

<b>Title of Report</b>	Use of Hackney’s Crisis and Resilience Fund Allocation April 2026-March 2029		
<b>Key Decision No</b>	<i>CED S618</i>		
<b>For Consideration By</b>	Cabinet		
<b>Meeting Date</b>	23 March 2026		
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Carole Williams, Cabinet Member for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities and Cllr Robert Chapman, Cabinet Member for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service		
<b>Classification</b>	Open		
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All		
<b>Key Decision &amp; Reason</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">Yes</td> <td>Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	Significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
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<b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>	<p>31 March 2026</p> <p>The Chief Executive has agreed to protect this report from call-in, in accordance with Part 4E of the Council’s constitution. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel has been consulted, and the decision will be reported to the next Full Council meeting.</p> <p>A full explanation of the reasons for this decision is found in Section 2 of this report.</p>		
<b>Group Director</b>	Dawn Carter-McDonald, Chief Executive		
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**1. Cabinet Member's introduction**

- 1.1. Despite high levels of economic activity, improved educational attainment and a rapidly growing business sector, high housing costs, low pay, and inadequate benefits have driven up poverty in Hackney in recent years. The

Cost of Living Crisis, brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the hike in the cost of energy and other essentials following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, has exacerbated these factors.

- 1.2. While inflationary pressures have eased somewhat and the economy nationally is showing signs of growth, the 2025 English Indices of Deprivation found that 45% of children and over half of people over 60 live in poverty in Hackney. Hackney ranks second in England for income deprivation among children and older people. Hackney is the 27th most deprived Local Authority in England by average score, and 10th by average rank. Unemployment is significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels.
- 1.3. We welcome the removal of the two-child benefit cap, which from April 2026 will substantially improve the circumstances of many children in Hackney. Tackling poverty and inequality has been a priority for Hackney Council since 2018. In 2022, the Council approved its Poverty Reduction Framework, which set out a clear approach to preventing poverty, addressing the immediate needs of people in poverty as well as longer-term drivers of poverty like high housing costs and access to good quality employment, and working more collaboratively and relationally, taking a holistic and long-term approach.
- 1.4. Since then, the Council has embarked on an ambitious transformation programme to improve early help and prevention to families with children via the Fairer Families Initiative; reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation and improve the responsiveness of Council services. Our refreshed Voluntary Sector Strategy and Target Operating Model aims to make the Council more outward-facing, collaborative, anti-racist and trauma-informed.
- 1.5. The Crisis and Resilience Fund is a three-year allocation which replaces the Household Support Fund. The Crisis and Resilience Fund marks a move away from an approach based purely on crisis support, towards one aimed at prevention and helping residents find ways out of poverty long-term. The three-year funding allocation will enable the Council to maintain support for our own services, such as Here to Help and support a range of voluntary and community sector organisations to provide financial and community resilience services to our residents.
- 1.6. The Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation was announced in tandem with the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, which signalled a 25% increase to Core Spending Power over the 2024/25-2028/29 period.

We welcome this additional funding.

- 1.7. All this comes alongside the publication of the National Child Poverty Strategy, the Getting Britain Working White Paper, the 10 Year Health Plan for England, the National Homelessness Strategy and the proposed Local Outcomes Framework. All of these initiatives emphasise the importance of Councils working collaboratively with communities and statutory partners like health and the DWP to help residents find routes out of poverty. We will engage fully in these initiatives to create a sustainable support system for those facing financial hardship, linked to wider support like mental health provision, affordable housing, childcare, and employment support.

