



Democratic Support

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Published 8 October 2015

#yourplymouth

YOUR PLYMOUTH 'TO FOLLOW' SUPPLEMENT

Monday 12 October 2015
4 pm
Council House, Armada Way, Plymouth, PL1 2AA

Members:

Councillor Jordan, Chair
Councillor Kate Taylor, Vice-Chair
Councillors Churchill, Damarell, Drean, Martin Leaves, Michael Leaves, Morris, Rennie, Riley and Sparling.

Co-opted Representative:

Steve Meakin, Money Advice Co-ordinator Devon and Cornwall.

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED A REPORT FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION UNDER AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.

Tracey Lee
Chief Executive

YOUR PLYMOUTH

6. EMERGENCY WELFARE SCHEME UPDATE (Pages 1 - 4)

The Panel will receive an update on progress with the Emergency Welfare Scheme.

EMERGENCY AND WELFARE FUND UPDATE



OCTOBER 2015

I BACKGROUND

- I.1 In April 2013, Government transferred the administration of the national Social Fund from the Department for Work and Pensions to the Local Authority. Funding was made available to Local Authorities to develop their own schemes to provide support for Local Residents; the funding was for a two year period.
- I.2 During September/October 2012, PCC undertook extensive public consultation on 8 key principles for the development of an Emergency and Welfare Fund (EWF) and ran focus groups for local professionals. The 8 principles consulted on were:
- Limiting the scheme to Plymouth residents
 - Delivering the awarded support from the most appropriate location
 - Limiting the amount of spend to the amount of funding we receive from Government
 - Eligibility based on benefit entitlement and/or low income
 - Providing crisis and welfare responses
 - Minimising administration costs and administering from PCC
 - Providing goods and services not cash
 - Limiting awards.
- I.3 The principles were also taken to a Customer and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel (CCOSP) task and finish group in October 2012. Feedback from consultation and scrutiny generally demonstrated a high level of support for the 8 principles.
- I.4 83% of those consulted were in agreement with applying the 8 key principles to underpin the development of a localised scheme. The CCOSP task and finish group also broadly endorsed these principles and made a number of recommendations to support the effective development of a scheme.
- I.5 Initial funding was paid to Housing Benefit Departments and the PCC scheme was agreed at Cabinet on 15 January 2013 (See [EWF Cabinet agreement](#) item I28). The funding was for two years and by implementing an efficient administration process and robust governance we were able to create a framework for financial planning up until 31 March 2016. No further funding is anticipated beyond that date.
- I.6 A number of actions have been taken to ensure that funds within the existing scheme are protected for the most vulnerable customers. This has included removing some items from the scope of the scheme, and capping the amount paid for ancillary items (e.g. cutlery). Whilst this had some impact, the absence of future funding and continual reduction of the remaining funds requires us to explore alternative schemes to ensure residents are protected.
- I.7 The EWF scheme consists of two main elements. Community Care Grants and Crisis Payments. Community Care Grants (CCG) are non-repayable grants awarded for a range of expenses including household equipment. They are intended to support vulnerable people to return to, or remain in, the community or to ease exceptional pressure on families.

1.8 Crisis payments are available to anyone (whether on benefit or not) who cannot meet their immediate short-term needs in an emergency or as a consequence of disaster. Examples include:

- where there has been a change in the Department of Work and Pension benefit entitlement (for example a sanction, a suspension or a change of circumstances),
- where the applicant is waiting for a new benefit claim from the Department of Works and Pension to be assessed.
- the applicant just started a new job and will not be paid for a period of time (evidence of employment will be required).
- a crisis has affected the applicant's ability to manage day to day essential living expenses.

2 EWF SPEND

2.1 The opening balance at the start of financial year 2014/15 was £1,048,568.

Table 1 - 2014/15 spend

	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr. 4	Total
Community Care Payments	£99,360	£62,441	£27,905	£43,025	£232,731
Crisis Payments	£37,165	£34,644	£27,612	£17,587	£117,010
Total Customer spend	£136,625	£97,085	£55,517	£60,612	£349,741
Total Admin	£19,124	£19,124	£19,124	£19,124	£76,498
Total EWF	£155,749	£116,209	£74,641	£79,736	£426,239

2.2 This spend represents:

- 1,170 crisis payments at an average of £100 per claim;
- 463 community care grants at an average of £500 per claim.

Table 2 – 2015/16 Spend to date and full year projection

	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15	July-15	Total	Full Year Projection
Community Care Payments	£10,820	£12,720	£17,420	£13,160	£54,120	£162,360
Crisis Payments	£8,655	£7,458	£14,473	£7,260	£37,846	£113,538
Total Customer spend	£19,475	£20,178	£31,893	£20,420	£91,966	£275,898
Total Admin	£6,375	£6,375	£6,375	£6,375	£25,499	£76,498
Total EWF	£25,850	£26,553	£38,268	£26,795	£117,465	£352,396

2.3 This spend represents:

- 295 crisis payments at an average of £128 per claim;
- 112 community care grants at an average of £483 per claim;
- A 50% increase in requests for crisis payments compared to same period last year (649 v 430 requested).

3 PROFILE OF SPEND

3.1 Since implementation of the scheme, residents living in the top 10 most deprived wards in Plymouth made the highest number of successful applications. In order of the highest proportion of successful applications, they were:

- St Peter and the Waterfront (25% - 989 applications)
- Devonport (14% - 585 applications)
- Sutton and Mount Gould (10% - 391 applications)
- Stoke (8% - 339 applications)
- Efford and Lipson (6% - 243 applications)
- St Budeaux (6% - 226 applications)
- Honicknowle (5% - 223 applications)
- Budshead (4% - 173 applications)
- Drake (4% - 161 applications)
- Ham (3% - 130 applications)

3.2 Since April 2015:

- 66% of crisis payments made were for food, representing a total value of £25k. In addition to these cash payments, 259 food bank vouchers have been issued in this financial year to date. Food bank vouchers are issued by PCC on behalf of the providers and are at no cost to the EWF scheme
- 18% of crisis payments were for gas/electric
- 7% were for travel

3.3 Analysis of a sample of successful applications since April 2014:

- 51% were 25 – 39 year olds
- 23% were people who describe themselves as having a disability
- 16% were people under 25 years
- 10% were students.

3.4 Since the scheme began in 2013, of all successful applications:

- 33% helped to support households with children
- 16% supported residents describing themselves as disabled
- 85% supported residents from the 10 most deprived wards in the city.

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