

Declaration of Interest

Background

The Council already provide Crisis support to residents through several different schemes.

In 2022-23 additional funds have been made available to enhance the level of support available both locally in Milton Keynes and via the national Household Support Fund.

The Council are seeking Expressions of interest for a 12-month scheme to support the Council with the following requirements. The Council would like this service to commence in September 2022 and run until September 2023 (at which point the scheme would be reviewed and extended subject to funding and priorities).

A helpline for enhanced support for residents

A helpline that supports direct expert advice, with the aim to improve the wellbeing of residents experiencing crisis or exceptional hardship relating to energy / fuel poverty, particularly warmth as we approach the winter period.

The service requirements are:

- **Requirement 1** - A free to phone helpline for residents to call direct or for referral from services in Milton Keynes
- **Requirement 2** - Advisors that can work with Milton Keynes service areas where a need is identified that can be supported directly by the Council, for example food, essential living items or help with rent or Council Tax arrears (where there is crisis or exceptional need). This could be in the form of affordability assessments with residents at home or over the phone that identifies wider need,
- **Requirement 3** - An end-to-end service for residents and MK employees focused on intensive support for energy assistance,
- **Requirement 4** - Support and train the Councils officers on advice and support available to those not requiring intensive support i.e., what support is available nationally. The review of existing referral and sign-posting information used by the Council will also be required (an energy advice handout)
- **Requirement 5** - Work with the Council on engaging communities on the support available including direct referrals from the Council on those identified as having a propensity for intensive support
- **Requirement 6** - Maintain contact with residents requiring intensive support providing ongoing assessments of the need for –
 - **Requirement 6.1** - Continued advice, including debt advice
 - **Requirement 6.2** - Financial support based on an allocation of funding from the Councils Household Support fund or via other accessible support nationally i.e., Government / Energy providers).
 - **Requirement 6.3** - Enforcing the need for residents to maintain and prioritise costs relating to essential living such as rent, Council Tax and utilities
 - **Requirement 6.4** - Ensure any safeguarding or welfare concerns are referred to the relevant agency through the course of engaging with residents, including safeguarding
 - **Requirement 6.5** Identify any opportunities for energy efficiency improvement, including any available grants / financial aid

- **Requirement 7** - Provide regular reports on direct support for energy costs, energy efficiency measures (tracking outcomes of what has been delivered/installed, value of grants secured, energy saved / costs reduced) and wider actions by client group i.e., Working families with children, Families and Individuals without children and pensioners
- **Requirement 8** - Data on carbon reductions

This element would expect to support contacting via press or mail or text messaging / social media in the region of 15 – 25,000 residents to support engagement from household in need.

The Council would expect a proportion of those contacting the helpline (10-15%) to require direct support and advice or referral to the Council or wider national help. Out of these the Council would like to see results of any home visits or assessments, over the period 1000 - 2000 with some of those, perhaps leading to more intensive interventions in the region of 1000 households. If direct support for installation of energy efficiency works because of grants were delivered in the region of 100 – 150 properties this would be seen as adding value to wider initiatives for home efficiency improvements.