

Communities Can...



one **Colchester**
Community in Action

Cost of living support

Cabinet – 12 October 2022

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Recap on activity so far

- Reporting and governance underway in CBC and partner organisations
- Becoming BAU in thinking and decision making
- Additional CBC funding given to **4** Foodbanks
- Government support announced – more clarity on 31 October
- Cost of living crisis meetings on-going – helping to pull together support offered by CBC, CBH, One Colchester and within the community
- Full communications campaign launched and continuing – both online and other options
- Immediate cost of living area created on the website
- Data mapping including Experian
- Financial assistance schemes implemented:
 - Household Support Fund payments to **2878** older residents
 - Council tax rebate payments to **64,363** residents under the main scheme and **1,125** under the discretionary scheme



Cost of living support - Overview of current schemes and partners supporting residents

New approach – 3 support stages

- Immediate help for those suffering financial hardship/crisis intervention
- Longer term support for those worried about increasing costs
- Support in the community (including warm welcoming spaces)



Approach for help

In need of immediate help (crisis intervention):

- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Exceptional Hardship Payments
- Food bank referrals
- Essential living fund referrals
- Debt advice referrals

In need of longer term support:

- Benefits and LCTS claims
- Employment support
- Reducing household costs (energy, food etc)
- Warm welcoming homes
- Private sector housing & Healthy Homes



New approach in the Community

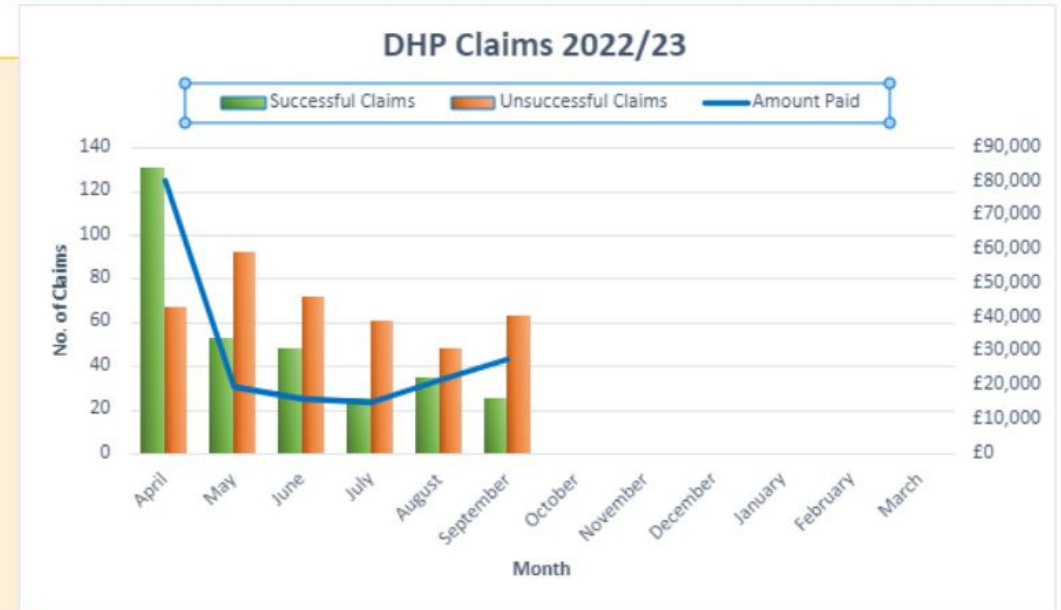
- Warm Welcoming spaces: [Warm Welcoming Spaces \(google.com\)](#)
- Outreach – C3 Hub, Anti loo roll concert, Greenstead Housing Office, General Hospital, Abbey Fields Medical Centre etc.....
- Pop up outreach to be launched soon. Including supermarkets, Xmas market, rural ward venues and others
- Regular communications with Town & Parish Councils to update and to gain their support
- Signposting and assistance by Community Enabling, Digital Access Teams and others
- Support and funding signposting to local community groups and leaders to enable communities to help themselves
- Partnership joint work continues to share each others expertise and support offers



