

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Anti-Poverty and Inequality
DATE	26 November 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Supporting People with the Cost of Living 2025/26 – Update on Progress and Spend
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/25/231
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Michelle Crombie on behalf of Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Susan Thoms, Fairer Aberdeen and Anti-Poverty Manager
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1, 3.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee on the outcomes achieved to date from the Cost of Living Funding allocated for 2025-26.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the Supporting People with the Cost of Living Crisis 2025-26 Update Report;
- 2.2 Notes that it is expected that allocations will be fully spent by April 2026; and
- 2.3 Agrees to reallocate £27,600 underspend in funding awarded to Aberdeen Health And Social Care Partnership for Telecare equipment and Power of Attorney in 2024-25 to the Scottish Welfare Fund.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 On 5 March 2025, Aberdeen City Council agreed to provide £1 million to mitigate against the ongoing cost of living crisis. On 11 June 2025 the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee agreed recommendations for how this funding should be spent.
- 3.2 This report provides an update on progress. Amount allocated and spend to date is shown in Appendix 1. A total of 15,391 people have been supported up to the end of September. £438,902 has been spent, 44% of the total allocation.

- 3.3 As a response to the cost of living crisis 137 clothing packs have been provided for teenagers; 59 people have been supported with the direct provision of infant formula; and 54 tonnes of free food has been delivered to 75 organisations across the city.
- 3.4 Early intervention measures have seen 3,329 families receiving £30 Winter Clothing Payments; 64 people have received Discretionary Housing Payments; 1,254 people have been supported at Cyrenians Community Hub; 15 vulnerable women in Torry have been supported; and 275 people have received financial support to address fuel debt.
- 3.5 To prevent further financial hardship 940 elderly and disabled people and unpaid carers have benefitted from financial advice; 15 people have received cash payments to purchase infant formula; 500 weekly free pantry shops have been provided for people affected by food insecurity; 71 people have received financial advice in community settings; and media activities are being developed to address stigma and raise awareness of issues facing those in poverty.
- 3.6 No funding has yet been spent on Christmas Panto Packages for low income families, as this takes place in December.
- 3.7 There is no requirement for reallocation of resources within the current financial year as it is expected that funds will be fully spent by April 2026. See Appendix 2 for further information.
- 3.8 Through end of year financial procedures it has been identified that Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership has £27,600 remaining of the 2024-25 allocations of £20,020 to provide telecare equipment and £10,000 to arrange Power of Attorney for low income families.
- 3.9 It is proposed to allocate this £27,600 to the Scottish Welfare Fund, which is facing a rising demand. Requests for Community Care Grants are up 8% (Apr–Sep 2025 vs same period 2024) and Crisis Grants are up 6% over the same period. Allocating this underspend will help the Council provide essential support to households in crisis and those struggling to afford basic items, reducing the risk of poverty and hardship in Aberdeen. The External Advisers to the Committee support this approach.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposals agreed by Committee on 25th June are within the £1million financial allocation approved by Council at the meeting on 5 March 2025, leaving a balance of £0 to be allocated. This is a one-off fund that has no recurring commitment.
- 4.2 Organisations awarded funding have provided an interim report detailing funding spend to date and any potential underspends. No underspends are anticipated at this point.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Funds allocated to third parties will be subject to Aberdeen City Council's standard terms and conditions.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	There is a risk that failing to support people struggling to meet the increased cost of living could lead to longer term economic harm.	Delivery of initiatives to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable, alongside work and support across services, partners and third sector.	L	Yes
Compliance	There is a risk of failing to comply with a Council decision to spend the allocated £1m to help the most vulnerable in our community with energy costs.	Delivery of measures to help mitigate the cost of living impacts for the most vulnerable, alongside work and support across services, partners and third sector.	L	Yes
Operational	The project delivery in this report requires some resource from the	Strong partnership working with organisations identified will ensure this risk is minimised.	L	Yes

	Council, but mainly through partners			
Financial	There is a risk of failing to deliver and spend the approved budget	All organisations are on target to deliver and spend their allocated funding by April 2026.	L	Yes
Reputational	There is a risk that failing to support people struggling to meet the cost of living could lead to reputational damage.	The delivery described in this report demonstrates a clear commitment to supporting people with the cost of living.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No environmental risks identified	N/A	N/A	N/A

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting People with the Cost of Living Actively support Aberdeen's foodbanks and provide assistance with bulk purchasing where desirable.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Stretch outcome 1: 20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they would not have enough food to eat and/ or not be able to heat their home by 2026.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	Stretch outcome 12: Reduce homelessness by 10% and youth homelessness by 6% by 2026, ensuring it is rare, brief and non-recurring with a longer term ambition to end homelessness in Aberdeen City.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	No assessment required. I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Michelle Crombie, Strategic Lead, Prevention and Community Empowerment on 24 October 2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Working in Partnership for Aberdeen - Supporting people with the cost of living 2025/26 CORS/25/132](#)

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - Supporting People with the Cost of Living 2025-26 – Update on Progress and Spend

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Supporting People with the Cost of Living 2025-26 – Update on Progress and Spend

