

Item: 13

Policy and Resources Committee: 16 June 2026.

Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund.

Joint Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing, Chief Officer, Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership, and Director of Enterprise and Resources.

1. Overview

- 1.1. This report seeks Members' approval for the Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Cost of Living Task Force to make recommendations to the Council on the local distribution of Orkney's allocation of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2026/27.
- 1.2. In December 2022, the Scottish Government established an Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund, in recognition of the higher costs of living experienced by residents of Scotland's islands. The fund was to be used to provide immediate help to families, communities and businesses who were struggling most, either through existing schemes and/or other new support where need was greatest. Allocated funds were to be distributed by local authorities based on their local knowledge and understanding of the impacts of the cost crisis on their islands.
- 1.3. Orkney's share of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2022/23, amounting to £305,000, was allocated by the Council to the Third Sector Cost of Living Crisis Fund, administered by Voluntary Action Orkney.
- 1.4. Orkney's share of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2023/24 and 2024/25 was £218,000 for each year. For 2023/24 and 2024/25, the Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Cost of Living Task Force was invited to make recommendations to the Council on local distribution of the funds, and to action their recommendations once approved. Delegated authority to scrutinise and approve the recommendations was assigned to the Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration. The new mechanism proved successful, with the funds distributed promptly and efficiently to those in greatest need.

- 1.5. In 2025/26, the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund was offered for a fourth year, with Orkney's allocation being £214,000. The same distribution mechanism as 2023/24 and 2024/25 was used again, with the money allowing the Orkney Community Planning Partnership to support 20 projects across the County.
- 1.6. In May 2026, the Scottish Government announced that the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund would run for a fifth year. The criteria for 2026/27 will again be to provide immediate help to families, communities and businesses who are struggling most, either through existing schemes and/or other new support where need is greatest' with a 'strong focus on tackling child poverty.
- 1.7. It is proposed that the same distribution mechanism should be used for the 2026/27 allocation of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund as has been used for the past 3 years.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:
 - i. Agree that the Orkney Community Planning Partnership's Cost of Living Task Force should be invited to make recommendations to the Council on the local distribution of Orkney's allocation of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2026/27, and to action their recommendations once approved.
 - ii. Agree that authority to scrutinise and approve the recommendations made by the Cost of Living Task Force should be delegated to the Director of Enterprise and Resources.

3. Background

- 3.1. In June 2022, the Orkney Partnership Board agreed to adopt a Poverty Pledge which stated:

"We believe that it is not acceptable that people in our community live in poverty. Over the coming years, we will commit our time, energy, and resources to do all we can, in partnership, to work towards the elimination of poverty throughout Orkney."
- 3.2. The Orkney Community Planning Partnership established the multi-agency Cost of Living Task Force with a brief to co-ordinate an agile response to the cost-of-living crisis, supporting both immediate need and longer-term prevention of poverty and disadvantage, including the co-ordination of partnership action plans relating to child poverty, food dignity and fuel poverty. Since June 2023, the Chair of the Cost

of Living Task Force has been the Chief Officer of the Orkney Health and Social Care Partnership.

- 3.3. Collectively, the members of the Task Force offer unparalleled expertise, capacity and local knowledge, as well as direct access to the people and communities who are still struggling the most as a consequence of the cost-of-living crisis. Many of the projects and services delivered by the organisations represented by members of the Cost of Living Task Force directly support the people and communities targeted by the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund.
- 3.4. A report on the allocation of the funds for 2025/26 was submitted to the Scottish Futures Trust, which administered the fund on behalf of the Scottish Government, in March 2026, and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.5. A letter confirming that the Scottish Government has allocated £1 million resource to the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund for 2026-27, was received from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform, on 12 March 2026.

Island Cost Crisis Emergency Funding allocation by local authority 2026-27

Local Authority	Population	Allocation	£
Argyll and Bute	14,957	0.145	145,000
Highland	11,022	0.107	107,000
Na h-Eileanan Siar	26,020	0.252	252,000
North Ayrshire	5,932	0.058	58,000
Orkney Islands	22,020	0.213	213,000
Shetland Islands	23,190	0.225	225,000
SCOTLAND	103,141	1.000	1,000,000

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

- 1. Financial** - Orkney's allocation for 2026/27 will be £213,000, which will be paid as a redetermination of the General Revenue Grant during the last two weeks of March 2027. This funding has been allocated to spend in the 2026/27 financial year.

Local authorities are asked to submit a short report by 31 March 2027, setting out:

- How the funding was used to tackle the challenges faced by our island communities due to the current cost crisis;
- The impact the funding has had within the communities;
- Any challenges they encountered whilst delivering the funding.

2. **Legal** - Where an award of funding is made to an enterprise providing goods or services, care must be taken to ensure that such award is made in compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
3. **Corporate Governance** - Not applicable.
4. **Human Resources** - No implications.
5. **Equalities** - A full Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken on both the [Orkney Community Plan 2025-30](#) and the [Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022-26](#), and published at the same time as the approved plans. The proposals in this report will additionally contribute toward The Fairer Scotland Duty, set out in Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, which requires public bodies in Scotland to pay due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for the local distribution of a Scottish Government fund with criteria set by Scottish Ministers.
7. **Links to Council Plan** - The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - ☐ Growing our economy.
 - ☒ Strengthening our Communities.
 - ☐ Developing our Infrastructure.
 - ☐ Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan** - The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - ☒ Cost of Living.
 - ☐ Sustainable Development.
 - ☐ Local Equality.
 - ☐ Improving Population Health.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk** - Not applicable.
10. **Risk** - Not applicable.
11. **Procurement** - Not applicable.
12. **Health and Safety** - Not applicable.
13. **Property and Assets** - Not applicable.
14. **Information Technology** - Not applicable.
15. **Cost of Living** - The recommendations in this report contribute directly to the mitigation of the impact on individuals, families and communities of the cost of living. A priority of the Orkney Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 is “Reducing Poverty and Disadvantage”. Statutory annual Local Child Poverty Action Reports include

information about how partner agencies have sought to mitigate the impact of the Cost of Living on children's lives and outcomes during the year in question.

List of Background Papers

Letter from Scottish Government dated 13 March 2026 confirming the criteria and Orkney's allocation of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund 2026-27.

[Orkney Child Poverty Strategy 2022-26](#)

[Orkney Children's Services Plan 2023-26](#)

[Orkney Local Child Poverty Action Report 2023-24](#)

Appendix

Appendix 1: Report on the allocation of the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund 2025-26.

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ISLANDS COST CRISIS EMERGENCY FUND 2025-26

Name of Local Authority: Orkney Islands

Name and role of respondent (on behalf of LA): Daniel Aubrey, Community Planning Manager.

Date: 25/03/2026

This form is designed to help Scottish Government understand how your Local Authority has utilised funding provided by the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund.

*Please send completed templates by **31 March 2026** to ann.macdonald@scottishfuturetrust.org.uk.*

Thank you for your assistance.

1. Activities Funded through Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund

Please use the table below to briefly detail the main activities being funded to tackle the challenges faced by your island communities due to the current cost crisis in 2025-26 financial year. (See Annex A for further detail on policy intent and activities).