Immediate help provided so far

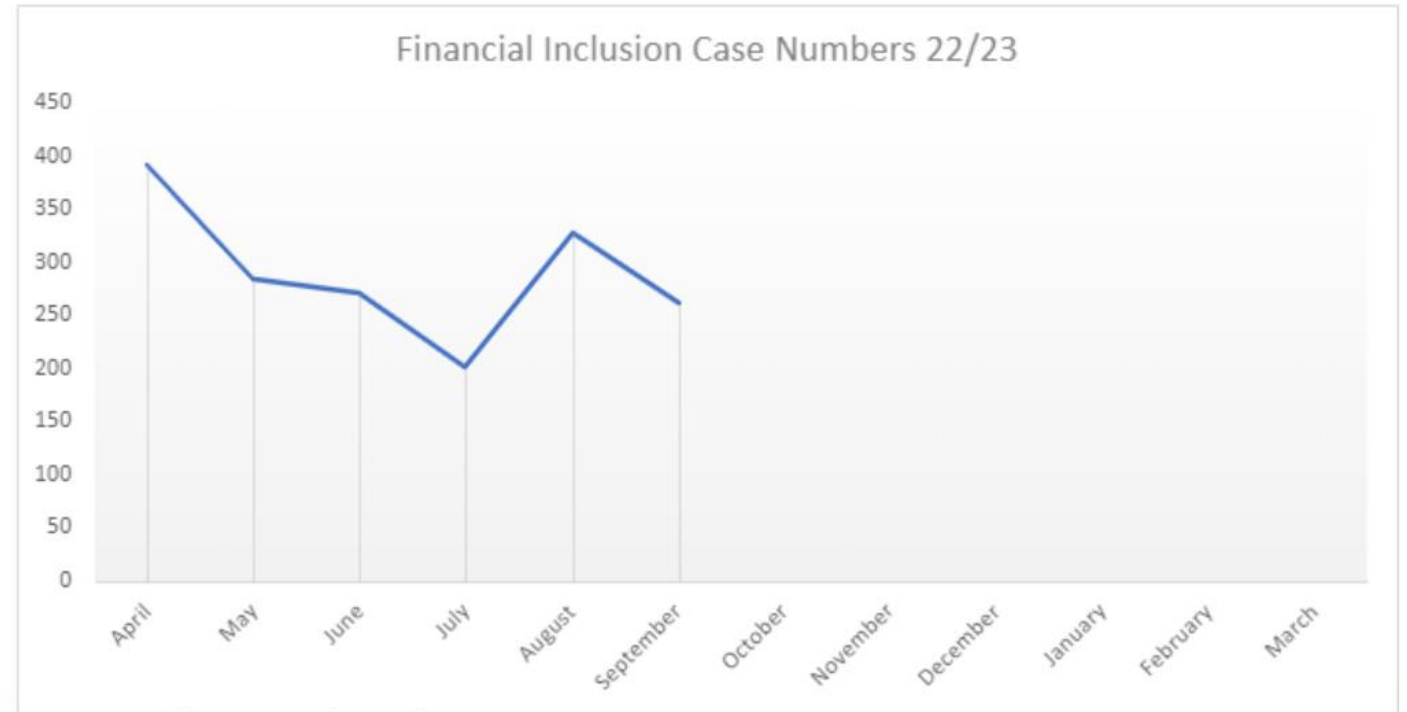
Data from April 2022

- Discretionary Housing Payments – support given to 317 residents to help with housing costs
- Exceptional Hardship Payments – support given to 66 residents helping with council tax costs
- **Data from September 2022 (this will be tracked going forward):**
 - Since September 129 residents have been referred into and been supported by Financial and Employment Support Teams due to financial hardship.
 - CBC foodbank referrals – 11 residents provided with foodbank vouchers since September
 - Essential living fund - 3 Residents referred to access funding for essential household goods