## **2. Group Director's introduction**

- 2.1. In June 2025, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that £1 billion (including the Barnett impact) would be allocated to councils in England for a new Crisis and Resilience Fund from April 2026 to March 2029.
- 2.2. The Crisis and Resilience Fund is a new three-year fund which replaces the Household Support Fund. This new fund will incorporate Discretionary Housing Payments and aims to offer a unified approach to household support, encompassing both crisis intervention and longer-term preventive work to increase financial resilience.
- 2.3. On 18th December 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced that Hackney's Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation would be £6.1m in 2026/27, £6.1m in 2027/28 and £5.9m in 2028/29. This funding will help the Council and the organisations we work with support residents over the next three years.
- 2.4. Hackney's Crisis and Resilience Fund programme will be delivered through a range of statutory and voluntary sector organisations. We believe this is the best way to reach the diverse range of residents facing financial hardship, some of whom may come from marginalised communities which are not as visible to statutory authorities or are less likely to approach the Council directly.
- 2.5. We have taken steps to ensure that communities are not disadvantaged due to their religion, race, disability, socio-economic status, or other protected characteristic, as outlined in the Equality Impact Assessment in this report.

- 2.6. In line with the Council's Transformation Plan, our Target Operating Model includes a commitment to place-based working, and in recognition of the widespread prevalence of deprivation across the borough, as evidenced in the 2025 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, we will ensure that support is available on a neighbourhood level, geographically evenly spread throughout the borough.
- 2.7. The Crisis and Resilience Fund Programme is due to commence delivery on 1st April 2026. Given the proximity to the pre-election period, I have made the decision to protect this report from call-in, as any delay could delay implementation of the programme, resulting in residents in financial hardship not receiving the support they need. In line with Section 4E of the Council's constitution, I have consulted Cllr Margaret Gordon, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny panel, about this decision and will report this decision to the next Full Council meeting. A further update will also be provided to Cabinet by September 2026.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. **Authorise the Council to accept the proposed Crisis and Resilience Fund programme grant funding, which is expected to be £6.1m from the Department for Work and Pensions in 2026/27, £6.1m in 2027/28 and £5.9 m in 2028/29 as set out in this report.**
- 3.2. **Authorise the Council to accept the additional £147,563 in 2026/27 and 2027/28 to support the administration of Housing Payments.**
- 3.3. **Agree the allocation of resources to the four strands of the programme for 2026/2027-2028/29 as set out in Section 5 of this report.**
- 3.4. **Agree to the launch of Grants or Commissioning programmes, which will provide funding for up to two and a half years from 2026/27 for VCS organisations to provide services that support Financial Resilience and improve the local support landscape in line with the Crisis and Resilience Fund Guidance - total value of £579,258 in Year 2026/27 and £1,470,242 in 2027/28 and £1,470,242 in 2028/29.**
- 3.5. **Authorise the distribution of £532,560 to voluntary and community sector organisations in the first half of 2026/27 via a grants programme as set out in Appendix 1 of this report.**

- 3.6. **Authorise £132,000 of funding from reserves to fund a small grants programme to voluntary and community organisations in 2026/27 via Hackney Giving, also detailed in Appendix 1.**
- 3.7. **Update Cabinet by the end of September 2026 on measures to support, or mitigate the impact of, the transition to new arrangements.**
- 3.8. **To delegate authority to approve any amendments to the programme and the deployment of resources to respond to any requirements of funding received via guidance and to utilise any underspends from April 2026 to March 2029 to the Director of Corporate Strategy & Transformation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service to ensure the funding is fully utilised to deliver crisis and resilience support to Hackney residents.**

#### **4. Reason(s) for decision**

- 4.1. This report sets out plans for the use of Hackney's Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation of £6.1 million in 2026/27, £6.1 million in 2027/28, and £5.9 million in 2028/29 and £147,563 allocated to support the administration of housing payments in 2026/27 and £147,563 in 2027/28. Each year's allocation must be spent in full within that financial year. Any unspent funding would be clawed back by the Department for Work and Pensions.
- 4.2. As stated above, the Crisis and Resilience Fund marks a shift away from an approach based mainly on crisis support, which comprised around 80% of the Household Support Fund programme, to one based on longer-term preventive support to promote financial resilience.
- 4.3. Programme guidance and funding allocation were not published until the end of December 2025, which has complicated the formalisation of this new approach. The Council must have an approved scheme in place ahead of 1 April so that funding can be allocated internally to staffing, to budgets for crisis and housing payments and voluntary and community sector partners, so that provision is in place to support low-income households who experience financial shocks. Therefore, this report allocates funding to the four themes of the grant and proposes a six-month extension of existing external funding arrangements to allow further time for transition.