Proposal	Lead Organisation	Allocation £	Spend to 30.9.25	Expected spend by 31.3.25	People supported to 30.9.25	Progress to end September 2025
Support for low income families and children	AberNecessities	£161,113	£39,768 (25%)	100%	237	137 packs of clothes, including jackets, pyjamas, underwear, t-shirts, hoodies and shoes, have been provided for teenagers and 100 volunteers have been supported by the volunteer coordinator, who is the first point of contact for incoming donations and supporting volunteers to ensure donations are suitable for families that are supported.
Infant formula	AberNecessities	£14,129	£1,730 (12%)	100%	59	59 families in need of support have received 119 tins of infant formula, many of them delivered within 24 hours by volunteer drivers.
Food procurement	Food Poverty Action Aberdeen	£271,197	£101,530 (37%)	100%	8,625	CFINE have been procuring ambient food and 54 tonnes of this has been distributed to 75 organisations across the city. The list of food items purchased is based on previous purchases, which are items commonly used in emergency food parcels, as reported by partners.
Winter clothing	Aberdeen City Council, Revenues & Benefits	£130,000	£99,870 (77%)	100%	3,329	The funding has been used to support families who have received the School Clothing Grant with a Winter Clothing Payment. The application window for School Clothing Grants remains open until 31 March 2026. There is also an exercise currently in progress to identify families who are eligible for the School Clothing Grant and have not received it through LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker).
Discretionary Housing Payments	Aberdeen City Council, Revenues & Benefits	£100,000	£98,547 (99%)	100%	64 households	The funding awarded to date has specifically helped citizens with a shortfall in the Local Housing Allowance or for income related reasons. 64 households have been supported.
Community Hub rent and energy costs	Aberdeen Cyrenians	£48,600	£24,202 (50%)	100%	1,254	1,254 people have been supported and the building was used 54 times by community groups. 105 group work sessions were held and 1,032 bags of essential items, including food, household goods, bedding, and clothing were provided. 47 people were supported to access housing and there were 1,896 support appointments.

Proposal	Lead Organisation	Allocation £	Spend to 30.9.25	Expected spend by 31.3.25	People supported to 30.9.25	Progress to end September 2025
Christmas Panto Package for low income families	Aberdeen Performing Arts	£10,000	£0	100%		This activity will not take place until December.
Supporting vulnerable women in Torry	Bethany Christian Church	£4,364	£1,682 (39%)	100%	15	Funding has been used to support 15 vulnerable women in Torry with benefit claims, citizenship claims and encouraging some new clients into volunteering opportunities. Further activities are being planned for the group, and new clients have been recruited and are receiving support.
Fuel Poverty	SCARF	£95,000	£22,305 (23%)	100%	276	276 people have been supported over 11 postcode areas in the city. £4,896 of fuel vouchers have been issued, £3,940 in non-prepayment meters payments, and £8,070 of fuel debt write off, Smart meter support and supply caps removed. They anticipate greater need over the winter months.
Financial advice for elderly and disabled people and unpaid carers	Aberdeen Care and Repair	£38,359	£19,179 (50%)	100%	940	250 households have received a benefit entitlement check and 198 households have been awarded benefits and/or charitable funding. 335 households have accessed a local or national grant and 407 have accessed other Care and Repair services. Client financial gain is £236,361.
Cash First infant formula	CFINE	£12,000	£780 (7%)	100%	15	<p>The infant formula pathway has been accessed by several individuals, providing a much-needed crisis response service for parents/carers who cannot access formula milk through usual channels. They issue vouchers which are redeemed for cash at Paypoint outlets, or by issuing cash directly to a beneficiary's bank via BACS.</p> <p>CFINE are currently undertaking a full review of the referral process to increase access, identify potential need, and increase direct referral partners. They are working with NHS Grampian and have recently engaged with the Maternity hospital to increase the number of referrals.</p> <p>They have provided projected figures for the rest of the funding period and will update on a regular basis.</p>

Proposal	Lead Organisation	Allocation £	Spend to 30.9.25	Expected spend by 31.3.25	People supported to 30.9.25	Progress to end September 2025
Community Pantries	CFINE	£66,500	£16,625 (25%)	100%	500	500 free pantry memberships have been allocated, enabling individuals to shop for free. Pantry members are able to 'shop' for a variety of products, including meat, fish, fruit & veg, store cupboard staples, and non-food, providing more choice and taking some pressure off household budgets.
SAFE financial advice outreach	CFINE	£28,738	£7,185 (25%)	100%	71	SAFE Outreach has engaged with 71 beneficiaries in 16 community-based locations, ensuring that welfare rights/ benefits advice can be accessed locally. Total client financial gain to end September is £8,273.
Poverty Awareness	SHMU	£20,000	£5,500 (28%)	100%	7	Funding so far has been used for planning, ideas development, and the early stages of media projects. The development of the project will include a film exploring cyclical poverty and attempts to break it, a film and podcast exploring the rise of prejudice in our communities and how this is impacting on people seeking asylum, and minority ethnic communities more broadly, a film about accessibility in Woodside, a podcast focusing on Seaton, and capturing progress on the manifesto project being developed by the CFINE lived experience group.
	TOTAL	£1,000,000	£438,902 (44%)	100%	15,391	