

INVERCLYDE HOUSING ASSOCIATION'S WIDER ACTION UPDATE - SUMMARY REPORT JANUARY TO MARCH 2023

Joint Projects

Energy Redress Application – Financial Fitness

Oak Tree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association

Financial Fitness received feedback on their unsuccessful application on 11th January 23. The feedback was very positive and in discussion with Home Energy Scotland and Financial Fitness, the application was revised and re submitted on 26th January 23. The biggest issue will be that there is not a lot of funding allocated to this round across the UK (£m in total).

The project aims to support households with: fuel debt; provide support and information in relation in relation to energy efficiency savings across households (undertaken through home advice visits); undertake negotiations with energy suppliers regarding debts and re-payments; benefit / health / income maximisation checks and the completion of applications to ensure that all households are maximising heat schemes including: Warm Home Discount, registration with PSR; referrals to Home Energy Scotland.

Upon advice from Home Energy Scotland, the application was reduced to one full-time staff member for a two year period.

Social Housing Fuel Support Fund

Oak Tree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association, Larkfield Housing Association and River Clyde Homes

This project was co-ordinated by RCH, with the energy vouchers elements managed by The Wise Group

Funding awarded is detailed below:

- OTHA – 200 households @ £100 = £20,000
- CHA – 200 households @ £100 = £20,000
- LHA - 50 households @ £100 = £5,000

In addition, funding was allocated to Starterpacks towards the creation of warm boxes and items of cooking equipment (microwaves, slow cookers, air fryers) to help households keep warm and keep costs as low as possible.

OTHA have provided an additional £20,000 as match towards this – ensuring that more tenants can be supported through this project and linked into The Wise group service delivery.

Tenancy Support Service

Oak Tree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association

This project comes to a close on 31st March 2023, with Tracey leaving after 9 years delivering a Tenancy Support service for Cloch, Oak Tree and Larkfield Housing Associations.

Simon Community Scotland (SCS) provide updates on service delivery – due to timescales, I think it's unlikely that we will receive a full Q4 update report. We have been sent the monitoring spreadsheet. I have contacted Simon Community Scotland requesting a full end of year report for 2022/23.

This project was part-funded (50%) through SFHAs Homelessness Prevention Fund to March 23. CLS continue to attend the quarterly meetings with other funded projects and SFHA – providing verbal updates as required. In January 2023, we prepared and delivered a short presentation to update SFHA and other funded projects on our delivery.

The Q3 monitoring report was prepared and submitted mid-January. Both the Q4 and the overall final report are due mid April 2023.

Advice for All

Oak Tree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association

Financial Fitness are open for face-to-face appointments and are continuing to provide additional phone-based appointments to support clients with all welfare benefit and money advice needs.

Financial Fitness are in the process of moving into their new offices within Oak Tree Housing Association – everything should be finalised by Friday 31st March 23.

Housing Associations will be issued invoices and updates directly on a quarterly basis.

Starter Packs Inverclyde

Oak Tree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association

Starter Packs Inverclyde continue to provide essential support for vulnerable households across Inverclyde. Referrals come from a number of partners and Housing Associations can continue to refer onto this service. Between April 2022 and February 2023, Starter Packs supported 437 households, this includes 248 individual people and 190 families including 356 children.

Housing Association	Total Direct referrals	Total In-direct referrals	Total Referrals	Total Pack Cost to Date
				Funding Received
Oak Tree Housing Association	25	41	66	£5,531 £6,000
Cloch Housing Association	23	32	55	£5,005 £5,500
Larkfield Housing Association (Link)	20 (1)	23 (9)	43 (10)	£6,102 £3,000

Starter Packs provide a variety of different packs (11No) and the referrals do not reflect the variety or number of different packs that are given to each household.

Oak Tree Housing Association

Pathways to Construction

2022/23 Q4 has seen this project coming to a positive conclusion. The project has been funded since it started in 2020 by the Scottish Government through their Investing in Communities Fund. OTHA were notified on 15th February 23 that their continuation application had been unsuccessful.

