



# Cost of living support

Support and advice services to help people across the city with the high cost of living



**Belfast**  
City Council



[www.belfastcity.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/costofliving)



# Purpose of today's meeting

## Cost of living support

Officers are seeking to update members of the cost-of-living task group on the following:

- **Hardship Programme 2023/24** – Provide members with a comprehensive overview on delivery and key achievements
- **Delivery Partner Update** – Partners will provide members with a brief overview of their respective projects and any lessons learned
- **Consideration of 2024/25 Hardship Programme** – Provide members with an overview of the current budget position

# Design Principles... Recap...

## Cost of living support

- **Dignity** – will be delivered in a way that maintains the dignity of the person accessing support
- **Needs driven** – will be targeted at those most in need and can demonstrate this
- **Wraparound** – any individual accessing emergency support should be offered access to other wraparound services to help address need on an ongoing basis
- **Promotes sustainability** – will not displace or duplicate but add value to what is already in existence
- **Delivery Infrastructure** - proper infrastructure is in place to support delivery, monitoring and evaluation



# Funding Allocations

## Cost of living support

Theme	Partner(s)	Funding Allocation (indicative)
1. Support to Children and Families	Schools via Education Authority	£250,000 (increased to £260,380)
	Sponsored/Community Day-Care (Children 0-10 years age / vulnerable children)	£24,000
	Save the Children	£100,000
	Family Support Hubs (network of 10)	£175,000
	2. Support for Individuals & Families in Immediate (Emergency) Need	SVDP
	Age NI	£50,000
	Generalist Advice Providers	£20,000
	Trussell Trust	£30,000
	Fareshare	£40,000
3. Enhance Capacity of Existing Structures & Programmes	Winter Wellbeing Community Programmes	£15,000
	Warm & Well Programme	£75,000
	Social Supermarkets	£165,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£1,029,380</b>



# Hardship Programme

2023-24



Belfast  
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Total Funding Allocated  
**£1,002,852**

