

Household Support Fund 4

Case studies



Introduction

In the financial year starting April 2023, Oldham Council allocated £400,000 of the Household Support Fund to the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Sector. Working with Action Together it provided an investment directly in VCFSE groups and organisations who are already working closely with individuals and households in Oldham who are at risk due to the adverse impact of the cost-of-living crisis. 27 groups and organisations were awarded funding in varying amounts.

What is the Household Support Fund (Phase 4)?

The purpose of this fund is to provide a flexible cash first fund which can meet emergency needs for residents before financial challenges escalate. It is aimed at those from communities and in situations where offers from the existing structured system are less trusted, accessible or appropriate. As well as reducing the impact of the cost of living crisis for these residents who already face greater inequality, this will have the added benefit of building trust for future initiatives to work better and reducing the likelihood of those communities needing more expensive interventions further down the line.

In this document are case studies which show the impact of the fund on some of the individuals supported by these organisations:

- Yuvanis Foundation
- SAWN
- Ancora
- All Sufficient Sanctuary
- Oldham Community Meals
- Oldham Play Action Group
- AgeUK
- St Barnabas Church

Yuvanis Foundation Mr. S's Story

Situation

In recent months, Yuvanis Foundation had encountered several impactful cases where their support made a meaningful difference in the lives of families facing significant challenges. In the last few months, they have been partially targeting families with no recourse to public funds. One particular instance stands out, highlighting the immediate relief their assistance provided to a newly arrived family in need.

Mr. S and his family who we came into contact with Yuvanis Foundation in early November 2023. They migrated to the UK in October, just a month earlier. The father of the household, Mr. S, was an attendee of one of the Mosques Yuvanis Foundation did outreach work in. Yuvanis Foundation also deliver weekly Friday Prayer service there. Mr. S shared that his family was residing in a two-bedroom terrace, shared with another family. With three additional dependents, they found themselves cramped into a single small bedroom. Despite Mr. S's qualifications as a seasoned civil engineer in Pakistan and his wife's background as a college lecturer, they faced challenges securing employment in their new environment. Struggling to cover high rent and expenses, they relied on dwindling savings to afford basic necessities.

Action

After learning about their difficulties, Yuvanis Foundation offered to support them with shopping vouchers to relieve their financial stress temporarily. Yuvanis Foundation also set both the parents up with data sim cards so they can freely have access to the internet and make phone calls.

With the alleviation of some of their financial burdens and the newfound access to the internet, coupled with Mr. S's resourcefulness, he actively pursued various job opportunities in his field. Within a fortnight, he started receiving interview invitations for multiple positions. With their shopping expenses covered by our vouchers, he could afford travel costs for interviews. By the third week, he successfully secured a promising position as a lecturer at a college in Sheffield, aligning with his expertise. Additionally, he secured suitable accommodation for his family within the same timeframe, providing them with much-needed stability.

Outcome

Mr. S reached out to Yuvanis Foundation shortly afterward to share an update on his progress. He expressed gratitude, acknowledging that while the financial assistance provided may not have been substantial, it arrived precisely when he needed it most. It was the very support he needed at the time to give him that crucial boost he required to begin rebuilding his life.

SAWN L's Story

Situation

L was referred to SAWN via the Oldham Community Advice Network (OCAN), she needed support with accessing groups as she wanted to socialise and mix with other people as she was socially isolated and had no family and friends who could support her and help her settle into the area.

L also needed furniture for her children who had recently joined her from Spain. She had no bedroom furniture for her children.

Action

SAWN's invited L to their Furniture Hub and provided her with a Household Fund grant, which enabled L to choose her own furniture.

SAWN also introduced L to their activities, projects and women like her who provide a peer support network. This helped her to overcome her isolation and access peer support regarding parenting in the UK.

The Household Fund grant enabled SAWN to provide L with essential furniture items to help her furnish her children's bedroom. This included; a wardrobe, chest of drawers, dining table and chairs, and this helped to make her house more comfortable for her children.

Outcome

L is now attending SAWN on a regular basis she attends the SARATI Women's Group on a Tuesday. She is also attending the Supporting Women into Business 2 group on a Wednesday.