Over the last few months, CLS has been supporting Robert Dowds with the development of Oak Tree Housing Association's DLO and an update on this is included within OTHA's April Board Papers.

A final report will be prepared and submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of April detailing all work on the project and the achievement of the project against outcomes.

In relation to employability targets, the project met the following:

- Of the Long-Term Unemployed Individuals recruited in partnership with Inverclyde Council. Five were employed through this programme; three have moved into Employment and one has transferred to Branchton to complete his contract.
- Of the young people recruited for 6 months through the ICF monies – six were employed through this and to date, four have moved into employment. One trainee, who finished on 31/3/23 has an interview next week.

These are really good outcomes.

NLCF – Cost of Living Application

An application was prepared to the above fund, to support households that are struggling most with the cost of living. Funding will support both OTHA and Starterpacks to purchase items and to undertake basic installations within households identified to be most vulnerable to the current crises. This application was approved on 25th January 23 to the value of £20,000.

Through this funding the following is being delivered:

- Heat the Home project – an allocation of 1 month salary towards R Dowds / DLO to undertake small scale improvements within households (hanging curtain rails; thermal curtains; draft proof measures; installation of radiator foil) - £5,200
- Creation of a series of Warm Packs for households - these could include bedding, duvets, blankets, thermal mugs. Cooking items – soup makers, slow cookers. Additional items for individuals/households – thermal curtains, electric blankets, draft excluders. These are being organised by OTHA staff team. £14,800

SFHA Winter Hardship Fund

This application was submitted on the 27th January 23 and was approved to the value of £22,054 for spend to the end of March 23, This funding has been allocated towards:

- Grieve Road Community Pantry to support Housing Association tenants to access a number of free shops (equivalent of 450 shops) - £10,350
- Financial Fitness – contribution towards the welfare benefits advice service – £1,704
- Food vouchers for OPTHAs tenants – this fund should prioritise OTHAs West Station community - £10,000

CLS liaised with The Trust and Financial Fitness to arrange for invoices to be raised for these elements. Further discussion is required with The Trust in relation to how these shops are allocated moving forward.

Grieve Road Community Centre

Staff from CLS attended a couple of meetings with the Voluntary management Committee. This group are being supported by staff from CLD, who have circulated a very basic survey via contacts and social media to see what local people would like to see happening within the centre.

The group, with the support of CLD workers accessed funding through Inverclyde Council's Warm Hands of Friendship Fund and have been running sessions weekly.

The group face a few challenges:

- There are no resources available within the centre, and small amounts of funding are requested towards this. The centre has a new kitchen, but there is nothing within it that can be used by the group to enhance or support engagement. The group have prepared a list of items and there was a request to OTHA for a contribution towards this.
- Hourly rental is £35/hour – which is reduced if the event is organised and led by CLD. This is expensive, especially for a new voluntary group.
- There is no available / free Wi-Fi connection with the Centre.

There is support that OTHA can provide to this group, although clarification is required in relation to role of CLD and reducing risk of overlapping or contradictory support. From meetings undertaken:

Existing consultation is very basic and needs to be enhanced – we provided a couple of options of a more detailed engagement, that could also be used to support future funding opportunities and ensures that anything the group look to undertake within the centre is rooted within the community.

Social Isolation & Loneliness Fund

An Expression of Interest was submitted on 29/03/31 towards the costs of a p/t community connector to work with OTHA's community within West Station. This role will engage via phone calls and conversations, run small scale community cafes to get people out and about and develop a local walking group to improve physical health and wellbeing.

If approved, the full application is to be submitted at the end of April. Max grant that you can apply for is £24/year for three years.

Cloch Housing Association

My Cloch Plus

Cloch Housing Association was notified on 15th March 2023, that the Investing in Communities application for the Cloch Plus Project had been approved. The project had been put on a reserve list in February.