4.4. This work supports the implementation of the Mayoral priority on Tackling Poverty and Inequality and is informed by the Council’s Policy Reduction Framework.

## 5. **Background**

### **Strategic Policy Context**

5.1. Following an announcement in the June Spending Review, the Household Support Fund (HSF) will be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) starting from April 2026. It represents the first multi-year settlement running from April 2026 to March 2029. The Crisis and Resilience Fund incorporates Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

5.2. The guidance states that “the primary objective” of the fund is to:

- provide a safety net for those on low incomes who encounter a financial shock<sup>1</sup>; and
- to invest in building local financial resilience to enable individuals and communities to better deal with crises in the long-term, reducing the need for crisis support.

5.3. This focus on those experiencing financial shock as well as addressing community financial resilience marks a significant departure from the current HSF objectives, which are:

- to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in the most need with the cost of essentials.
- to provide preventative support to prevent vulnerable households from falling into – or falling further into – crisis.

5.4. Authorities must allocate the CRF funding across the following components:

- Crisis Payment: Providing support to those in crisis.
- Housing Payment: Providing financial support towards housing needs to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs.

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<sup>1</sup> A financial shock is defined as “a sudden, unexpected expense or drop in income, that can place pressure on their budget and wellbeing, or prevent individuals from entering crisis. Providing timely support so that people can manage pressures, maintain control and avoid being pushed into crisis or prevent crises from escalating.” Examples of events that might constitute a financial shock are listed on page 11 of the guidance.

- Resilience Services: Funding for services delivered by Authorities or external providers to improve financial resilience.
- Community Coordination: Investment in activities that connect and enhance the local support landscape.

5.5. Local authorities' individual allocations were announced in the Local Government Finance Settlement on 17th December 2025. Hackney's allocation is outlined in the table below.

*Table 1: Hackney's allocation for Crisis and Resilience Fund and Discretionary Housing Payment Administration 2026/27-2028/29*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Crisis Payments, Resilience Services and Community Funding</b>	<b>Discretionary Housing Payments</b>	<b>Discretionary Housing Payments Admin allowance</b>	<b>Total</b>
2026/27	£4,940,217	£1,192,513	£147,592	<b>£6,280,293</b>
2027/28	£4,940,217	£1,192,513	£147,592	<b>£6,280,293</b>
2028/29	£4,887,507	£976,317	0	<b>£5,863,824</b>

5.6. Monitoring will be more outcome-based, implying the need for greater collaboration between services to track and monitor residents' progress over time.

5.7. The CRF policy is part of a wider national policy. The Government has recently published its Child Poverty Strategy, which contains a raft of measures that will benefit Hackney's children, including:

- The lifting of the two-child-benefit cap, which will benefit 15,740 Hackney children by £3,600 per child annually.
- Additional funding for new temporary accommodation and measures to ensure that schools and GPs are informed when families enter TA.
- Expanding free childcare to 30 hours from age 9-months - saving families an average of £7,500 a year.
- The government announced the continuation of Holiday Activities with Food provision until April 2029 - £1.3m allocated to Hackney annually.

## Hackney's CRF Programme design

5.8. The current programme is heavily skewed towards crisis support, mainly a one-off, transactional approach. The CRF emphasises crisis support linked to longer-term, personalised support to achieve financial resilience. We welcome the shift in focus and length of funding, which have been key asks in relation to the current scheme.