L has made fantastic progression from being isolated and lonely to making lots of new friends, whilst learning about setting herself up in business, enabling her to become an empowered independent woman, with the help and support she accessed via the Household Fund, SAWN and OCAN.

"Thank you so much for all the support you have given me I have been given a new lease of life and didn't realise all this support existed . I am very grateful for everything and the opportunities you are providing for me as well as my daughter."

- L

Ancora LP's Story

Situation

LP was referred to Ancora by his work coach. He had recently undergone surgery after a diagnosis of lung cancer and was sleeping in his van as he was homeless.

LP had applied to join the LA housing register 12 months ago but had not heard anything back.

LP had relinquished his private tenancy accommodation as he had been attacked and was continually being harassed. Due to his health issues, it was not appropriate or safe for him to be living without any access to any washing & cooking facilities.

Action

Ancora made referrals to the Safeguarding & Homeless Teams and also contacted his Macmillan Nurse who was unaware of his homeless situation.

They referred LP to the RSI Team (Rough Sleeper Team) and spoke to them directly about his situation. As Ancora had only been working with LP for half a day, they had not gathered all his details. LP was from a military background and with this information, he was awarded statutory duty. There was additional issue that he had a small dog, that he was unwilling to give up. With the help of the Red Cross, they provided a small grant enabling LP to access hotel accommodation that allowed his dog to be placed with him. LP was accommodated the next day and was able to stay at the hotel for 2 weeks. The LA managed to source some temporary accommodation that allowed a dog, and he was moved from the hotel.

LP was incredibly pleased to have been accommodated but there were no basic facilities in the flat other than a bed, settee and cooker/fridge. No bedding, pots & pans, kettle or microwave and the meter had no electricity and LP was struggling to top it up. Ancora managed to get most of the items from various places and from a shout out on social media.

Ancora continued to liaise with the LA as the property had very high ceilings, none of the windows locked so there were a number of drafts and none of the doors closed. LP was cold and unable to heat the property adequately.

LP's mental health started to deteriorate, and he stated that if it wasn't for the dog, he wouldn't be here. The town centre property was incredibly noisy all day and night, and he was experiencing flash backs as he had been diagnosed with PTSD some years ago.

After some discussion LP felt that he was unable to continue living at the property. Ancora liaised with housing as they were yet to decide on his homeless status and if he were to leave the property, Ancora needed to ensure they would be willing to offer him a statutory duty.

Outcome

LP has left the property and is staying with his sister who lives in the south for a month. The LA have agreed their statutory duty to him, and Ancora will liaise with them about LP's return to Oldham in the New Year. LP has appreciated the support he has received so far and regularly thanks Ancora for their input and support the HSF funding enabled them to provide.

“Thank you for all that you do. I can't say that enough about your service.”

- LP

Ancora VPW's Story

Situation

VPW is single parent to 2 young girls and had been recently sanctioned by DWP for missing an appointment. She was struggling with COL and the sanction had further impacted her ability to provide for children.

VPW had accessed Ancora support before but only when she was desperate as she is a proud young lady that really doesn't like asking for help. She had managed to feed her children but hadn't eaten herself for 2 days.

Action

Ancora spoke to VPW about her sanction, and it was clear that DWP had gotten their decision wrong. VPW had let them know quite clearly on her journal that she was unable to attend an upcoming appoint with them and informed them that she had an important hospital appointment for her daughter. VPW had already appealed this decision and knew that she would just have to wait. She shared that she had previously appealed a similar sanction and had won her appeal but the decision took over 10 months to be given. VPW also told Ancora that trying to make ends meet and the stress of this and some other issues had made her seek the support of her GP for her mental health. The GP had issued a lengthy sicknote and VPW stated that this was the first time ever she'd submitted a sicknote to DWP.

Ancora provided VPW with a supermarket voucher and also referred her for a food parcel from the Foodbank. They also referred her to Greenacres Community Centre as they were aware they had been awarded some National Lottery COL funding.

Ancora shared their concerns with DWP and they agreed they would try and expediate the decision process if they were able.

VPW will also attend Ancora's F2F hub at the library so they can further support her with other issues.

