

Fuel Support Fund for low income Highland households experiencing fuel insecurities (18.01.2021)

Households in the Highland who are on low income and experiencing fuel insecurities as a result of COVID-19 can apply for a Fuel Support Fund from The Highland Council.

The £270,000 Fuel Support Fund has been set up by the Council using Scottish Government funding which can be used flexibly to alleviate financial insecurities.

Leader of The Highland Council Cllr Margaret Davidson said: “Sadly, as a result of Covid-19, an increasing number of households in Highland are experiencing fuel insecurities. Large sections of the Highland population do not have access to mains gas and are reliant on more expensive sources of domestic heating such as oil, wood, coal, and wood pellets.

“Highland Council has therefore decided to use part of the Government’s funding to set up a fuel support fund for those who are having difficulties paying for fuel for their homes.”

Crisis Grants for fuel support are already available via the Scottish Welfare Fund for those in crisis. Where appropriate, eligible applicants will be awarded a grant from the Scottish Welfare Fund before being considered for a grant from the local Fuel Support Fund.

For those experiencing fuel insecurities, the scheme is available to low income households who are entitled to Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and for those without recourse to public funds.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Margaret Davidson added: “Working from home has increased the financial pressures for many of our households. Council tax rules mean that there are some individuals on a low income who are exempt from council tax and therefore not entitled to council tax reduction. The Council’s Head of Revenues and Business Support will therefore look at these claims on an individual basis so that awards can be made to those who are eligible.”

All applicants will be offered a referral to Citizens Advice (CAB) for energy checks and expertise available from CAB as this may help to reduce domestic fuel bills.

As this is a cash-limited fund, the Scheme will close on 28 February 2021.

People on low incomes who are experiencing fuel insecurities can apply online at www.highland.gov.uk/fuelsupportfund for a £60 non-repayable cash payment per application which is made to eligible applicants.