5.9. To achieve this, Hackney's CRF programme will need to:

- Embody a kind, caring, empathetic, trauma-informed anti-discriminatory approach capable of engaging residents in the long term.
- Build collaboration between organisations across the system to provide effective support to residents with multiple and complex needs. This will require behavioural and cultural change.
- Ensure crisis support reaches residents facing a crisis in a timely, but robust way.
- Develop data and information sharing systems capable of tracking residents' progress over time and across multiple agencies.
- Coordinate with other programmes, e.g. HAF, Mayor's FSM programme, VCS Grants Programme, Connect2work, to ensure best use of resources.
- Ensure funding for VCS providers is sustainable, encouraging prevention and collaboration.
- Ensure support with essentials like food is sustainable, e.g. making better use of food waste, and ensuring advice and support with fuel is properly joined up.

5.10. The table below summarises the proposed spend for each of the four elements of the CRF programme over the life of the programme. These allocations reflect that 2026/27 will be a transitional year due to the short time since guidance was published and the need to support policy implementation with engagement and communications with stakeholders and residents.

*Table 2 Crisis and Resilience Fund allocations by theme 2026/27 - 2028/29*

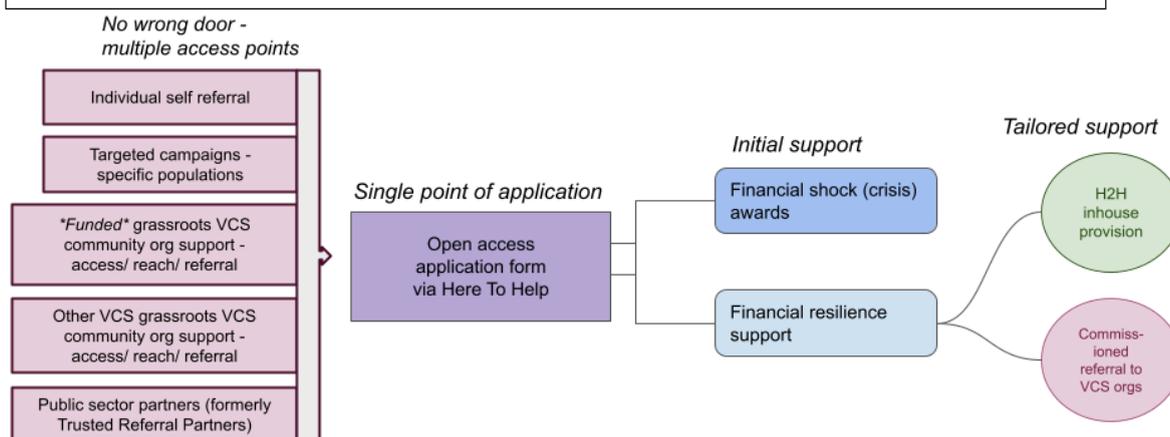
	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
Crisis payment	£2,528,160	£1,500,000	1,500,000
Housing payments	£1,192,513	£1,192,513	£976,317
Resilience Services	£1,352,259	£1,950,542	£1,855,930
Community Funding	£742,402	£1,024,019	£901,611
Admin and programme management	£596,960	£613,219	£629,965
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,412,293</b>	<b>£6,280,293</b>	<b>£5,863,823</b>

**Crisis Payments**

5.11. We propose amalgamating existing crisis payments budgets into a single fund of £1m in 2026/27, rising to £1.5m in 2027/28 onwards. This will help avoid fragmentation and improve data collection across the programme. We envisage this route to be underpinned by a no wrong door approach, illustrated in the diagram below.

**Multiple points of access + single point of application + resilience services**

Individuals and VCS orgs can apply via Here To Help application form - single point of application route in to award  
 Here To Help manage and deliver assessment and award  
 "Resilience support" offered directly by Here To Help and through onward referral to selected VCS partners



5.12. The Council’s Here to Help (H2H) service will administer crisis payments to eligible residents, along with financial resilience support, particularly to residents with more complex needs, such as those requiring housing payments or the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and those requiring support

to apply for disability benefits. This approach will maintain a crisis support route, which residents, statutory, voluntary and community sector services will be able to refer into. There will also be the possibility of using data to identify residents who might need support.