Details of activity	How has the level of need for this activity been determined?	Are there specific groups to whom this support is targeted or adapted?
1. Grant to expand the FoodHub for 12 months, including an additional FareShare pallet every fortnight and related island haulage and handling – Island of Hoy Development Trust	“Feedback to Island of Hoy Development Trust, via anonymous feedback forms, informed us that there were households in the north of the island who were unable to attend. Furthermore, these households live furthest from the island’s only shop and there was every reason that they would benefit from the FoodHub as much as the community in the south, possibly more due to their remoteness and isolation. Feelings of isolation and exclusion for households in the north was a finding highlighted in	“Through the outreach work done by our Community Support Officer (CSO) we know that there are a mix of households struggling to feed themselves in the north. These, like the households in the south, include families with children, working adults, disabled residents, business proprietors and retired folk. This cost-of-living crisis has not left any sectors unaffected.”

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	results of the Community Transport Public Consultation done by IoHDT in March 2025 and informed our decision. Our application was to fund a 12-month pilot for a FoodHub in the north.”	
2. Tailored support to families facing hardship, reducing the impact of poverty and building resilience to help children thrive – Home Start Orkney	“We identified the need through increased referrals, direct feedback from families, and frontline observations showing rising financial pressure, lack of confidence, and difficulty accessing essential services. Partner agencies reported similar trends, with more families struggling to meet basic needs. This evidence showed a clear need for targeted support to prevent crises from escalating.”	Yes. The activity was primarily targeted at families with young children who were experiencing financial strain, rural isolation, or difficulty accessing essential services. We also adapted support for families with additional vulnerabilities, including those with disabled children, single-parent households, and families referred through health and social care due to heightened stress or risk. This ensured the fund reached those most affected by the cost-of-living pressures in our islands communities.”
3. Covers local transport costs so Orkney charities can continue to benefit from FareShare’s surplus food redistribution – Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE)	“In 2024-25, 7.88 tonnes of food were re-distributed to Community Food Members in Orkney, equivalent to 18,760 meals with a retail value of £22,580. Please see the graph below, demonstrating an increase in demand for the service in recent months.  Additionally, as noted above, we had a waiting list of organisations	“Surplus food that CFINE redistributes is used by local community organisations to support low income, vulnerable, disadvantaged individuals, and families.”

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	wishing to sign up to support their communities access food. The evidence therefore shows a clearly increasing need for food support in Orkney.”	
4. A youth-led micro-grants pot enabling young people to design and run small projects tackling cost-of-living and food insecurity – Orkney Youth Forum	“Need was identified through direct engagement with young people across Orkney via schools and community groups. As well as The Youth Chamber Debate in June 2025, young people highlighted key issues affecting them, including cost of living pressures, access to activities, wellbeing, and social isolation. Young people consistently identified barriers to participation, including affordability and lack of opportunities, and expressed a desire to influence solutions. This confirmed a clear need for a flexible, youth-led funding programme that enables young people to design and deliver projects responding to their own needs and those of their communities.”	“The Youth Voice Fund is targeted at young people aged 12–25 across Orkney, including those engaged in schools, youth groups, and community settings. Activities have been adapted to be inclusive and accessible, with a particular focus on young people in rural and island communities who may experience additional barriers to participation, such as limited access to services, transport challenges, and fewer local opportunities. Additionally, one application to the Youth Voice Fund seeks to benefit the older generations. For example, a group of young people applied to develop an intergenerational bowling league.”
5. Payments to families of children entitled to free school meals to cover lunches during school holidays – Orkney Islands Council	“Funds used towards Holiday Provision of Free School Meals – the funds received from Scottish Government were insufficient to cover all holiday periods during the academic year.”	“Those eligible for free school meals, which is families on low incomes with at least one school-aged child.”
6. Provides free meals for young people each session, with	“We established the Café Cubbie almost two years ago and the need for the items we provide have	“Our main focus is young people aged 12-19years thought the Cubbie is open for anyone who needs to

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enough leftovers for those who need to take food home for themselves and their families – Orkney Youth Café	increased over that time. We also provide free meals as Food Poverty is a real issue for our young people and use our service regularly.”	access it during our opening hours. Our meals, if there are leftovers, are given to the young people to take home for their families.”
7. A monthly warm, learning and activity hub for older residents on Flotta – Flotta Day Club	“Local data shows Flotta has one of the highest rates of fuel poverty in Orkney with over 70% of residents experiencing fuel poverty. The people who attend the club are in the age group who are most likely to experience fuel poverty, which can have significant impacts on their health and mental wellbeing.”	“Local people over 50 who are facing financial insecurity, fuel poverty, and social and geographical isolation.”
8. Continues the school participation fund supporting families so children can take part in activities in and out of school – OIC Education (Schools)	“As a local authority, we are very aware of the cost of the school day and understand the current financial climate and the impact this is having on children and young people’s participation both in school and outside of school. The participation fund has allowed us to support children, young people and their and families in a sensitive and practical way across the authority.”	“It was recognised that families just above the eligibility threshold for free school meals (FSM) are also experiencing significant financial pressure, alongside those already in receipt of FSM and other benefits. In addition, the Scottish Government has identified six priority family types at higher risk of child poverty. These include: • Lone parent families • Minority ethnic families • Families with a disabled adult or child • Families with a young mother (under 25) • Families with a child under 1

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		• Larger families (three or more children) These groups were considered when targeting and allocating support.”
9. Extra support for clients (especially low-income and single-parent families; families with additional needs) with a focus on those experiencing or at risk of child poverty – Orkney Foodbank	“We monitor our client numbers monthly and discuss any pressures in our system at a monthly management/operational team meeting. The ability to provide funding for perishable items is a core aim of our extended service as it provides the items not in a traditional parcel which clients and referrers have fed back would be very welcome additions.”	“We wanted to be able to provide additional healthy snack items in a parcel as families had feedback that providing snack items was beyond their ability in financial terms.”
10. Voucher packs for women and families impacted by domestic abuse – Women's Aid Orkney	“We often have families that come through our service who are struggling financially, and in need of essential items (clothing, food, toiletries, hydro). We wanted to be able to offer them vouchers for supermarkets and local shops, to allow them independence in sourcing these items. The need was determined purely through conversation with our service users about their support needs.”	“It was targeted at women and families who have experienced/are experiencing domestic abuse.”
11. Weekly therapeutic social activity for care-experienced and other young people facing mental-health challenges; participants plan and cook a	“Orkney Blide Trust runs a mental health and wellbeing project for Care Experienced Young People for which we receive funding from the Robertson Trust for the cost of a full-time mental health support worker. This has been running for 4 years now with funding for paying for	“Care Experienced Young People aged 16 to around 30 years (and young people who have had significant social work involvement in childhood and were on ‘the edge of care’)”

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shared meal and develop life skills – Orkney Blide Trust	food and therapeutic activities coming from donations and applications to local charities however we did not have any funding past December 2025 for this. Our young people gain a lot from cooking and sharing food and taking part in creative and outdoor activities all of which support mental health recovery.”	
12. Fortnightly sewing, mending, quilting and upcycling sessions, with PAT testing/small repairs and monthly Warm Hub open days – Stronsay Development Trust	“We identified the need last year when we offered crisis grant lunches and hot meals. It was clear here were families needing this but also that they were very proud to attend stand-alone meals linked with crisis support. Our new concept new concept will enable those to attend without stating it’s for the hot meal or social interaction it’s to be part of a wider community concept of make n mend and sharing skills. The need for the Make n Mend and Warm Hub project was identified through ongoing engagement with the local community, including direct feedback from families and community groups. Rising living costs, particularly in island communities, have increased financial pressure on households, with many struggling to afford clothing, heating, and basic essentials. Repair skills are important.”	“The project is primarily targeted at low-income families, households experiencing financial hardship, and individuals at risk of social isolation. It is particularly relevant to: 1. Families with young children 2. Individuals affected by the rising cost of living 3. Older residents experiencing isolation 4. Those lacking access to resources or skills to repair clothing and household items The Warm Hub element ensures accessibility for those who may be struggling with heating costs.”
13. Helps older people buy food from local shops using the	“We have very strong links with the local older community and listen to concerns raised. We knew	“Older people throughout Orkney.”