Outcome

VPW has met with Ancora who have supported her with some other issues. The HSF grant enabled Ancora to help VPW and she is aware that she can contact us them if she ever needs to.

"I can't thank Ancora, Greenacres & Foodbank enough. We didn't do a big shop at Christmas because we just couldn't afford to. I nearly cried seeing the girls faces today. Thank you so very, very much."

- VPW

All Sufficient Sanctuary Mrs. X's Story

Situation

Mrs. X is a single mother of two, living Oldham. She is currently unemployed autistic. As a result, she is unable to do things for herself and her family. Mrs. X was introduced to All Sufficient Sanctuary through one of the families that have previously benefitted from their services. Having narrated her story, All Sufficient Sanctuary decided to investigate further by asking their volunteers to pay a visit to her home. On arrival at their home, the volunteers were shocked to discover that the house was very cold, as it was not well heated, in spite of the fact that there are children living in the house.

Mrs. X was struggling with the huge bill of heating and lighting her home. She was also struggling with feeding the children as a direct consequence of the current high cost of food, gas and electricity.

Action

Looking at the plethora of issues, All Sufficient Sanctuary decided that they should help with some cash to pay for gas bill and electricity and to supply the family with food such as rice, plantain, yams, cooking oil, Tomatoes etc. on a regular basis to reduce their burden. Mrs. X's children were also provided with School uniforms, shoes and jackets.

Outcome

Mrs. X and her family are happy and very appreciative of this intervention and are now looking into the future with a renewed hope and vigor. Whenever All Sufficient Sanctuary meet this family, Mrs. X keep says 'God is faithful', 'You are God sent', ' You guys are amazing'.

All Sufficient Sanctuary have received a letter of appreciations from the family and they have also asked that their appreciation be extended to Action Together and the local council for this gesture of goodwill.

"It is such a pleasant and joyful thing when you see people showing so much appreciation for the assistance they have received. "

- All Sufficient Sanctuary

Oldham Community Meals Family A's Story

Situation

The A family called to ask for help with food because the husband lost his job due to ill health and the wife doesn't work as she just had a baby, the youngest being 3 months. They had been to all the food banks that could help and exhausted all the help that was available.

Action

Oldham Community Meals was able to deliver food items to the family.

Outcome

The A family were so full of joy when the Oldham Community Meals volunteer driver arrived with the food and the children were excited screaming, "We will eat today!" Mrs. A said "It was very thoughtful of you to ask if we have any dietary requirements", as the family only eat halal food because of their religion. She went on to say, "Most times, it's not like we are not grateful but we go to food banks where we are given tins of pork sausages or bacon and it's like we just have to accept it because we don't have food, but this means a lot realising that someone took their time to consider what we can eat and cannot eat."

"Thank you once again Oldham Community Meals for the food especially the rice, chicken and cooking oil. The family is much happier as we have food on our table"

- Mrs. A

Oldham Community Meals Mrs. D's Story

Situation

Mrs. D migrated to the UK with her 2 boys, leaving her abusive husband behind. She became critically ill after living in the UK for only 6 months and was in hospital for 5 months when she was diagnosed with AIDS and put on life support.

Mrs. D had a sister who was already living in the country, who was supporting her but then lost her job as she was childminding her sister's children as well as her own, while Mrs. D was in hospital.

Action

When Oldham Community Meals received the referral, they helped the family with the food packages and cultural appropriate food.

Outcome

The family was relieved, especially the children who were still trying to adjust to the new country and the type of food as they were not used to it. Providing a food package that they were familiar with brought so much joy to them and a big relief to the sister who was supporting them.

Mrs. D who was in hospital also enjoyed home cooked meals and it was soon realised that she was responding to her medication very well and was later discharged from hospital.

Mrs. D has fully recovered and is now working. Her children in school and her sister has another job. They are all happy and always look back to these moments when this much needed help made a big difference to the family.

“I was not only worried about my health as I was in hospital but the responsibility my sister had to look after me as well as feed my children and her children but when I was told there was support from Oldham Community Meals with a grocery package, I began to feel much better. The medication I was taking is very strong and being able to eat food that I am familiar with and the one I was craving for, my cultural food made a big difference, thank you so much.”

