Hampshire County Council Fuel Poverty Payments Scheme

Background

The aim of Hampshire Local Welfare Assistance, Fuel Poverty Payment (FPP) scheme is to provide support to vulnerable people within Hampshire who are facing a fuel crisis. Access to the scheme was previously via the Local Welfare Assistance Line. From 1 April 2020, as part of the Hitting the Cold Spots service, the Environment Centre will act as the referral route.

Process

Self-referrals and agency referrals will be accepted.

1. Confirmation that the client has sought money or debt advice from a recognised agency and an action plan is being / has been developed (confirmed by tEC or referral agency).
2. Other options for reducing fuel costs explored by tEC (or confirmed by referral agency)
3. Decision to award FPP made by tEC adviser (Record kept)
4. tEC advisor sends referral to SCRATCH for fulfilment
5. Voucher emailed by SCRATCH for collection by client. Vouchers can be sent to referral agencies or direct to clients.
6. Client redeems vouchers at local PayPoint. The client will be required to show ID with their name and address.

Amounts

- Up to £25 single person
- Up to £49 family

If required, this maximum amount can be split (in any proportion) into 2 vouchers to cover the cost of gas and electricity.

Eligibility

Individuals and households who may be eligible for assistance must live within the county of Hampshire (excluding Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council areas). They will be living in social housing, private rented accommodation or owner occupied homes, AND be vulnerable due to:

- Financial crisis (e.g. delayed benefit claims or appeals)
- Age (elderly or frail)
- Family circumstance (dependent children under 5 or pregnancy)
- Mental illness
- Long-term limiting health condition
- Leaving institutional/supported accommodation.

- Other short term crisis for which they are receiving support*

*A payment would only be made where a trusted referral agent can demonstrate the individual/household is taking action and have a plan regarding how to resolve the crisis in the short, medium and long-term.

It is reasonable to provide FPP on more than one occasion where;
- There is a genuine and new crisis or
- Local cold weather plans have been actioned (this will require verification by the local housing authority) or
- a vulnerable resident is experiencing an ongoing crisis and there is evidence that they are fully engaged with an appropriate agency and actively working towards resolving the issues

A household should not receive more than 3 vouchers in any 12 month period.

If an agency is calling on client's behalf, the applicant must be known to the referring officer through engagement with their organisation and have a plan of ongoing support in place.

GDPR

This process involves the collection and sharing of personal data. All organisations involved must ensure that they operate within GDPR. This includes gaining explicit consent from clients that their data can be shared with tEC and SCRATCH, who directly get in contact with them.

Additional information

Due to the limited funds available for this scheme, it is important that applications are only made where all other available resources have been exhausted. For this reason, it is expected that frontline workers will establish what benefits or awards people are already in receipt of, or could apply for, to inform whether an application is needed.

All and any payment made through the Hampshire FPP provision is discretionary. Awards are not solely dependent upon meeting eligibility but also take into consideration additional factors such as the availability of alternative and reasonable solutions as examples.

British Gas customers cannot top up their meter key using PayPoint. For British Gas key meter customers, request a PayPoint cash voucher, which your client can take to any PayPoint store, where they exchange it for cash. British Gas customers then need to go to a Post Office or [Payzone](#) store to top up their key, or top up online if they are on Smart Pay As You Go.