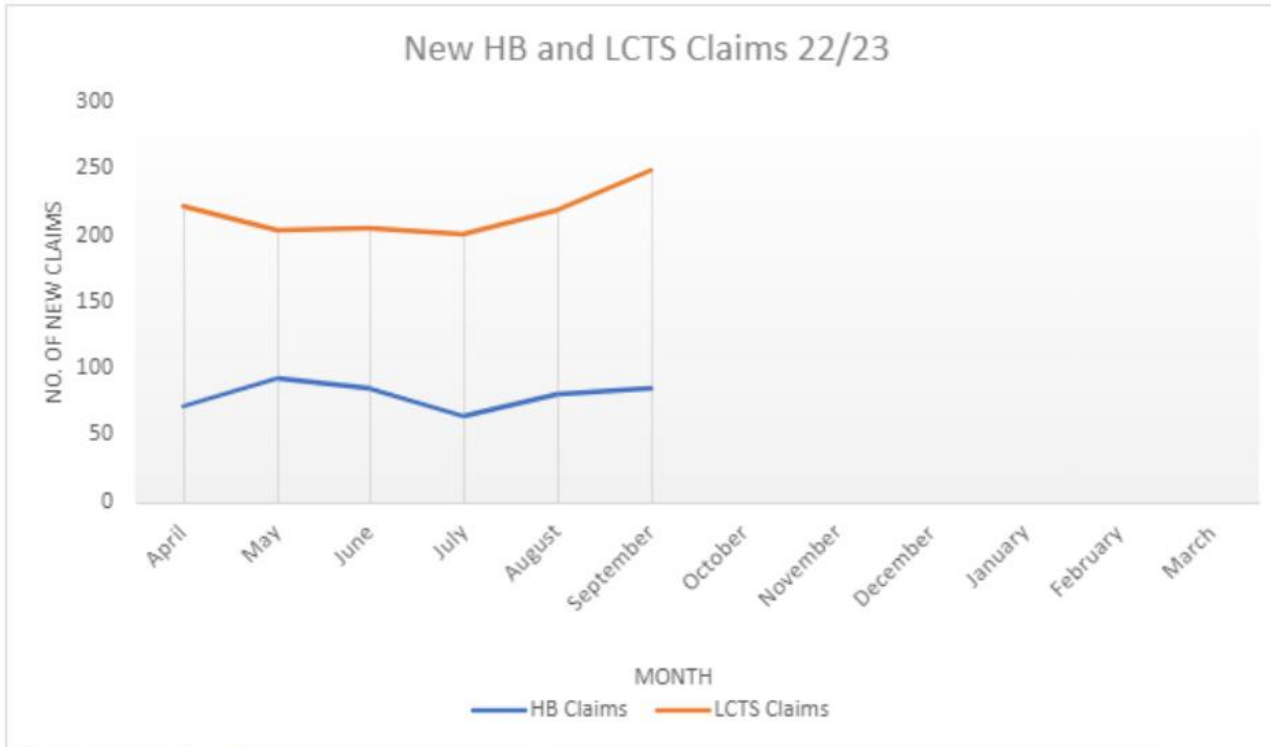


Immediate help provided so far

CBH Financial Inclusion caseloads – no significant trends to date, but showing slight increase from August.



Longer term support provided so far



Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Claims:

- Housing benefit claims reducing in line with Universal Credit migration
- LCTS claims increasing indicating more people are experiencing financial difficulties. The team have been proactively contacting residents who may be eligible, encouraging them to apply. This will be monitored going forward.



Progress & Actions in Sept/Oct

- LCTS scheme for 23/24 to include increased support. Consultation is now underway and will close in November.
- The website is being re-written to make it more personal and easier to navigate.
- Outreach continuing through various events.
- Brief completed for COL video
- Leaflet design underway providing customers information on the different support available.
- Facebook video created highlighting CBC support available - [CoL Facebook video for support Sept 22.mp4](#)
- We are applying to become a referral partner for the Money and Pension Service – this will provide one referral route for residents in debt and allow us to track progress.
- Restructure of the teams to combine Financial and Employment Support with Communities. This will provide more resource for outreach and a more coordinated approach to further plans
- Discussions are underway with the University to use their expertise in wider data collection and analysis to valid or change our approaches
- Continued support for CBC staff members



Case Studies

The team received a telephone call regarding the cost of living. After a brief discussion, it was clear that this family were in dire need of help. The resident had recently been assaulted by her ex-partner, her 2 daughters were allegedly being groomed and were frequent runaways, her 2 young sons were starting to show behaviour problems. They had no money for gas and electric, no food due to being benefit capped. The following actions were taken:

- Completed LCTS application. This has been awarded.
- Completed DHP application. This is being assessed at present.
- Made a referral to Welfare Benefits Specialist for help with an application for DLA for her daughter. In progress.
- Made a referral to C360 requesting a family day out for her family as their mental health was suffering. Zoo tickets were awarded.
- Completed the application for discretionary energy rebate. This has been awarded.
- Requested a food parcel with some extra treats for the children plus delivery due to the Police looking for her daughter and mum should stay at home in case she returned. A parcel was delivered, the Police found her daughter and brought her home.
- Made a safeguarding referral.
- Contacted CBH for an update on their housing status due to overcrowding and the need for the family to move out of area for their safety. I was told they were aware of the Police investigation and Social Care supporting the family.



Cost of living support - Overview of current schemes and partners supporting residents

Questions?