- Mrs. D

Oldham Community Meals Mr. S's Story

Situation

Mr. S is young man who contacted Oldham Community Meals to ask for food, stating that he hasn't been able to work and on universal credit, but due to other priority bills and his gas and electricity top up, was not able to have enough food. He specifically asked for food just to last him a few days until he receives his next payment and said he will be able to afford food again.

Action

Oldham Community Meals were able to deliver a food package to him.

Outcome

He was so happy when he received the package and shared his gratitude.

“Thank you so much for all you have done, the food is more than I expected and this will keep me going for a couple of weeks and will top up with my next pay . I never want to be in this situation again. Thank you for your caring attitude and not being judgemental and even asking if I have any dietary requirements. I have a Coeliac disease an I appreciated the gluten free food stuff so much. I am less anxious now and sleeping much better as I have enough food now. Keep up the great work.”

- Mr. S

Oldham Play Action Group Miss K's Story

Situation

Miss K is a Mum with 5 children ranging from 1 – 13 years, and was struggling for food and to keep her young children entertained over the holidays.

Action

OPAG were able to supply Miss K with a shopping voucher and invited the family to their activity sessions.

Outcome

The voucher helped Miss K to do a family shop during a difficult time. The children were also eligible for free school meals and were encouraged to come along to OPAG's HAF sessions where they were provided hot meals. They came to sessions at all of the OPAG general venues including Greenacres Community Centre, Poppy Road and Holts Roc 'N' Rolls Café. They also participated in the National Playday event in Royton and sessions at Trinity Methodist Church, Royton.

They were pleased that the original contact to get a shopping voucher had led to so many other opportunities and offered activities they could enjoy together as a family they could enjoy together as a family.

The sessions offered a real variety and meant there was something to engage each of the children. OPAG popped into one of the sessions at Roc N Roll Café and the middle daughter, 9, was performing a 'dinosaur dance' while wearing a simple costume of a headpiece and claws she had created. The other children were shared with OPAG what they had done that day which included the eldest daughter, 13, helping to create a wellbeing themed canvas and getting younger children's ideas about the '5 ways of wellbeing' to create a picture. The two boys had worked together on a space station inspired junk model with alien characters talking to one another about Earth and looking after it. The toddler enjoyed a story read to them by a child from another family keen to practice their reading. They all enjoyed making their own pizzas, choosing a chopping vegetables, grating cheese and chopping fruit for the fruit salad dessert. told me they had enjoyed trying different things, learning something new and were keen to share their ideas for future activities.



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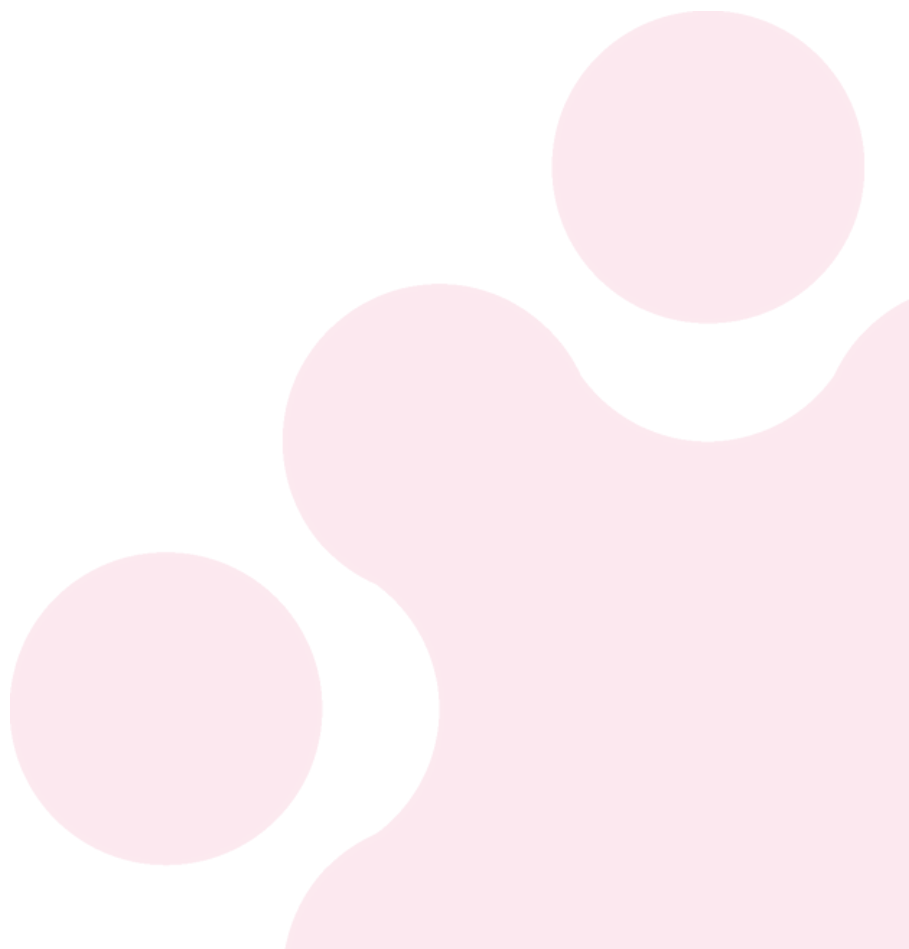
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Like many families, Miss K and her children they were able to access the Greenacres Community Fridge, which thanks to a grant from Forever Manchester, and items donated by Grotton Co-op, Greenacres Community Association were able to restock, which by helping out OPAG were able to ensure it linked in with their HAF sessions.