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Kirkwall BID Card— supporting nutrition, including where grandparents provide childcare – Age Scotland Orkney	there was a need for more support for people to buy essentials. We work closely with other organisations that support older adults including the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) who confirmed enquiries for day-to-day living has increased.”	
14.Free healthy snacks during free Friday drop-in activities, delivered with Action for Children and Stromness Community Centre – OIC Youth Services	“The young people in Stromness previously had no dedicated safe space to meet friends, socialise, or take part in positive activities on Fridays when school finished earlier (especially for pupils who live in Hoy whose ferry was not until nearer 4pm). Community Learning, Development and Employability (CLDE) collaborated with Action for Children and Stromness Community Centre to open up a safe space Drop-In session for young people to attend, chill or play some activities and have a free snack. With support from the funding provided we were able to provide food and beverages, including healthy choices and interactive food activities to improve life skills in a fun setting. The space also encourages positive peer interactions, building confidence and strengthening social connections. Funding has been essential in allowing us to continue delivering this support, ensuring young people have a consistent, safe, and welcoming	Young People aged 11-18years old (Secondary school aged)

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	environment to attend each Friday.”	
15. Continue cash-first vouchers and capital funds to support financially insecure households – THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank, and Orkney CAB	“The number of people within the county that are struggling has been increasing every year, with continually increasing client numbers across all of the core partners services. The level of need for debt support was based upon levels provided in the previous year of Orkney Money Matters support. This project provided extensive experience in the support needed for hard-to-reach households.”	“Orkney Money Matters funds are restricted to those households assessed as being in crisis, but this is widely defined via insecurity indicators, such as self-reported food insecurity, fuel poverty level, financial insecurity or impacts of health or other personal circumstances. Families, isles residents and those working on low incomes are priority groups for the fund, with greater funds provided to these groups. Longer-term support is also available to those who have engaged with core partners for long-term support and advice.”
16. Energy vouchers and debt relief for households in fuel poverty to manage energy crises over the winter – THAW Orkney	“Our annual statistics find that most of our clients are in extreme fuel poverty. We are also finding that the number of households coming forward for energy support has continued to increase every year for at least the last 2 years. Although there are some external funds to provide energy vouchers, these are slower and less flexible, including few options for supporting credit meters, solid fuel and energy debt.”	“Although anyone can access energy advice from THAW Orkney, vouchers (including prepayment vouchers) are restricted to households in extreme fuel poverty (>20% of income used to heat the property) or in fuel poverty (>10%) and a priority group (e.g. families, isles, in-work, >70). Larger support vouchers are further restricted to those in fuel destitution (>50%) or extreme fuel poverty and with multiple intersectionalities.”
17. £20 energy-crisis grants for young people in supported accommodation; weekly shared hot meals to	“The needs for this activity were identified through our direct work with vulnerable young people across our supported accommodation, young people and family support service and Youth	“People aged 16-25 experiencing homelessness Young people aged 12-26 affected by others drug and/or alcohol use.”

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reduce isolation and improve diet/budgeting; food parcels/vouchers – Right There	counselling. We have seen an increase in financial hardship among the people we support aged 12-26, particularly those experiencing homelessness or affected by a family members drug and/or alcohol use. Rising cost of living have increase pressure on already vulnerable young people. With many struggling to afford food, utilities, and essentials. This was further evidenced through ongoing engagement with the young people, support meetings and partnership working.”	
18. Funding supports a stock of toiletries, snacks and personal-care items that children and families can access when needed – Hoy Youth Hub	“We Identified the need for our project through three years of working with the children, young people and their families resident on Hoy.”	“Direct beneficiaries were all children and Young people on Hoy aged 0-18, indirect beneficiaries their families.”
19. Targeted cash-first support in December: £60 per child (professionally referred and verified) to alleviate winter and festive poverty – Orkney Charitable Trust	“The level of need has been determined over the last 11 years of the Orkney Charitable Trust distributing these grants to help address festive poverty. Over this time, we have first-hand experience of the additional pressure this time of year around costs of food, items, gifts, heating and the impact it has on families and often their anxiety or health. Each year since 2014 we	“The grant is targeted at any family living in Orkney. They must be permanent resident and the children under 16 on Christmas day. The grant must make a difference at Christmas time and be in need of the financial support. From our data collected we know many of our families are within high risks of poverty, such as lone parenting, 3 plus children in the one house hold,

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	have seen an increase in families applying and children benefiting from the Christmas Grants. However, in 2023 was our higher amount of grant approvals supporting 410 children. These decreased slightly to 390 children in 2024. These numbers around 400 are consistent with local data sources of the number of children in Orkney Living in Poverty. Therefore, we are confident our programme of Christmas Grants reach the families who need it most.”	children with additional support. The families we support are a mixture of families on benefits and also the working poor. We support families across every parish in Orkney and the isles.”
20. Free snack from Picky Café for young people taking part in free Friday activities; voucher collected on the day – The Pickaquoy Centre Trust	“On Friday afternoons we deliver free activities (the Hub) to secondary aged young people. The ICCEF Funding has been used to offer a free healthy snack from Picky Café as part of the afternoon activities. The Hub was initially launched to combat anti-social behaviour post Covid-19 when the Kirkwall Grammar School closes early on a Friday afternoon. We recognised that not all young people have access to food during this time. The snack allows the young people attending the session something to eat.”	“Young people aged 11-18 (Secondary age)”

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2. Details of Spending

Please list the amount (£) of spend allocated to each of the activities described above.

1. £3,500
2. £8,860
3. £1,500
4. £3,000
5. £25,000
6. £6,000
7. £2,000
8. £30,000
9. £15,000
10. £10,000
11. £4,500
12. £3,000
13. £15,000
14. £1,600
15. £16,500
16. £25,000
17. £10,000
18. £8,000
19. £22,500
20. £3,040

Is the allocation sufficient to fund these activities? Have you utilised your entire allocation?

1. Island of Hoy Development Trust: "[The funds] will be spent over the 12 months from 1 Dec 2025 to 30 Nov 2026 and the funds are ringfenced in the FoodHub Northern Pilot Fund. Hall booking fees have not been invoiced yet but have been requested. Our FareShare contract is due to be renewed in April and we will be paying that as soon as invoiced. Haulage costs have not increased yet as the FareShare pallet size has not been increased but we expect it will be after the contract renewal in April. So far, we have spent: £185.80 CSO wages for extra hours dedicated to this pilot. £14.87 CSO pension contribution. £27.87 CSO NI contributions. £28.97 Carrier bags and food bags for attendees. £7.49 Fuel costs for EV transport to the FoodHub. £164.97 Care packages (Hats, gloves, socks etc.). Total Spend £ 429.97
2. HomeStart Orkney: "We have used the full allocation, ensuring all funds directly supported families."
3. Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE): "The allocation was sufficient and fully utilised."
4. Orkney Youth Forum: "Funding has been allocated as small grants to support youth-led community initiatives. Funding is being actively allocated to projects identified through the Youth Voice Fund process. The allocation is supporting delivery; however, demand from young people indicates that additional funding increases the number and impact of projects that can be supported."

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All funding is expected to be paid out of The Orkney Youth Forum account by the end of March 2026.”

