



The Rt Hon Mel Stride MP
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions
Caxton House
7th Floor, 6 – 12 Tothill Street
SW1H 9NA

6th of November 2023

Re: Renewal of Household Support Fund urgently needed to protect our most vulnerable residents

Dear Rt Hon Mel Stride MP

We urge you to extend the Household Support Fund for the financial year from April 24 to March 25.

The Household Support Fund (Fund) has become a core source of funding for local authorities to support their most vulnerable residents accessing food and other essentials. However, there is no confirmation that it will be extended beyond March 2024. It is unthinkable to imagine a near future without the Fund at a time when our frontline services are experiencing the most demand.

The Sustainable Food Places (SFP) Network is a growing movement of 94 food partnerships across the UK that are driving innovation and best practice in all aspects of healthy and sustainable food. Among other functions, food partnerships support local food poverty alliances, work strategically with or within their council and the voluntary and community sector. They are extremely concerned about the uncertainty around the Fund. This account from Hull Food Partnership is echoed by many of our members:

'It is unthinkable to imagine a near future without this extra money at a time when our frontline services are experiencing the most demand. Applications from Citizens in crisis are more than nine times the volume they were prior to the pandemic and the current cost of living crisis. It is only through the Household Support Fund that we have been able to support citizens as we would wish to, and there is now an expectation of that support being there at a time of continuing need.'

Councils need to know if the Fund is being extended, in the November 22nd Autumn statement. Previous announcements have not given enough notice to plan effectively, which has caused stress within councils.

We are at your disposal to provide evidence the impact the Fund is having, in support of its renewal.

Yours Sincerely:

Helen Starr-Kedde, Sustainable Food Places

helensk@foodmatters.org