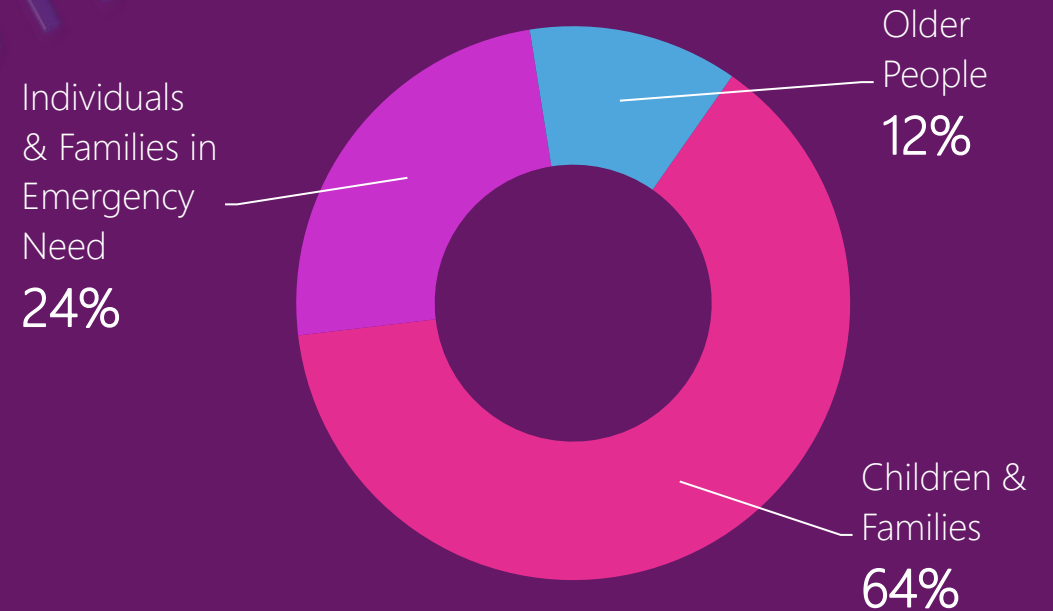


Number Of Individuals Supported  
**42,050**

## Total Funding Per Project



## Proportion of Total Funding Per Area of Support



# Hardship Programme

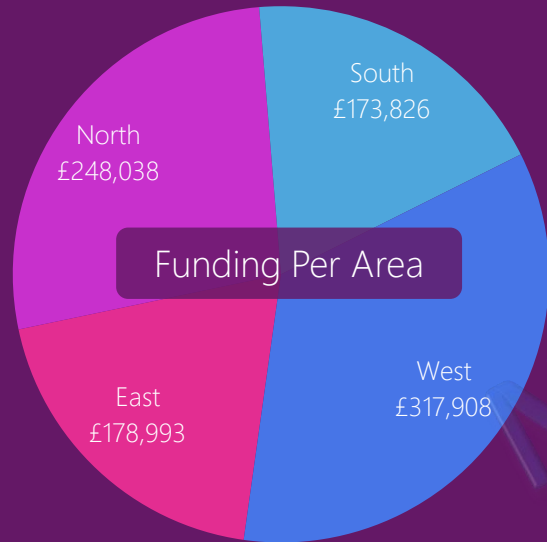
2023-24



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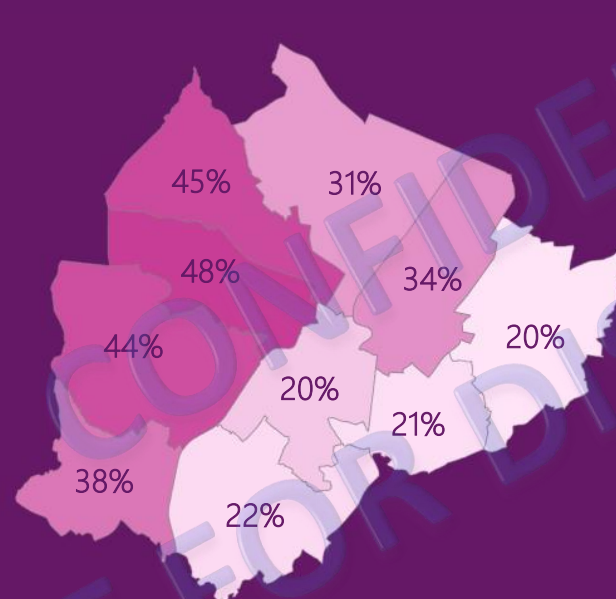
Total Funding  
Across Belfast City Council