The K family are now also coming to the junior youth sessions OPAG have re- started at Greenacres Community Centre after the Christmas break.

“Both the voucher and the sessions have been so valuable as I she certainly would not be able to afford to do something each day with the children during the school holidays for an activity and food. It really helped the family finance to go that bit further.”

- Miss K



AgeUK JM's Story

Situation

JM contacted AgeUK in a distressed state as she had lost her son 5 weeks ago. JM's son had a Mental Health diagnosis. He had become withdrawn from his friends, not able to work and starting drinking more. JM said she felt let down by his GP, the GP had discussed with her son that it was his last sick note. He never returned to see his GP, stopped going out, drank more, and stopped taking his medication. His medication would come to the home monthly, he never attended any appointments for medication reviews and his condition worsened. He would not want his mum to contact the GP or the Ambulance Services during this time. His condition had got so bad that he agreed to go into hospital but sadly passed away.

JM has unpadlocked her son's room and to her distress, couldn't believe the room was full of empty beer cans and bottles filled with urine. Her son was not able to sleep in this room, but she never questioned him why he didn't sleep in his room. Her son had been sleeping on the dining room floor downstairs. JM felt embarrassed and upset that her son couldn't tell her that his room had got into such a state. She felt she couldn't go in his room, and he had this padlocked all the time.

JM had her own health conditions, suffering a stroke and her son had supported her with her recovery when he was off sick from work. Her son had become her main carer. JM still has some loss of feeling in her right side of her face and toes and is wanting to attend coffee mornings or lunch clubs close to her home.

JM needed support clearing her sons bedroom, accessing groups as she felt socially isolated and had no savings or pension credit.

Action

AgeUK visited JM in her home. She was upset upon the visit and felt embarrassed showing her sons room. She was in clear distress and she couldn't enter the room.

AgeUK reassured JM that they would get quotes from reputable companies and find help to fund to clear her son's room. JM knew she couldn't tackle this room on her own and needed expert help. JM was happy for all the support Age UK Oldham provided emotionally and practically.

AgeUK arranged to take away a dining room table and chairs to clear her dining room and for Bulky Bobs to take away a separate fridge and freezer her son had put in the dining room.



