

INVERCLYDE HOUSING ASSOCIATION'S WIDER ACTION UPDATE APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024

Funding

Funding applications were submitted to the value of £356,045. Total funding secured (via funding applications approved during 2023/24) for all Housing Association partners: **£247,538**

This complements additional funding of £103,730 secured for the My Cloch Plus project (approved in March 2023 for delivery in 2023/24)

Joint Projects

Financial Fitness

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

Advice for All

The three Associations collectively provide £35,000 of funding to Financial Fitness to directly fund a dedicated advice service. Financial Fitness provided regular ring-fenced appointments over the financial year for Housing Association customers to access.

Through this funding, Financial Fitness have:

- Provided over 1,000 telephone appointments to Housing Association customers.
- Engaged with 638 Housing Association customers on a one-to-one basis – 475 of which were new customers. In relation to new customer's, 212 are from Oak Tree Housing Association, 209 from Cloch Housing Association and 54 from Larkfield Housing Association). In total, 1,490 advice interventions were provided: an average of 3.25 advice interventions/customer.
- Secured £615,898 worth of unclaimed benefits for these customers, an average annual financial increase of £1,296 per customer (note, as of 31/3/24 there are approximately £250,000 of claims still being processed)

A full report has been prepared by Financial Fitness and submitted directly to each Housing Association.

Energy Redress Application

Despite three attempts on an Energy Redress application led by Financial Fitness, the application was never approved. This would have ensured that energy advice and advocacy was available to Housing Association tenants.

Due to the volume of applications received, the Fund no longer gives detailed comments. In developing the application, we had been liaising with Home Energy Scotland, who reviewed our draft application and provided comments, and they agreed that it wasn't worth re-submitting for a fourth time. The fund has been extremely competitive and there is significantly less funding available at present than there was a few years ago.

Starter Packs Inverclyde

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

During 2023/24 all Housing Associations made a financial contribution towards the costs of Starter Pack Inverclyde. Due to increased referrals to Starterpacks, contributions continue at an increased level: Oak Tree - £6,000; Cloch - £10,000; Larkfield - £6,000.

Cloch Housing Association were awarded funding within their Investing in Communities Fund Application to support increased allocation towards packs and to contribute towards the Project Coordinators salary (circa 50% of salary costs)

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 2023 and March 2024, Starter Packs supported 406 households, this includes 224 individual people and 182 families including 301 children.

Housing Association	Total Direct referrals	Total In-direct referrals	Total Referrals	Total Pack Cost to Date
				Funding Received
Oak Tree Housing Association	42	27	69	£11,000 £6,000
Cloch Housing Association	25	47	72	£6,082 £10,000
Larkfield Housing Association	24	12	36	£7,288 £6,000

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.

Social Housing Fuel Support Fund – Round 4

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

Applications were submitted for all three phases of this fund. These were joint applications between River Clyde Homes, Oak Tree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association and Larkfield Housing Association

Phase 1 (led by RCH)

This application was towards staffing costs to support tenants / customers with energy advice and advocacy. Due to timescales available, the application was developed as a partnership with The Wise group. The application for £74,359.20 was approved in July 2023.

The funding will support 300 tenants most vulnerable to the impacts of fuel poverty across the four Housing Association. Support numbers will be broken down as follows: 150 RCH households; 60 OTHA households; 55 CHA households and 35 LHA households.

The tenants supported included those in crisis situations, such as self-disconnection; or no access to heat/electric. The service provided advocacy support to help the household to engage with their energy supplier, to access energy supplier initiatives such as PSR and also facilitated managed referrals.

Tenants accessing the service were provided with advice on energy billing, including onward referrals to existing partners and DWP to check that they were receiving all benefits they may be entitled to. They were also given simple energy efficiency and energy savings advice to try and reduce their household usage.