5. Orkney Islands Council: Yes, with other sources of funding
6. Orkney Youth Café: “We have split the £6000 received between the Cubbie and Meal provision, yes it has been sufficient for the timescale we had the funding for.”
7. Flotta Day Club: The money covered cost of the hall rental, refreshments, insurance costs, travel costs for visiting guest speakers, activity resources, coordination costs, and the cost of a one-off island outing.
8. OIC Participation Fund: “The total allocation was distributed across all schools in Orkney. Funding levels were determined based on pupil roll and the number of pupils entitled to FSM. Schools are best placed to understand the needs of their communities and allocate resources accordingly.
Funding was used flexibly to support a wide range of needs, including: school trips (including residential experiences), wet weather clothing, food provision, extracurricular clubs and activities, swimwear, footwear, and holiday programmes.
This approach ensured that support could be tailored to local needs and circumstances.”
9. Orkney Foodbank: “£10K – supermarket gift cards and cash for isles clients for local shop use. £5K – additional healthy snack items added to parcels.
The allocation was a very welcome addition as the funding allowed us to add additional items as a short-term project and were warmly received by clients. We were also able to supplement parcels with vouchers or cash so clients could purchase non-perishable items.”
10. Women’s Aid Orkney: “The full £10,000 was spent on vouchers allocated to women and families. We have supported 7 single women, 18 families with 1-2 children, and 6 families with 2+ children and still have £800 to spend which has been planned for.”
11. Orkney Blide Trust: “Food and activities the group at a cost of £60 per week for 50 weeks. Total £4K. This was sufficient as some activities are less costly (e.g. printmaking course @£20 pw and others more costly (e.g. outdoor education days on Hoy @ £260 per day). Cost of a trip to Shetland £1.5K. We underestimated the costs for this but were able to secure an additional £1K from OIC’s CLDE team for this. The trip has been planned and will take place in the next few weeks.”
12. Stronsay Development Trust: “The funding allocation of £3k was not the £8,100 requested so we had to scale the project back significantly funds have been directed towards: Purchase of sewing machines and repair tools; Promotion and volunteer recruitment and the hot meals and refreshments being offered at the events. Due to initial delays in both allocation and subsequent low level staff support, not all funding has yet been fully utilised. However, key equipment has now been purchased, and delivery is underway. The allocation is considered sufficient to deliver the planned activities now we have scaled down.”
13. Age Scotland Orkney: “Yes, it funded what we had agreed. However, we could have allocated more funds if they had been available.”
14. OIC Youth Services: “The funding was sufficient. As the funding was received a few months after the start of the school year then we have not spent all of the allocation just yet, however over the next week we will be purchasing

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things for next term too so that we continue to provide health snacks until the end of this school year."

15. THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank & Orkney CAB: "£16,500 was allocated for debt support; of this £9356 has been provided to clients. However, over £17k has also been allocated from a separate fund for capital support, much of which is also for debt, suggesting it is the allocation method rather than level of need that is restricting spend. £7k is still to be utilised over the next few months."
16. THAW Orkney: "£10,000 has been transferred to the Charis system for prepayment vouchers with over £7000 allocated to clients this year. Another £15,000 was committed for credit vouchers, solid fuel and energy debt, with £8,489 already supporting clients since October. Although we are still to utilise a remaining £9k, this is likely to be fully utilised by the end of the summer, especially with potential oil price increases."
17. Right There: "Funding was allocated across several key areas to directly support young people: Emergency Food: £6000; Store Vouchers: £360; Energy support: £1300 (£100 energy top x13 flats in supported accommodation); Weekly meal in supported accommodation: £2340 (£3pp x 15p for 1 year). The funding was essential in enabling us to respond flexibly to immediate needs. While the allocation has supported several young people, demand remains high, particularly for food and energy support."
18. Hoy Youth Hub: "We have utilised our whole allocation creating an item bank of toiletries and personal care products (£6280.00), assisting with our Christmas Hampers £1200.00) and ensuring we have gift vouchers for every child for their birthday this year (£520.00)."
19. Orkney Charitable Trust: "Yes, we used all the allocation of £22,500 plus additional Charitable Trust funds. The Christmas grants supported 373 Children in Orkney at a cost of £22,380. Plus we supported 9 Children outwith our Criteria - the children were families known to us, and in crisis, who had children 16 years old plus. This cost was £540. Total cost of this project was £22,920."
20. The Pickaquoy Centre Trust: "The full £3040 was allocated to allow the young people attending the hub activities to receive a free healthy snack. The average attendance across the week utilised the full allocation of funding. The hub runs every Friday through the school term (28 weeks)."

3. Partnership Working

Please list any delivery partners associated with each of the funded activities and briefly explain their role. How were they selected?

1. Island of Hoy Development Trust: "FareShare are the charity that generously provide the main content of our FoodHubs and of similar endeavours in Orkney and beyond. The Hoy Kirk is a venue chosen for its central location to most households in the north and its ideal size for our FoodHub. IoHDT have made their 7-seater electric vehicle available on a fuel-only basis to transport provisions and personnel to the northern venue."
2. HomeStart Orkney: "We worked with key local partners, including Health Visiting teams, Social Work/ community organisations, and schools. They

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referred families, shared emerging needs, and helped us target support effectively.”

3. Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE): “YM Empower, Right There (Orkney), HomeStart Orkney, Westray Development Trust. These organisations are Community Food Members supporting their local communities with surplus food.”
4. Orkney Youth Forum: “Westray Youthclub - Young people felt that opportunities for young people on the outer isles are lacking and applied for £500 to provide a fun day for young people who attend the youth club. The Orkney Youth Café - Young people developed the idea of providing an intergenerational bowling league. Stromness Academy - Pupils decided that they wanted to use the money to develop their pupil council. Kirkwall Grammar School - Pupils decided they wanted to use the money to develop their pupil council. The Orkney Youth Forum and MSYPS x 2 projects - young people decided that they wanted to use the money to put on youth disco events in partnership with Rapture Nightclub. The 2nd project is to create spaces for people to feel confident enough to talk to each other using community benches around the local area. Partners were selected based on their existing relationships with young people and their ability to support engagement, delivery, and safeguarding. Community Learning, Development and Employability (CLDE) staff worked collaboratively with these partners to facilitate sessions and support project development.
5. Orkney Islands Council: None reported
6. Orkney Youth Café: “We have used local shops to provide the stock required for the meals to support locally as much as possible. James Wilson in Stromness mainly.”
7. Flotta Day Club: None listed
8. OIC Participation Fund: No partners listed
9. Orkney Foodbank: “We have around 54 referral partners”
10. Women’s Aid Orkney: “The activity was delivered solely by Women’s Aid Orkney.”
11. Orkney Blide Trust: “Delivery partners are CLDE who have worked alongside the Blide Trust on this project for the past 4 years.”
12. Stronsay Development Trust: “Delivery is being led by Stronsay Development Trust, with support from: Local volunteers (currently being recruited); Community groups and networks assisting with outreach and engagement; The Hotel which is a community asset and a warm welcoming space to host. Partners were selected based on their existing relationships within the community, their ability to support delivery, and their understanding of local need.”