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Outcome

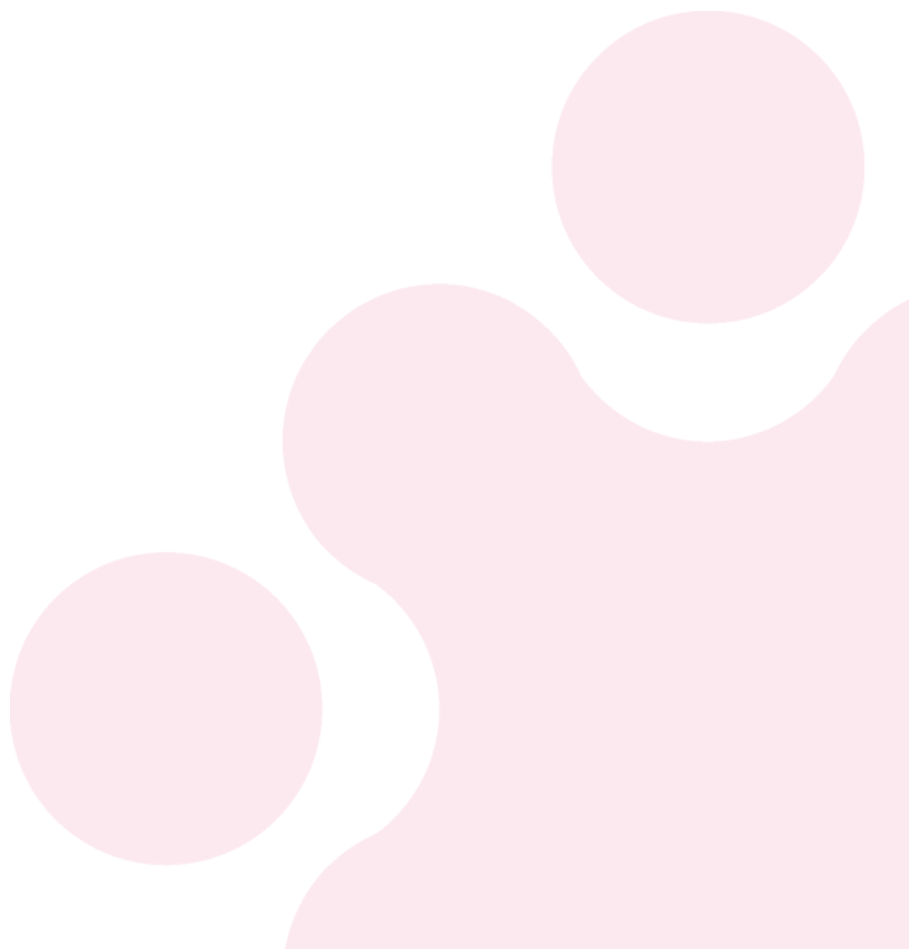
AgeUK sourced 2 quotes for clearing JM son's bedroom and remove his old bed. With the support of the Age UK Oldham's Winter Pressure Funding, they arranged for Fishers Cleaning Company to empty the room of two and a half tonnes of waste and his bed.

AgeUK spoke to Fishers to make sure to keep personal possessions in a safe place that JM could sort through later in her own time.

Information had been given on the Age UK Oldham Meals and she may try these in the future.

JM couldn't thank Age UK Oldham enough for all their support and help in clearing her son's room, she felt relieved.

She feels more positive and knows she can self-refer into our service at any time.



St Barnabas Church

V's Story

Situation

V had extreme morning sickness and could not work.

Action

St Barnabas Church gave her an eVoucher to buy food.

X's Story

Situation

X is a young mother with a son with severe autism. He also has learning difficulties and accompanying developmental delays: he can neither speak well nor read. His mum therefore cannot work causing economic vulnerabilities.

Action

St Barnabas Church bought her a new washing machine when her existing machine failed through over-use.

Y's Story

Situation

Y is an elderly man in his early 90s. He is suffering some of the usual health concerns for a man of his age, particularly concerning his mobility. Sadly, his wife died after a long debilitating illness. During his wife's last few weeks, receiving superb end-of-life care in the local hospice.

Action

St Barnabas Church helped support the cost of taxi fares to enable him to see his wife during their valued final day together.

Z's Story

Situation

Z is a young man who manages to hold down three small jobs and works an almost incredible number of hours each week. But he never seems to have enough money—bus fares, rent, medication, uniform ... and of course the unexpected costs that defy budgeting such as shoes and an illness when he could not work.

Action

St Barnabas Church gave him an eVoucher to buy food.