In total 256 referrals were made by the four partner RSLs to the service provided by the Wise Group and 186 of these households took up the opportunity of advice and support. They break down for each RSL is provided below:

RSL	Number of Referrals	Number of Households Supported
River Clyde Homes	105	74
Oak Tree Housing Association	67	56
Cloch Housing Association	72	48
Larkfield Housing Association	12	8
TOTAL	256	186

Phase 2 (led by Oak Tree Housing Association)

This funding enabled the Associations to access small scale warmth and/or energy efficient items that would support tenants to stay warm and maintain lower bills over the winter period. An application was developed and submitted for £82,775. SFHA review panel, approved partial funding of £69,975 on 14th August. Electric drying racks were not approved for funding. Funding allocation: Oak Tree – £14,800; Cloch - £14,250; Larkfield - £6,525

Phase 3 (led by Cloch Housing Association)

This funding enabled the Associations to provide tenants with fuel vouchers. An application was developed and submitted for £105,000. SFHA review panel, approved partial funding of £87,150 on 19th October. SFHA applied a suggested cap of £100/household to enable the wider funding pot to be distributed as widely as possible.

Fuel vouchers could be distributed via a cash first approach, direct payment to supplier or through formal vouchers / energy cards (charis). Cost allocation was as follows: Oak Tree – £16,800; Cloch - £16,800; Larkfield - £9,450.

Lottery Community Anchor Fund

Oak Tree Housing Association, Cloch Housing Association,

In January 2024, CLS liaised with staff from both Oak Tree and Cloch Housing Association to complete and submit the End of Grant report for the Lottery Community Anchor Fund. This was awarded in January 2023 and was used to support:

Cloch Housing Association

- Four community hubs (Broomhill, Belville, Gibshill and Auchmountain) – supporting them to provide a series of warm hubs and food and fuel vouchers for local people accessing the hubs.
- Provision of high tog duvets, duvet covers and fleece blankets for tenants.
- It is estimated that the project supported 740 tenants and local people (through the Hubs)

Oak Tree Housing Association

- Provision of energy efficient cooking items (Air fryers, slow cookers, microwaves and soup makers) and items that supported tenants to stay warm in the cooler, winter / spring / autumn months – including electric blankets, heated throws, hot water bottles.
- In total this project supported 270 tenants, with some tenants receiving multiple items.

Inverclyde Housing Support Service

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

There was a small amount of time allocated to this project during 2023-24, despite the project ending in March 2023. CLS prepared the and submitted the final report to SFHA in April.

Energy Activators

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

Despite the final claim being submitted in October 2022 and being approved, a change in staffing and managers within Energy Redress, together with an internal EST audit meant that additional queries were raised regarding this project.

There was a small allocation of time during 2023-24, as we needed to respond to a series of additional queries regarding delivery and spent. A complain was raised regarding the management and payment of the final claim and this was finally resolved (and paid) in October 2023.

Winter Hardship Fund - Evaluation

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

In April 2024, we completed the evaluation for this award from SFHA (delivery 2022/23).

- Oak Tree Housing Association - this funding was allocated towards food and fuel vouchers, an allocation towards the Grieve Road Community Pantry and an allocation towards Financial Fitness.
- Cloch Housing Association - this funding was allocated towards food vouchers for tenants and an allocation towards Financial Fitness to deliver drop-in support within Cloch offices and at organised events.

- Larkfield Housing Association -this funding was allocated towards Soup and a Blether session (6 drop-ins), food vouchers for vulnerable tenants and an allocation to Youth Connections towards the community fridges programme.

Oak Tree Housing Association – Individual Projects

Pathways to Construction

There were some final elements of the project to be completed, including the End of Project report to The Scottish Government. All work was completed by the end of April 2024. A report on the project outcomes achieved was included within our 2022/23 End of Year report.

Social Isolation & Loneliness Fund

In April 2024, a funding application was developed and submitted to the above fund. This was 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.

The application for £69,368 over three years, was submitted on 27th April. Oak Tree Housing Association received notification that this application was unsuccessful on 6th July. It should be noted that only 55 projects out of a total of over 600 applications were approved.

Community Investment Strategy

CLS have been working with staff to develop a new Community Investment Strategy for Oak Tree Housing Association. The aim of this Strategy is to ensure that the project's being developed and delivered meet the strategic requirements of Oak Tree Housing Association and the needs of your tenants and the wider communities that you operate within. This strategy will support people, places and communities to thrive.