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13. Age Scotland Orkney: "We worked with the CAB to target those in most need. They would refer older people to us."
14. OIC Youth Services: "Action for Children work in partnership with CLDE and Stromness Community Centre to provide staffing the sessions. We also have worked with Health, Active Schools, ORSAS, Right There, School Health Team, ADP, SeeMe, Mikeyline, Connected Neighbourhoods, SDS."
15. THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank & Orkney CAB: "The Orkney Money Matters is administered by 3 frontline organisation, THAW, CAB and Foodbank, who work together to ensure a joined-up pathway to advice and support for financial insecurity. Along with wider partners in the Orkney Money Matters Partnership (OIC, NHS, VAO, OHAL, Blide Trust, OCT, SWF, SSS), the organisations work together to ensure a no-wrong-door approach as well as ensuring access for any local partners that provide client support. New partners are added where beneficial to engaging new groups."
16. THAW Orkney: "THAW work closely with Foodbank and Citizen's Advice through the Orkney Money Matters pathway, as well as housing agencies and other referral partners such as isles wellbeing coordinators, for reaching clients in financial and energy difficulty. Most are long-term partners, but new partners are engaged where reach can be increased."
17. Right There: "We engaged with the local foodbank to discuss our idea to establish an in-house food provision within our services, aimed at supporting young people in crisis. The foodbank provided valuable insight and feedback on this approach, helping to ensure that the model complemented existing provision and met local needs efficiently.
The foodbank continues to play an important role by providing food parcels twice per week for young people accessing our services. This partnership ensures consistent access to essential food supplies.
In addition, our in-house provision enables us to offer more flexible, immediate support out with these times, ensure the people we support in crisis can access food as they need it.
The foodbank was selected due to their expertise, established community presence, and ability to provide reliable ongoing support, as well as their willingness to collaborate in developing a responsive and complementary service."
18. Hoy Youth Hub: "None – all managed in house by our volunteers."
19. Orkney Charitable Trust: "Orkney Charitable Trust delivers all of of its project in Partnership. Every project or grant for the Christmas grant is verified by a statutory agency, or third sector. We work closely with Education, Health, Foodbank, THAW, Homestart, CAB, Women Aid, Social Work, Employability. The uniqueness of Orkney Charitable Trust is our charity crosses all aspects of poverty and not limited by social or geographic circumstances."

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20. The Pickaquooy Centre Trust: "The Hub is delivered in partnership with Community Learning & Development at Orkney Islands Council."

How was the funding available through the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund promoted among local communities?

1. Island of Hoy Development Trust: "Our CSO regularly posts on Facebook to the community and on Monday 23 March 2026 will post that the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund has been awarded to IoHDT to continue its work in the community, without highlighting the FoodHub activities alone."
2. HomeStart Orkney: "Information was shared directly with professionals who work closely with families experiencing financial pressure, ensuring the support reached those most in need. We also highlighted the fund through our routine family support contacts, allowing staff to identify eligible families quickly and sensitively. On our social media platform."
3. Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE): "The service was promoted by our Development Workers through existing networks."
4. Orkney Youth Forum: "The funding was promoted through direct engagement with schools, youth groups, and community organisations, alongside existing CLDE networks. Information was shared through facilitated sessions, partner communications, and word of mouth. Young people themselves also played a key role in promoting the opportunity within their peer groups, helping to increase awareness and engagement."
5. Orkney Islands Council: No answer
6. Orkney Youth Café: No answer
7. Flotta Day Club: The Day Club was promoted locally on Flotta, as well as through Voluntary Action Orkney.
8. OIC Participation Fund: "Schools communicated the availability of the fund to their communities, including through Parent Councils. Families were able to self-refer for support. In addition, school staff could identify and refer pupils where appropriate, with headteachers engaging directly and sensitively with families. School staff are aware of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, those receiving other benefits, and individuals identified as part of vulnerable groups who may be at risk of experiencing financial hardship."
9. Orkney Foodbank: "Advertised widely"
10. Women's Aid Orkney: "Due to the nature of our service, we did not advertise this publicly but spoke directly with service users who we believed would benefit from this."
11. Orkney Blide Trust: "We heard about this through the CLDE team and also our Third Sector Interface, VAO."
12. Stronsay Development Trust: "The project has been promoted through: Local noticeboards and community spaces; Social media channels; Word-of-mouth through community networks; Direct engagement with families and partner organisations. Promotion is ongoing."
13. Age Scotland Orkney: "We regularly support over 500 older people in Orkney and were able to allocate funding to some of our clients and those referred to us. Our staff spoke to many people asking them to spread the word around all our local communities to ensure no one was left out that needed support."

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14. OIC Youth Services: "This was promoted as a free healthy snack when attending the Friday afternoon drop in."
15. THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank & Orkney CAB: "Available funding and links to access the funding was shared with all the partners listed above. Although these new funds were not explicitly promoted to households, the Orkney Money Matters pathway which provides access to the funds continued to be promoted through promotional materials from the project initiation. The fund was also directly available through Foodbank and CAB, the main avenues of support for food and financial insecurity."
16. THAW Orkney: "Information on THAW services is shared directly with referral partners, including Foodbank, CAB, wellbeing coordinators, National scheme operators and other partners supporting clients with housing issues across Orkney."
17. Right There: "The funding and support were promoted directly within our existing services rather than through our wider public channels. This was intentional, as the support was targeting specifically at vulnerable young people already engaged with our services. Information was shared through support staff and counsellors ensuring that young people were made aware of the support in a safe, trusted, and accessible way. In addition, we made relevant external partners aware of the support such as guidance teachers and other professionals involved with the people we support, to ensure the young people in need could be signposted effectively."
18. Hoy Youth Hub: "We posted on social media and wrote directly to every family on the island outlining the funding and what it could provide."
19. Orkney Charitable Trust: "The Every Child Deserves A Christmas grants was promoted through the local Newspaper, BBC Radio Orkney and our face book page. Our face book post telling the grants and the link to form was open on the 11th November has 58 shares. There were also emails from our charity to our main partners through our extensive network."
20. The Pickaquoy Centre Trust: "Promotion for the sessions through our Facebook page and website."

4. Need and Impact

Please provide a brief assessment of the impact of the funded activities/schemes. How was local need identified and to what extent was it met? Please share any data or statistics that can demonstrate need and/or impact.

1. Island of Hoy Development Trust: "This is early days for the pilot programme since we have, as we write, only had two sessions in the north – one in December, just before Christmas, and another in February. Due to a combination of bad weather and their funding issues, FareShare were unable to deliver over the winter as they planned. Furthermore, when deliveries did arrive, they were last-minute and without prior notice and we were unable to do more than single sessions at our Longhope base. This was our first experience of the complications of winter deliveries and, hopefully, these issues will ease and we expect to get back on track to providing fortnightly sessions in the north from now. We attach no blame to FareShare and are

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grateful for their amazing efforts to support us. In the two sessions we helped 16 and 15 household respectively. This was a similar start to the one we had at our Longhope base. The people who did attend the second session informed us that they had heard about the event by word of mouth and that many of them did not use Facebook, which is our primary media for notifications. The funding, 30% less than applied for, had to be allocated differently and one of the things we opted not to do was the signage to alert passers-by of our FoodHub. However, we will now look at some weather resistant signage to drive-up numbers for the pilot. Also, we have requested that attendees alert their friends and neighbours to come along to the FoodHub. Regular sessions are key and will help attract more people going forward.”