Subject to full approval of some (minor) variations, the project will:

- Employ 2 P/T Community and Wellbeing Officers. 1 existing post, 1 new post
- Employ 1 PT (equivalent to 1 day/week) Community Handyperson

These staff will support Cloch Housing Association tenants to tackle mental health, physical health and isolation across their most deprived communities. The project will ensure that local people are connected with wider services and empowered to make decisions that will positively impact their health and wellbeing, enabling them to thrive within their homes and their community.

In addition, this application included a mixture of revenue and material funding for Starter Packs Inverclyde to support them over the next three years.

Exact figures to be confirmed, but full allocation of £327,587 was awarded: £241,581 – CHA and £86,006 Starter Packs over three years 2023/24 to 2025/26.

During March, CLS has provided support in relation to revising costs and responding to Scottish Government queries.

Cost of Living Application

An application was submitted to the NLCF Cost of Living Fund to work with four community hubs to enhance their provision as warm hubs, to provide essentials that will help people keep warm within their own homes and vital food and fuel vouchers for families most in need.

The application for £23,400 was approved on 30th January 23 and was to be spent as follows:

- Cloch Housing Association - Warm items (blankets, socks, gloves, thermos, hot water bottles) - £8,900
- Belville Community Garden - Refreshments - £1,125 and Food/Fuel vouchers - £2,500
- Broomhill Community Hub - Refreshments - £1,125 and Food/Fuel vouchers - £2,500
- Gibshill Community Centre - Refreshments - £1,125 and Food/Fuel vouchers - £2,500
- Auchmountain Community Centre - Refreshments - £1,125 and Food/Fuel vouchers - £2,500

All spend on this project must be delivered by June 2023.

SFHA Winter Hardship Fund

This application was submitted on the 27th January 23 and was approved to the value of £16,004 for spend to the end of March 23.

Project spend as detailed below:

- Food insecurity: Delivering a Neighbours Night – delivery of a series of organised events that support local communities to come together to get to know each other and to access warm, healthy food. £1,800 allocated.
- Food Vouchers – £12,500 allocated towards households to purchase essentials and support food insecurity within households.
- Welfare benefits Advice & Support – additional resource availability through Financial Fitness to deliver drop-in support within Cloch offices and at organised events. £1,704

Golden Creatives

Initial conversations were held with staff regarding the development of an Awards for All application towards the delivery of a series of art and creative activities within Sheltered Housing complex.

CLS prepared a number of different ideas and provide some visuals for the Housing officer to take back to the local group. They have identified that they would most like to undertake reminiscence and art sessions. An application towards this will be progressed April 2023.

Larkfield Housing Association

Grow Larkfield / Power to Change

Development of this project is on-going with the Landscape Architect undertaking significant engagement with local groups. Jon Simmons has been working alongside Alec Galloway and the Power to Change Programme (Larkfield Youth Connections). Consultation and design workshops have been undertaken with local groups and school including: Larkfield Housing Association, Connect Youth Club, Little Larkies Mother and Toddlers Group, Youth Connections Drop-in for young people, WISHES Group, Book and Blether Group, St Andrews primary School, Aileymill Primary School and community wide consultation at the Meliora Community Festival.

Consultation is complete and a draft report has been prepared and submitted to Larkfield Housing Association mid-March 23.

SFHA Winter Hardship Fund

This application was submitted on the 27th January 23 and was approved to the value of £17,650 on 14th February 23 for spend to the end of March 23.

Project delivery as detailed below:

- Soup and a Blether – LHA will run this weekly within the neighbouring Larkfield Community Hall, ensuring that all vulnerable tenants can access a warm healthy lunchtime meal, alongside the opportunity to leave their house and engage with other members of the local community. 4-week allocation - £1,400
- Food Vouchers – allocation of £12,500 to be distributed across LHA tenancies’.
- Community Fridges – In partnership with Inverclyde Academy, Larkfield Family Centre and Larkfield Youth Connections a series of Community Fridges were established that would support families, young adults and older members of the community to access free food essentials when required. Allocation of £3,750 towards weekly stock ups, managed by Youth Connections.