£1,002,852

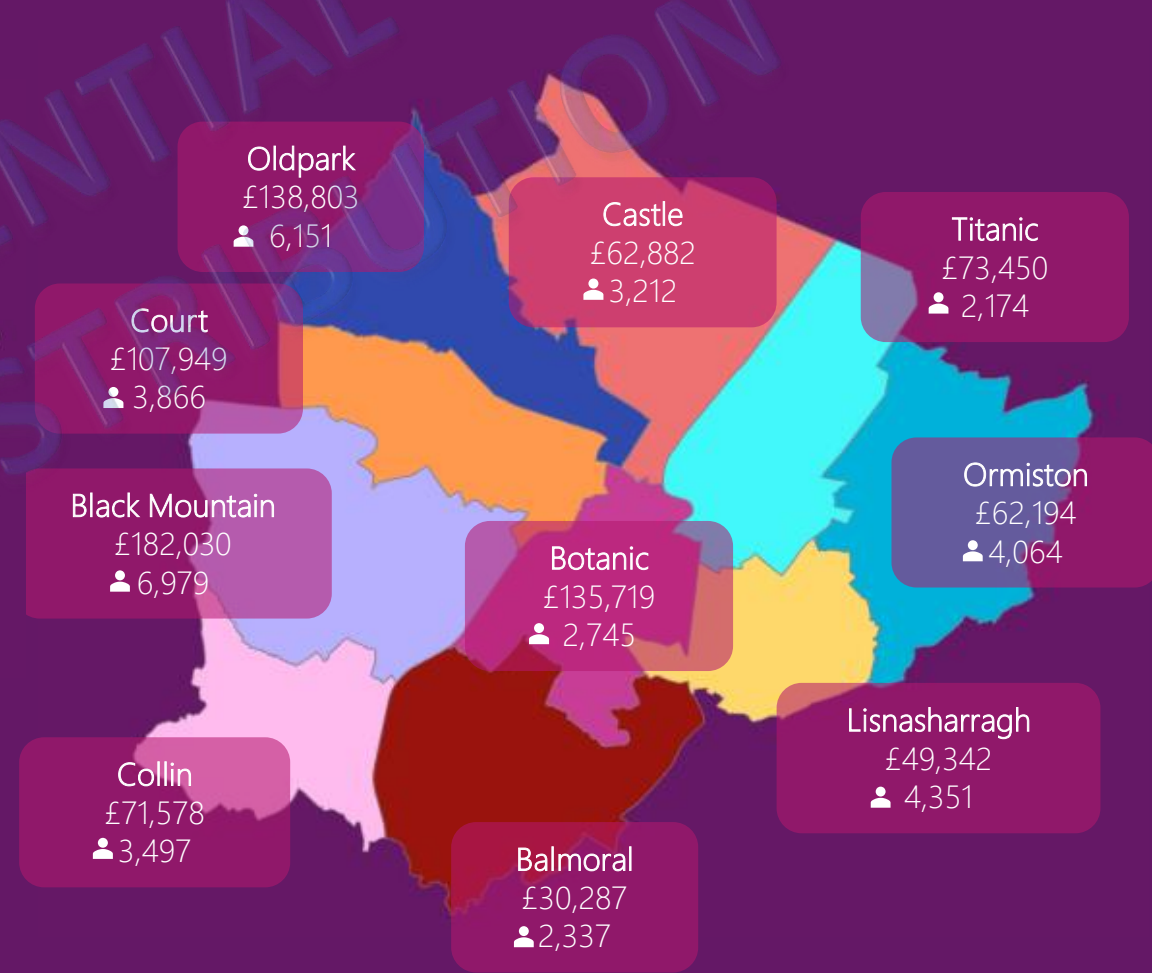


## 2021 Census

Proportion of households deprived in 2 or more dimensions by District Electoral Area



## Area Based Funding Per District Electoral Area\*



\*Fareshare Homeless Connect have been excluded from District Electoral Area count.

A proxy based on household count has been used to illustrate funding disrupted across Area/District Electoral for National Energy Action and Fareshare Homeless Connect.



Number of individuals supported



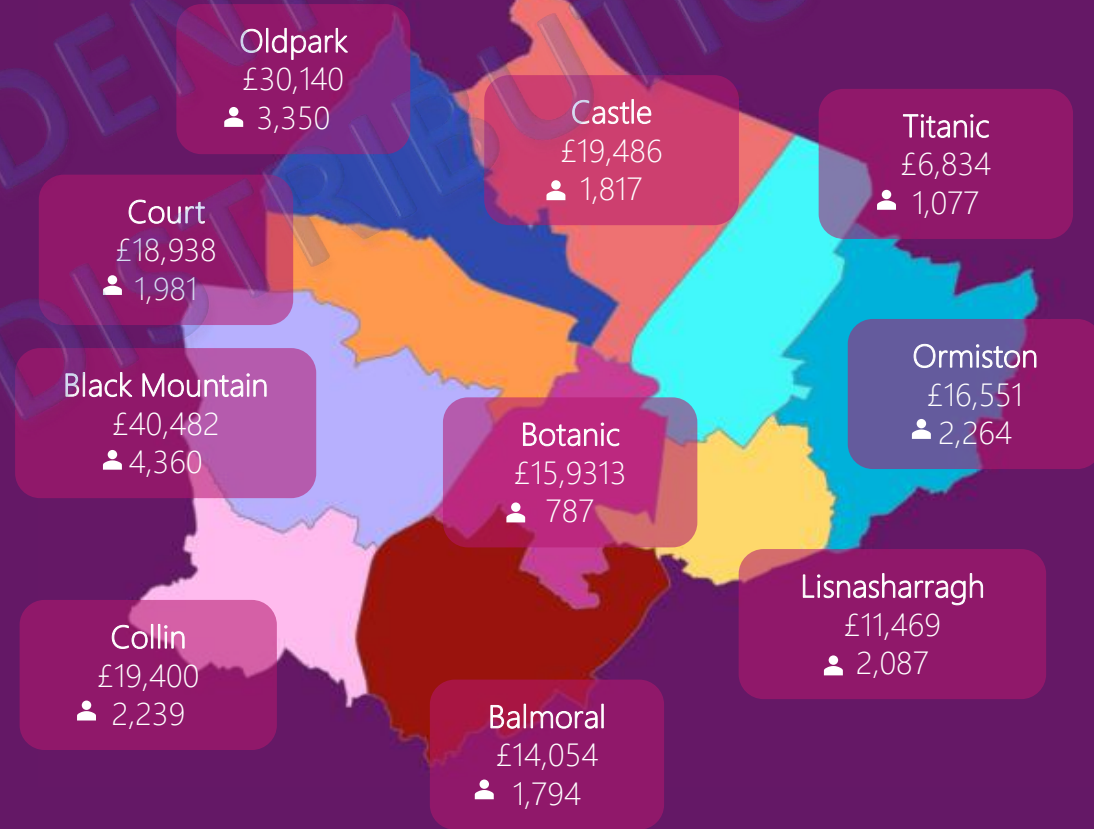
Total School Programme  
Funding  
**£193,283**