The **draft** report was sent to Oak Tree Housing Association in February 2024.

Work undertaken:

- Place Standard Workshop - which aimed to explore the communities where OTHA has stock – their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Staff and Committee survey
- Tenants survey
- All questionnaire responses analysed
- Priorities workshop delivered
- Key priorities identified
- Identification of potential solutions and outline project proposals.

Cloch Housing Association – Individual Projects

My Cloch Plus

This project was approved in March 2023. CLS provided the following support:

- Revised project costs and respond to Scottish Government queries.
- Discuss the application and the outcomes / outputs that must be achieved – CLS met with SMT (15/05/24). This was followed up with a summary of the full application circulated to relevant staff across Cloch Housing Association. A meeting was also held with Mary, David and Louise (17th May) to review the application in more detail and discuss delivery against key targets.
- A list of referral partners was prepared, based on previous work undertaken and relationships developed – this was circulated to delivery staff
- We also reviewed and commented on the Health and Wellbeing Officer Job Pack – based on our experiences of supporting other Housing Associations with similar programmes.
- Continued ad hoc support is provided for the funding aspects of the project. CLS attended the monitoring session run by The Scottish Governments and completed the monitoring report and provided detailed information in relation to statistics and how compiled (as it contains several different projects). CLS met with project staff to discuss and review monitoring requirements, ensuring all data required is recorded.
- Meet with project staff to so that information was available to prepare the monitoring reports (6 monthly) and end of year reports

Kingsglen

CLS undertook a site visit to review the landscape works undertaken within the site and to determine whether the proposed wildflower seeding on the embankments adjacent to the housing should still go ahead.

A short report was compiled highlighting a series of suggestions and outline recommendations for the site / wider estate. This was submitted on 6th September 23.

Golden Creatives

An Awards for All application for £8,489 was prepared that aimed to provide a series of art-based projects to support Cloch Housing Association's residents within Elliot Court Retirement Complex to come together, share information, encourage deeper connections and promote healthy aging.

Additional queries were raised by the funder, and these were responded to. Project was unsuccessful as "it was considered weaker in value for money and in wider community involvement than other projects under consideration."

Community Investment Strategy

We have been working with Cloch Housing Association to prepare a new Community Investment Strategy. The aim of this Strategy is to ensure that the projects being developed and delivered meet the strategic requirements of Cloch Housing Association and the needs of your tenants and the wider communities that you operate within. This strategy will support people, places and communities to thrive.

We have held two workshops during August 2023 that aimed to explore the communities where Cloch Housing Association has stock. Initial questionnaires were developed and circulated; however, the project was put on hold due to staffing restructures. It will be further developed during 2024/25 and quarterly updates provided.

CVS Cost of Living Fund

We prepared two applications for this fund, with a total of £10,000 being awarded to Cloch Housing Association through these applications.

- First application was submitted 27/4/23, awarded £5,000 – funding for supermarket vouchers for 65 households.
- Second application submitted 13/6/23, awarded £5,000 – funding to support 45 households, primarily households with children or households identified through Tenancy Support programme.

Larkfield Housing Association – Individual Projects

CVS Cost of Living Fund

Application was submitted towards the continuation of the Soup and a Blether sessions and Food vouchers – total funding request was £5,000. LHA were notified that Soup and a Blether costs were not eligible and amended the application requesting £5,000 towards food vouchers. This application was approved.

Warm Hands of friendship

Following a conversation about funding for the Soup and a Blether session. A conversation was held with Inverclyde CLD and a small application (£1,054), for spend to the end of March 2024 was submitted to the Inverclyde Council Warm Hands of Friendship Fund. This was approved on 19/2/24

Larkfield Hall support

CLS staff attended a meeting with Committee Members from Larkfield Community Hall to discuss requirements and support that could be provided to help the Committee grow (secure SCIO status) and secure funding, upgrade works within the Hall and support engagement with energy suppliers. CLS await information from the group.