2. HomeStart Orkney: “We identified need through increased referrals from Health Visiting, Social Work/ maternity, and community organisations, alongside direct requests from families facing financial strain and rural isolation. The fund supported 34 families, helping them reduce stress, and stabilise their situations and improve confidence, reduce isolation. All funding was fully utilised, and demand remained high, demonstrating clear ongoing need. feedback and family responses indicated improved wellbeing and better engagement with services as a result of timely support.”
3. Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE): “The funded activity involved the distribution of surplus food to the Community Food Members. This was coordinated from our bases in Aberdeen and Alness, involving considerable logistical planning and engagement with local groups. We significantly increased the supply of food to the islands from 7.88 tonnes to **17.15 tonnes**, equivalent to **40,840** meals with a retail value of **>£47,000**, representing substantial social return on investment. This also demonstrated the increasing need for food support locally due to the cost-of-living crisis. It is clear further support will be required going forward.”
4. Orkney Youth Forum: “The programme has demonstrated strong engagement from young people, with multiple groups identifying relevant local issues and developing practical project ideas. Examples include initiatives focused on community connection, wellbeing, and access to activities. Local need was identified directly by young people through structured discussions and consultation (including surveys within schools). The programme has enabled young people to respond to these needs with realistic, community-based solutions. Early indications show increased confidence, participation, and leadership among young people, alongside the development of projects that will deliver tangible community benefits.”
5. Orkney Islands Council: It allowed children to receive a free school meal who otherwise would not have been able to afford one.
6. Orkney Youth Café: “As mentioned above, need was identified through observation and discussion with the young people attending. Both the Cubbie stock and meals have been well utilised and has become a central part of the young people’s visit to the café. Many cannot afford the everyday essentials

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within the cubbie (shower gel, deodorant, hair products, seasonal equipment such as exam prep materials and Christmas items). This is an ongoing issue for young people that we have not solved but ease.”

7. Flotta Day Club: “There are limited opportunities for older residents to engage in activities without travelling to the mainland. Many who attend the club don’t have the funds to do this or the ability to travel independently. The club therefore has supported residents to engage in meaningful activities and reduce isolation and loneliness.”
8. OIC Participation Fund: “Feedback from families, children, and young people has been overwhelmingly positive. Families have expressed appreciation for the support and opportunities provided. Many reported that the funding enabled their children to participate in activities that would otherwise have been inaccessible. Schools have highlighted that financial barriers to participation—particularly for school trips—have been significantly reduced, ensuring that all pupils who wished to attend were able to do so.”
9. Orkney Foodbank: “We have received feedback over the years that whilst the Trussell Trust recommended parcel contents were very welcome clients would really like non-perishable items. Our storage facilities and environmental health requirements/food legislation limits what we can issue in terms of nonperishable items so therefore supermarket gifts cards (or cash for isles clients) has enabled us to provide this additional service.”
10. Women’s Aid Orkney: “As mentioned, we often identify women and families who are in need of financial support for a variety of reasons. We often make referrals to the Foodbank, Scottish Welfare Fund, THAW Orkney and other agencies that can help, but sometimes this does not meet ongoing needs/are limited in what they can supply and if they can supply. Through providing these vouchers, we were able to reduce the pressure on other charities and give our service users the independence to source their own goods. The feedback we have received from our service users has been extremely positive, with most feeling positively overwhelmed by this. Feedback was that it was really empowering to be able to go and choose their own good/do their own shopping with the vouchers.”
11. Orkney Blide Trust: “Young people involved in the group have been very proactive in designing, planning and budgeting for the activities that they would like to take part in over the next year. These are a range or creative, artistic, outdoor, active and social activities all chosen by the young people and all of which are designed to promote mental health recovery and positive wellbeing.”
12. Stronsay Development Trust: “Although delivery was delayed, the project is now progressing, with essential equipment secured and preparations in place. Local need was identified through consistent community feedback and aligns with wider evidence of cost-of-living pressures in island communities. Expected impacts include: Reduced household expenditure through clothing repair and reuse; Increased access to warm, safe community space;

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Improved wellbeing and reduced isolation; Skill-sharing and increased community resilience. Impact measurement will include attendance numbers, participant feedback, and monitoring of repeat engagement.”

13. Age Scotland Orkney: “150 older people were given a Community Card charged with £100 on each card to spend locally. The impact has been positive, we know most people purchased food from the local shops. Not only did this allow older people to have enough food to eat and not worry about where the money was coming from to pay their next energy bill as they had an extra £100 to use. It also supported the local shops and had a positive financial impact on turnover on our local economy with an extra £15,000 being spent in a relatively short timescale.”
14. OIC Youth Services: “The activities have had a significant positive impact on young people in Stromness. The Friday safe-space sessions have provided a consistent, welcoming environment where young people can socialise, build positive peer relationships, and take part in activities they previously did not have access to. The funding has ensured we can provide free food and beverages which has supported health and wellbeing while helping to ease cost-of-living pressures for families.
We have received feedback from young people who reported having no safe or affordable place to meet friends on Friday afternoons after school. These Friday afternoon activities were part of the programme of CLDE working with a range of partners to offer free activities after school on Fridays, following some concerns of some perceived anti-social behaviour during this time. Engagement with schools and community partners confirm the positive impact that the Drop in is having with the young people. Since October 2025-March 2026 (period of the funding) we have had between 13 and 34 young people attending the drop in every week. Young people have fed back that they love coming along. The love having access to different foods and they feel the staff who are there care about them and they can speak to them if they are feeling worried.”
15. THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank & Orkney CAB: “The Orkney Money Matters pathway for financial insecurity provides a joint assessment and referral pathway prior to financial support. The funded activity provided a key fund to cover priority debts for clients in financial crisis, which significantly reduces financial and personal strain for many of these households. 25 payments have been made so far, averaging £374 per payment, with maximum payments of £676 for larger grants so far, although higher levels are available for families.”
16. THAW Orkney: “As part of wider support through Orkney Money Matters, larger energy support has supported 31 payments so far, averaging £274 per voucher. This includes supporting households lacking heating due to being unable to afford topping up solid fuel. All clients were also supported with energy advice and home visits where required, which has supported access to property upgrades and wider energy support in many cases.”

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17. Right There: “The funding has had a significant positive impact on the people we support. It has enabled us to provide immediate assistance, reducing financial stress and improving stability for those at risk. The need was identified through ongoing engagement. The funding helped us to respond to those immediate needs. Qualitative feedback from support staff and the people we support demonstrates the value of this support.”
18. Hoy Youth Hub: “We have provided Christmas Hampers to every child on the island, we are also able to ensure each child receives a gift voucher for their birthday and have set up an item bank of personal care products that every family on the island can access – with items available to young people at our sessions freely. The needs were identified through our ongoing sessions and discussions with young people and their families as well as our own experiences as parents. We are delighted with the impact these initiatives have had.”
19. Orkney Charitable Trust: “The need for this grant was that it supported 373 children and 9 over 16 years old children. This money was spent on food, clothes, Santa gifts, a family day out, or a treat such as a family event. Families also used it for basic comforts such as warmer clothes, coats, bedroom furniture or improvements. Each family was asked of their intention of spend and it was clear these grants help alleviate additional pressure around this time of year. Many families talked about trying to make ends meet and Christmas being an additional cost leading to increased anxiety or poor mental health with worry. Being able to use this Christmas grant to tailor the needs to each family was appreciated by the parents. We know this was valued from the thanks we received in emails and letters. Some families expressed their gratitude as “you will never know how much this means to us a family”. We know these Christmas grants give a more relaxed Christmas / festive season to the families and with additional help we offer this time of year there has been a few families we helped in time of crisis which has stopped further debt or hardship and they have not fallen so deeply into the river of poverty.”
20. The Pickaquooy Centre Trust: “Whilst the programme is still ongoing (Session run up to the Summer Holidays) The sessions have been averaging 45 young people per week. The funding was to cover 40 snacks per week which has covered the cost with an 85% uptake on the snack each week.”

How have your activities delivered on alleviating child poverty?