\*Total of £260,380 paid to schools – still awaiting  
29 Schools monitoring returns

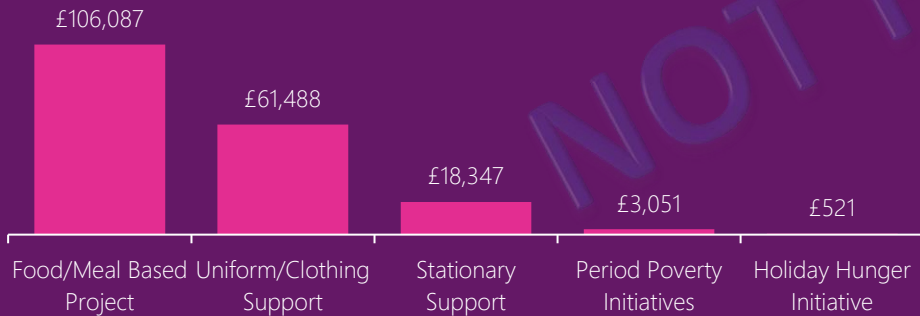


Number Of Students  
Supported  
**21,756**

Area Based Funding Per District Electoral Area



Type of Support



# Communications

# Cost of living support

## Help for those facing hardship

Last winter we supported thousands of people through our £1 million hardship programme in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

The programme was designed to target children and their families in need of help, plus individuals and families who needed emergency support such as help with food, fuel and other bills. We also provided funding to organisations in the city already providing support to people affected by poverty.

Below are some of examples of the support provided.



### Support for individuals and families in immediate need

Over 3,500 individuals and 40,000 families received emergency support, including help with food and fuel costs, through funding we provided to St Vincent de Paul, Age NI, the Trussell Trust, Fareshare and generalist advice centres across the city.

“I'm struggling with the price of things and have had to make major cut backs with my food shopping. Knowing my two sons get an additional hot dinner in the afternoon before home time has taken a lot of pressure of me as I use the food bank every week.”

### Support for children and families

- **Schools:** We supported 121 schools (more than 2/3 of all schools in the city). This included over 5,000 children who were fed at breakfast clubs. Other types of support included help with the cost of uniforms, stationery and period products.
- **Day care providers:** 16,042 warm and nutritious meals were provided to 1,187 young children.
- **Family Support Hubs:** 793 families received help with their food and utility costs.
- **Save the Children:** 276 families, 913 individuals (352 adults, including 38 pregnant mothers, and 599 children) received help with household costs.

“Myself and my husband work full time and don't pick our children up until after 5pm. Knowing that our children are getting a hot meal was of great benefit to us and definitely a big support, particularly with rising costs.”

