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 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Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?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 direct legal implications associated with noting this report. The Household Support Fund is administered in accordance with central government guidance and within the Council's existing legal framework, including duties relating to equality, data protection, and the fair and consistent allocation of financial support.

Completed by: Graham Kitchen, Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)

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 continue to 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 fourth Welfare and Financial Advice report was presented to this committee on 24 March 2026, which can be found here at item 8: [Agenda for Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 24th March, 2026, 2.00 pm | South Kesteven District Council](#)

Household Support Fund – 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

- 2.3 The total amount of funding for SKDC (2025-26) was £458,452 with all funding distributed (£435,530) with £22,922 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
South Kesteven	14%	£458,452
West Lindsey	13%	£425,705
Total	100%	£9,631,345

How funding was distributed for SKDC Residents

- 2.4 The delivery plan and funding distribution is detailed below:

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Confirmed use	Value awarded (£)
1	£9,000	2%	Lincolnshire Community Foundation (LCF)	Contribution towards Warm Packs for 2025 – as part of county-wide 'Warm welcome' working group This was removed at source with LCC making payment direct to LCF	Winter pack scheme started in November 2025. Charis account was set up with £9,000 to enable purchase of winter packs by 3 rd party Organisations within the district. £1000	£9,000 (from LCC) This was re-used for other support by SKDC

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Confirmed use	Value awarded (£)
					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.	Administration of HSF for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026	£22,922
3	£45,845	10%	3 rd party Referrers	This will be set aside for referrals that have come from 3 rd party organisations distributed throughout the year.	<p style="text-align: right;">£45,845</p> <p>Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed:</p> <p>October to December 2025 Mid-February to March 2026</p> <p>This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.7</p>	
4	£59,759	13%	Outreach Work/ Pensioners	<p>Vouchers will be distributed as an outcome of outreach visits depending on the needs.</p> <p>Priority will be given to pensioners.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">£59,759</p> <p>Vouchers available during period Household Support Fund referrals are closed</p> <p>October to December 2025 Mid-February to March 2026</p> <p>This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.8</p>	
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	Round 1 funding issued to LCF with referrals being open from 4 August 2025 to 26	<p>£91,690</p> <p>This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.8</p>

Method	Amount	% of fund	Distributing organisation	Purpose	Confirmed use	Value awarded (£)
				payment will be made in two instalments in July and December.	September 2025 and 12 January to 31 March 2026	
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.	Distribution from 4 August to 26 September 2025 and 12 January 2026 to 31 March 2026	£229,236 This is included in the total award in paragraph 2.6 and 2.9

2.5 The distribution for **method 1 (warm packs)** changed for 2025. The packs were produced by Charis Grants Ltd who sent the pack directly to the resident. The pack was requested by an approved referral partner within the district, there were 33 from various organisations, including SKDC. Referrals were limited to a £100 spend limit to ensure the fund was managed effectively. Items available for purchase were 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).

2.6 During 2025/26, a total of **2,601 HSF vouchers** were issued to the **value of £372,091**.

2.7 **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	104	£12,500
Energy	0	£0
Wider Household Essentials	0	£0
Total	104	£12,500
Total funding available		£45,845
Remaining funding to 31 March 2026		£33,345

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

Category	Number	Value
Food	520	£77,936
Energy	0	£0
Wider Household Essentials	0	£0
Total	0	£77,936
Admin Costs		£13,754
Total funding available		£91,690
Remaining funding to 31 March 2026		£0

2.9 **Method 4 and 6:** SKDCs Welfare and Financial Advice Team has issued the following vouchers.

Category	Number	Value
Food	1,903	£260,871
Energy	8	£464
Wider Household Essentials	66	£6,566
Total issued	1,977	£267,901
Total funding available		£288,995
Remaining funding to 31 March 2026		£21,094

2.10 **The remaining funding** has been issued to Charis for ongoing voucher support.

Welfare and Financial Advice Team – additional wrap around support (2025/26) - £117,199

2.11 The team received and processed **2,566** referrals, with **£117,199** of financial support identified and provided.

2.12 Included within the additional wrap around is energy support, with **£117,199** of financial support identified and provided. The team are able to access energy vouchers through the HACT Energy Fund for pre-payment meters. A maximum of 3 x £49 vouchers can be requested per application. The fund can only support residents in social housing. An additional fund was open over the winter where up to £600 was allocated to resident's accounts to assist in clearing their arrears. Applications are subject to funding being available.

- 2.13 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. As SKDC is a member of the Fusion 21 Network we can access energy vouchers through HACT Energy Fund. A maximum of three £49 vouchers can be requested at a time.
- 2.14 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
- Energy support – this makes up around **19% of the additional wrap around support** and includes energy vouchers from HACT, referral to Better Housing Better Health for support as well as applications to energy charities to apply for assistance in clear arrears.
- 2.15 The team will also liaise with SKDC tenancy support (if they are an SKDC tenant, they will be referred into the Tenancy Support Team) and other wider support organisations such as referrals into BBC Children in need, Better Housing Better Health, Bhive, Bourne United Charities, Citizens Advice South Lincolnshire, Department for Work and Pension, Job Clubs, NHS neighbourhood Teams, Len Pick Trust, Money and Pension Service, Percy Bilton Charity and Shine Lincolnshire. The support provided is in-depth and is always tailored to the individual's needs.
- 2.16 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 and 2026/27

- 2.17 The action plan for additional activities undertaken by the Welfare and Financial Advice Team during 2025/26 is detailed in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.18 An updated plan is currently being developed for 2026/27 and will be linked to the Crisis and Resilience Fund scheme, which is being presented to Cabinet on 2 June 2026.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Members of Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the report and are invited to ask questions regarding its content.

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)