1. Island of Hoy Development Trust: “Early indications have been good as households with children have attended both sessions and praised the selection of produce we provided.”
2. HomeStart Orkney: “The funded activities directly supported families facing financial hardship, helping them to reduce isolation and improve confidence. By reducing immediate pressures around food and activities the support improved children’s wellbeing and reduced the risk of crisis or escalation.

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Families reported reduced stress, improved ability to participate in daily life, and better engagement with education, health, and support services. For many, small, timely interventions prevented situations that could have deepened poverty or led to statutory involvement. Overall, the fund helped ensure children in our islands' communities had safer, more stable home environments during a period of significant financial strain while accessing community activities and parents access food sharing and cooking with confidence."

3. Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE): "The activity is focussed on tackling food insecurity and poverty, directly supporting vulnerable individuals, families and communities, including children.
4. Orkney Youth Forum: "The programme contributes to alleviating child poverty by reducing financial barriers to participation and increasing access to opportunities. Projects funded through the Youth Voice Fund often provide free or low-cost activities, resources, or support that young people might not otherwise be able to access. In addition, the programme supports wellbeing, social inclusion, and skill development, which are key factors in addressing the wider impacts of poverty on children and young people."
5. Orkney Islands Council: "It provides low income families with payments to purchase food for their children."
6. Orkney Youth Café: "By providing everyday essentials for young people, easing financial stress. The meals we provide ease food poverty, some having their main meal with us, and leftovers taken home to family."
7. Flotta Day Club: N/A
8. OIC Participation Fund: "The fund has helped to reduce financial barriers and increase access to opportunities that would otherwise have been out of reach for many families, particularly in relation to residential school trips and extracurricular activities."
9. Orkney Foodbank: "Particularly during extended period of leave from school families report having difficulty providing snacks for children – the funding enabled us to provide additional snacks on a pilot basis."
10. Women's Aid Orkney: "Through providing families with vouchers, this directly helped to alleviate child poverty through allowing mothers to access, food, heating, clothing etc."
11. Orkney Blide Trust: "Many of our young people would not be able to afford to take part in these activities (transport, food and activity costs) without the project due to low wages/benefits."
12. Stronsay Development Trust: "The project contributes to alleviating child poverty by: Reducing costs associated with clothing and basic household items; Providing a Warm Hub to reduce heating-related financial strain; Supporting families with practical skills that enable long-term savings; Creating a supportive environment where families can access help without stigma."
13. Age Scotland Orkney: "Many older people provide childcare for their grandchildren whilst the parents are working. This extra funding will help them to provide nutritional meals for themselves and the children they look after."
14. OIC Youth Services: "The drop-in is designed to remove financial and social barriers to participation so that young people can attend for free. This can support families affected by cost-of-living pressures, all activities, food, and refreshments are provided free of charge. Recognising that some young

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people may not have access to a cooked meal at home, we ensured universal access to food to avoid stigma or singling out individuals. This approach promoted both equality and equity, allowing all young people to participate fully and without disadvantage.”

15. THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank & Orkney CAB: “The Orkney Money Matters debt fund sets financial support based upon household demographics, as set out by the Minimum Income Standard (MIS). In practice this means that families, especially lone parents, are provided with significantly greater financial support. This is multiplied in the Isles, where families have even greater costs, so the fund is indexed to the Remote Rural Scotland MIS, which again ensures a higher value of support.”
16. THAW Orkney: “Recent statistics show that since the last energy crisis the number of families supported has reduced to one fifth of all THAW clients. However, provision of support is dependent upon both fuel poverty level as well as other intersectional priorities, which includes caregiving for children and adults. Therefore, families are eligible for higher values of financial support as well as increased financial support from onward referrals for other emergency support, such as the Orkney Money Matters cash-first fund.”
17. Right There: “Our activities have directly contributed to alleviating poverty by supporting vulnerable young people aged 12-26 some of whom are experiencing homelessness, financial hardship, or the impact of a family member drug and/or alcohol use. The provision of food and crisis support helped ensure the young people were able to meet their basic needs reducing the immediate effects of poverty. By reducing financial pressure, young people have been better able to engage in education and support services, improving their longer-term outcomes. In addition, support has contributed to improved wellbeing, helping to break the cycle of disadvantage and reducing the impact of ongoing poverty.”
18. Hoy Youth Hub: “This project has allowed us to continue to build on our ongoing activities to battle Child poverty on Hoy – the impact of this is evident when speaking to children, young people and their families – their gratitude is phenomenal.”
19. Orkney Charitable Trust: “Over November and December we verified and administered 373 Christmas grants and 9 General Orkney Fund £60 grants plus additional support to families in crisis. Each grant was £60 Bank Transfer for each child, with no limit of children within a single household. Before Christmas we distributed £22,920. As each family contacted Orkney Charitable Trust through the Microsoft Form, we could use this as an opportunity to offer additional help and financial help to families. It was an opportunity many families took to write about their circumstances and the impact of poverty of their family and their physical and mental health.”
20. The Pickaquoy Centre Trust: “The free snack allows children who may not otherwise have access to food the opportunity to have a healthy snack whilst attending the activities.”

5. Challenges

Have you faced any challenges so far in delivering these activities, or reaching the intended groups? Please give brief details.

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1. Island of Hoy Development Trust: "FareShare's deliveries over winter have been greatly affected by weather. High winds and/or snow have hindered road and ferry transport. Furthermore, they have had other problems around funding and supplies. Short notice deliveries to the island have meant us only being able to hold single Friday sessions in Longhope. The vehicle provided by IoHDT is unavailable on a Friday, as it services one of the community transport routes. This situation will change from April 2026 so that FoodHubs in the north on Fridays will be an option for us."
2. HomeStart Orkney: "We experienced some disruption due to staffing changes, which affected capacity at points during the funding period. This occasionally slowed delivery or limited how quickly we could respond to new referrals. Moving forward, we have strengthened our staffing structure and improved internal processes to ensure continuity and maintain timely support for families."
3. Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE): None reported
4. Orkney Youth Forum: "Some challenges include ensuring all project ideas are realistic within the available budget and timeframe and managing expectations where initial ideas are not feasible. Geographic spread and rurality can also present challenges in terms of access and engagement. However, these have been mitigated through flexible delivery, partnership working, and adapting sessions to meet the needs of different groups."
5. Orkney Islands Council: None reported
6. Orkney Youth Café: "We have reached the target audience of young people who attend the café but obviously there are many more who do not. We have advertised the space and had Pop-Up events to promote it so numbers are increasing."
7. Flotta Day Club: None reported
8. OIC Participation Fund: "Some parents were reluctant to self-refer or seek support, and initiating conversations about financial hardship was not always straightforward. Schools addressed this by taking a sensitive and proactive approach to engagement."
9. Orkney Foodbank: "We are able to issue to our clients on receipt of referral. We highlight this additional service to referrers."
10. Women's Aid Orkney: None reported
11. Orkney Blide Trust: "No, the group is well established and attended. Communication is via a closed group chat so that the opportunities are open to everyone. Weekend and evening activities mean that people who are working or at college are not excluded."
12. Stronsay Development Trust: "Yes. Delivery was initially delayed due to staff reductions, which impacted capacity to begin the project as planned. However, this has now been addressed, and progress has been made, including: Purchase of all required sewing machines and tools; Restarting volunteer recruitment; Preparing for delivery of sessions. The project is now moving forward as intended."
13. Age Scotland Orkney: "No, we did not experience any difficulties."
14. OIC Youth Services: "We have faced some challenges in ensuring consistent engagement. Some of our young people who would like to attend, cannot due to their bus times after school which means that they cannot come along as the school bus leaves at 2pm and the public buses do not go to some areas. We have also experienced occasional pressure on staffing and resources"

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during higher-than-expected attendance. We also have challenges around what the Drop in will look like once the Community Centre is taken over by the Stromness Development Trust but this is continuing as is at present with negotiations taking place.”

15. THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank & Orkney CAB: “More work is needed to promote the OMM pathway through schools and the NHS, via the OMM partnership, since a smaller proportion of families have accessed the debt support fund than were supported through the original cash-first fund. This may be due to higher levels of family support reducing the number of households falling into debt, but it is important that families can easily access additional funds if needed.”
16. THAW Orkney: “There have been some challenges reaching households on the isles through anchor organisations, partially due to energy projects developed through community energy and commercial organisations working closely with the isles network, reducing interest/capacity for engagement on some isles. However, direct support on these isles has continued on these isles through word of mouth from existing households and support organisations.”
17. Right There: “One of the main challenges have been the high level of demand for support, which has at times exceeded available resources particularly in relation to food provision and financial assistance. The complex needs of the young people we support, including Trauma, mental health, and chaotic living situations, can also impact on engagement and require a flexible and responsive approach. However, partnership working and the introduction of in-house food provision have helped us to respond effectively and ensure that support remains accessible to those most in need.”
18. Hoy Youth Hub: “The only difficulty we faced was getting people to say what they needed, we got round this by offering a selection of items and allowing them to take freely – removing the barrier where they felt they had to ask.”
19. Orkney Charitable Trust: “We have no faced any challenges in delivering our planned project, The Every Child Deserves a Christmas grant scheme is embedded within the Orkney Community and before launched families and professional often check in, when it will be starting. We reached our intended groups with ease and trust, as we have been doing these grants for over 10 years. Our partnerships are strengthening each year. However, our challenges are that we are volunteers running the charity with no overheads, time and resources are a limiting factor, when we can see so much more can be done to support families and young people in Poverty. This can be frustrating for the Trustees.”
20. The Pickaquoy Centre Trust: “To reach as many young people as possible, we have two snack options each week including soup. Therefore at least one of the options would be to the taste of the young people.”

Any other observations you want to share?

1. Island of Hoy Development Trust: “Whilst we have had a slow start to the North FoodHub Pilot, for reasons outside our control, we expect to roll out the programme as expected from now on, as we move into spring. With a regular presence in the north, we will increase awareness of our FoodHub using Facebook notifications and posters, highlighting the funding we have had, and

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signage to alert passers-by. Funds are ringfenced and will be spent throughout the pilot-period ending on 30 Nov 2026.”

2. HomeStart Orkney: None reported.
3. Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE): “The need for locally accessible surplus food is clear, and given continued economic uncertainty and pressure, this support will continue to be needed going forward.”
4. Orkney Youth Forum: “A key strength of the programme is the genuine level of youth participation, with young people actively shaping projects from idea through to delivery. The flexibility of the funding model allows for a wide range of creative and locally relevant projects.”
5. Orkney Islands Council: None
6. Orkney Youth Café: “We are very grateful, as are the young people who have benefitted from this funding. It’s heartbreaking that so many young people find themselves in food poverty and with these financial stresses, but with the funding allocated we have been able to ease this a little and hope to continue to do so.”
7. Flotta Day Club: None reported
8. OIC Participation Fund: “This fund has been very positively received by schools, children, young people, and their families. It has made a meaningful contribution to promoting inclusion and reducing barriers to participation associated with financial hardship.”
9. Orkney Foodbank: “We would intend to secure additional funds going forward to continue both of these extended services.”
10. Women’s Aid Orkney: None
11. Orkney Blide Trust: None
12. Stronsay Development Trust: “Despite early delays, there remains strong community interest and clear need for the project. The combination of practical support (Make n Mend) and social/wellbeing support (Warm Hub) is particularly valuable in a small island context, where access to services is limited. We are confident the project will deliver meaningful impact as it becomes fully operational.”
13. Age Scotland Orkney: “The recipients of the cards were so grateful to be given this extra money especially leading up to Christmas time when we know that many people struggle just buying the essentials. This funding was key to many older people having a warm home in the coldest months of the year.”
14. OIC Youth Services: “The funding made a huge difference to the food provision we offer and the young people really appreciate this.”
15. THAW Orkney, Orkney Foodbank & Orkney CAB: None reported.
16. THAW Orkney: None reported.
17. Right There: “The funding has highlighted the ongoing and increasing level of need among vulnerable young people, particularly those experiencing homelessness or affected by a family members drug and/or alcohol use. It has demonstrated the importance of flexible, person-centred support that can respond quickly to crisis situations. The ability to provide immediate assistance, alongside ongoing support has been essential in improving outcomes for people we support. We have also seen the value of partnership working particularly with the local foodbank, in strengthening provision and ensuring a coordinated response to need. Continued investment in this type of support would be vital in building on the positive impact achieved.”

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18. Hoy Youth Hub: "This funding has had a significant impact for our families and young people – thank you for supporting our work with such a large amount – we are truly grateful that the wellbeing of the children and young people of Hoy is important to those outside the island."
19. Orkney Charitable Trust: "
20. The Pickaquoy Centre Trust: None reported

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Annex A - Policy Intent and Activities for 2025/26

Scotland's islands continue to face high costs of living pressures and are often more exposed than other parts of the country to the ongoing cost crisis. Since December 2022, the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund has already distributed £3.4 million to help local authorities support those islanders who are most affected by cost of living pressures.

Whilst island communities can access a wide range of existing funding from the Scottish Government, the Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund was developed by the Islands Team to specifically recognise and tackle the challenges that our islands face.

As in past years, this £1 million of funding should therefore be used to target island areas only by providing immediate help to families, communities and businesses who are struggling most, either through existing schemes and/or other new support where need is greatest.

The spirit and deliverables of the 2025-26 round remain the same as in previous years, with a continuing strong focus on tackling child poverty. Many of the projects your local authorities have delivered with Islands Cost Crisis Emergency Fund support so far have already had the reduction of child poverty levels as one of their main objectives. Through this additional funding, the Scottish Government and local authorities can increase efforts to support children in low income households on our islands.

Funds are to be distributed on a 100% population basis, as recommended by the joint Scottish Government/COSLA Settlement Distribution Group and approved by COSLA political Leaders. This funding will be paid as a redetermination of the General Revenue Grant during the last 2 weeks in March 2026. The funding has been allocated to spend in the 2025-26 financial year. More recent population figures from sources such as the 2022 Census and 2023 National Records of Scotland Mid-Year Estimates, have been used to determine the breakdown of funding per local authority which can be found below.

Given the flexibility around this funding, Scottish Government expects the administrative cost to Local Authorities to be minimal. In all cases, administrative costs should be kept to a minimum. Scottish Government anticipates that the funding will be spent by 31 March 2026.

ICCEF Funding Allocation by Local Authority

Local Authority	Population*	Allocation	£
Argyll & Bute	14,957	0.145	145,000
Highland	11,022	0.107	107,000
Na h-Eileanan Siar	26,030	0.253	253,000
North Ayrshire	5,932	0.058	58,000
Orkney Islands	22,000	0.214	214,000
Shetland Islands	23,000	0.223	223,000
SCOTLAND	102,941	1.000	1,000,000

[*Scottish Local Government Finance 'Green Book' for Grant Aided Expenditure and other allocations 2025-26, p.60](#)