### Enhancing existing programmes

- **Social supermarkets:** 8,400 people received help with food and other costs at 17 social supermarkets which received funding.
- **Warm & Well Programme:** 630 families and individuals received help with their gas and electric bills through National Energy Action.
- **Community centres:** Over 300 people were supported through programmes which including provision of free hot meals and nutritious food and snacks.

“This funding really is great as a parent that suffers from mental health issues. There are days I don't cook hot meals for myself or the children, so knowing they have a nutritious meal in nursery helps me a lot.”

For contact details of organisations in Belfast offering support for those in need, visit [www.belfastcity.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/costofliving)

Our hardship programme was possible thanks to funding from the Department for Communities.

## Your views on City Matters

How often do you read City Matters?

- Always
- Sometimes
- This is the first time

City Matters is delivered to your door twice a year.

Do you think this is:

- Not often enough
- About right
- Too often
- The council should not provide a publication of this kind
- Don't know

What areas appeal to you most in City Matters?

- A-Z services
- Historic features (eg City Hall)
- Bin information
- Business articles
- Green section
- Zoo section
- Competition
- What's On
- Seniors' section

It is a good way for me to find out about the council?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Any other comments?

Thank you for taking the time to tell us what you think.

Now return this slip to:  
Freepost, RTHB-SJTZ-TZUJ, Belfast City Council, BT1 5GS  
(no stamp required)

Or email your comments to  
[MarketingandCorporateCommunications@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:MarketingandCorporateCommunications@belfastcity.gov.uk)

Belfast City Council complies with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. The personal information you provide on Your Views will only be used if we need to respond to you about your feedback. It will not be used for any other purpose and will be deleted after use.

**City Matters** article highlighting the overall Hardship Fund and impact including quotes will be delivered to all households' w/c 24<sup>th</sup> June

**Vox Pop videos** – Videographer booked for 14<sup>th</sup> June for videos with schools explaining the positive impact the hardship fund has had on their pupils and families. Video interviews will be organised for all funded projects throughout the year to highlight the impact of the hardship fund and used for councils' socials

**Hardship / Anti-Poverty event** in Oct to showcase the great work being done in this space. Further details to be shared in future.





# Delivery Partner Updates

## Cost of living support

Partners will provide a brief 5-minute overview of the support provided, to include:

- **Cohort** – description of the cohorts that were supported
- **Activity** – overview of activities
- **Referral routes** – overview of how people access services, including any assessment of need or eligibility criteria applied
- **Learning & Lived Experience** – what are the lessons learned from delivering the programme and what is needed going forward?



# Hardship Programme 2024/25 Budget Position

## Cost of living support

Current available Hardship Programme 24/25 budget (from identified underspends – this may increase)	£223,400*
Commitment to provide 25% funding to 21 Social Supermarket Projects (April SP&R)	£122,627
Current Balance for Hardship Programme (this is likely to increase with DfC Social Supermarket Funding)	£100,773

- There is still no certainty around funding from DfC for SSM or Hardship Funding for 2024/25
- There is currently no allocation from Council towards a 2024/25 Hardship Programme



# Future Funding Framework

**Cost of living**  
support

## Key Considerations:

- Are members content to recommend support with the approach of enhancing capacity of existing structures & programmes
- Cohorts to support i.e children & families, older people, individuals and families in emergency need -
- Development of a procurement funding framework will allow funding to be distributed at pace to organisations with experience/capacity and provide AGRS assurance
- Feedback from delivery partners states that annual recurrent funding throughout the year is needed and will have more impact

# Next Steps & Target Dates...

## Cost of living support

Task	Target Date
Seek initial views & feedback from Cost-of-living task group	Now
Update SP&R Re: Delivery of 2023/24 Programme and budget position for 2024/25	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2024
Develop a funding framework in more detail based on Members Feedback	July/August 2024
Seek feedback from Cost-of-Living Task Group	September 2024
Seek ratification of agreed approach from SP&R	September 2024
Market-Place event in City Hall in October to enhance signposting and referral processes across the city – potential establishment of stakeholder network	October 2024
Establishment of Delivery Mechanisms	October 2024
Design & Distribution of Cost-of-Living Booklet	October 2024
Delivery of Hardship Programme 2024/25	November 2024 – March 2025