

Appendix A

Mitigations Council can make regarding loss of Universal Credit uplift and financial inequalities

- Support for residents

Policy Panel – 24 November 2021



Financial and Employment Support

Issues faced by residents

Resolution

15,000 of our residents are claiming Universal Credit and many will be losing £20 per week temporary uplift due to Covid

Working with County partners and our colleagues in DWP to support residents to maximise their income

We will be working in the Job Centre Plus in Chapel Street and two new Job Centres to offer a wraparound service that is not provided by DWP (including priority debt and housing support)

Residents being told to self-isolate leading to financial hardship

We administer Test and Trace Support Payments - further allocations from Central Government and ECC are continuing into the winter

Many who are currently employed could be affected by the end of the furlough scheme and radical changes in the job market

Support residents (who may be claiming Benefits for the first time) to maximise their income through Benefits and make them aware of what is available to them

Rising fuel costs

Work with residents to ensure they are accessing services such as The Green Doctor, Extra Winter Fuel Payments, Warm Home initiatives

Ability to meet basic day to day living expenses

Partnership working with Colchester Foodbank where CBC officers provide users with specialist advice on income maximisation and employment/training opportunities

Vulnerable households across the country will be able to access a new £500m support fund to help them with essentials over the coming months as the country continues its recovery from the pandemic.

Financial and Employment Support Team

Issues faced by residents	Resolution
Residents struggling to find work	<p>We have recruited (funded by DWP) two Employment Support Officers to help those who are furthest from the employment market to find work</p> <p>These officers will be based at Job Centre Plus locations to be available for immediate referrals on a day to day basis</p> <p>We will work across partnerships (for example ECC, University and Institute) and through One Colchester embedding their role as key anchor institutions</p>
Residents who are unable to access the internet to apply for jobs	<p>We will enhance the role of the Digital Access Team who, along with many other partners, provide devices and digital support to minimise the challenges faced by residents who have trouble accessing online opportunities</p>
Residents struggling to manage work and family life	<p>As part of the Working Families Strategy ECC are launching an Essex Employers Family Friendly Charter to enable working families to balance their work and caring commitments</p> <p>This will commit organisations to develop and agree a set of principles that govern effective family friendly employment practice across the county to actively promote family friendly practice to the employment market and wider supply chains</p>
Lack of opportunities and change in the employment market	<p>We are working with partners to promote local jobs (for example - The Knowledge Gateway at Essex University, New Health Academy in North East Essex and CBC)</p> <p>We are part of the ECC Anchor Network who are working on five key themes to help residents including employment, skills and workforce</p> <p>This work is developing fast and providing opportunities for our residents</p>

Housing Support Colchester Borough Homes and Colchester Borough Council

Issues faced by residents	Resolution
Residents facing eviction	<p>Colchester Borough Homes will only evict as last resort</p> <p>Support for residents renting privately is available to help prioritise debt and manage repayment plans to prevent homelessness</p> <p>Discretionary Housing Payments and Exceptional Hardship Payments to help those struggling to meet their rent and council tax liabilities</p>
Rough sleeping	<p>Rough sleeper team restructured to strengthen prevention work with partners and now includes secondments from mental health, trauma informed counselling and support with addiction</p> <p>New supported accommodation pathways are in place for winter</p> <p>Demand and emerging issues are complex, with high physical and mental health problems that cannot be resolved without long term supported housing projects</p>
Residents living in unsuitable housing	<p>Healthy Homes Team within CBC ensuring the most clinically vulnerable have an improved living environment</p> <p>Grants and Loans are available to help with home adaptations</p> <p>Our Private Sector Housing Team is focussed on ensuring people live in safety and will prosecute criminal landlords when necessary</p>