- 5.13. £2,362,472.89 of the existing £4,974,147 Household Support Fund allocation in Hackney is used to fund holiday food support for free school meals-eligible children during the holidays. The guidance for the CRF states that:
- 5.14. *“Authorities should use their discretion to prioritise funding efficiently within their own CRF schemes, including when considering how best to support families in crisis to ensure the poorest children do not go hungry in the school holidays. This may not be through the blanket provision of vouchers to those on free school meals, as we recognise that some Free School Meal eligible families may not routinely need crisis support during every school holiday. Authorities should consider how best to support the poorest and most in need households.”*
- 5.15. We will work with schools, children’s settings and community organisations, including independent settings such as those in the Muslim and Orthodox Jewish communities, to ensure that families on low incomes, including free-school-meals eligible households, receive support throughout the year through:
- Crisis payments via the Crisis Support Fund, administered by the Here to Help Service - worth £1m in 2026/27 and £1.5m in 2027/28 and 2028/29. Outbound work with benefits residents are entitled to, as part of our Here to Help financial resilience offer.
  - Ensuring alternative sources of food support are well-publicised to parents and schools in advance of the school holiday periods, including Holiday Activities with Food provision, low-cost food shops and school uniform grants, working with colleagues in education to establish a smooth transition away from holiday vouchers.
  - Further development of food pantries and low-cost food shops, including culturally specific foods like Kosher and Halal, to enable residents on low incomes to purchase nutritious food at affordable prices.
  - Engage with our diverse communities, and update the Cabinet by the end of September 2026 on measures to support and review the impact of the transition to the new arrangements.

5.16. We also propose to fund the following transitional provision in the first half of 2026/27:

- Continuing to provide holiday food vouchers to Free-School-Meals eligible children through the summer holidays. Funding for holiday food vouchers for children in state-funded settings for this coming Easter holiday will come from the Household Support Fund allocation (2025/26), and support for the May Half Term and Summer holidays from the CRF allocation (2026/27). Cost: £1,153,280.
- Continuing funding for the 11 Orthodox Jewish community organisations for the first two quarters of 2026/27, which will enable them to support children during holidays until the end of September. The names of the organisations and allocations are outlined in Appendix 1. Cost: £374,880.

5.17. This will ensure that there is appropriate provision in place whilst we work closely with schools, community partners, including those in the Orthodox Jewish communities and others, to help ensure low-income families, especially those requiring specialist and culturally appropriate food such as Kosher and Halal, are aware of options to access affordable, nutritious food year-round and especially at holiday times. We will also ensure that those facing food insecurity are aware of how to access additional support, like advice, employment services, and help to increase their incomes. This approach is in line with the approach taken by other neighbouring boroughs. We will also work with those partners and those communities to assess the impact of these changes on them and report to Cabinet by September 2026 on support measures, as outlined in the recommendation in Section 3.7 of this report.

### *Housing Payments*

5.18. Here to Help will also administer Housing Payments. These replace Discretionary Housing Payments, which are also currently administered by Here to Help. By bringing housing payments together with crisis support, financial and community resilience within a single programme, the Government is signalling an expectation that these will be administered in a more integrated way. Hackney is fortunate in that it already has a service which administers both payments, and we will build on this alignment over the next three years. Cost of housing payments plus administration: Year 1 £1,192,513 and £1,192,513 in Year 2. The Year 3 budget will be reduced to £976,317 in line with the reduced allocation from the Government.

## Community funding

- 5.19. We will undertake a grants programme to provide funding for community resilience activities, such as food support and wrap-around social support, to start delivery from October 1st, 2026. Organisations will be offered funding up until the end of March 2029. Year 1 cost: £295,789, rising to £798,750 in Years 2 and 3.
- 5.20. These partners will be selected for their ability to meet the needs of those communities in Hackney known to be at significant risk of financial hardship, in line with our Equality Impact Assessment. We will also ensure that provision is geographically evenly spread throughout the borough. Our approach is informed by our learning from funding of Community Infrastructure organisations. These organisations have significant reach and expertise in their communities, along with the person-centred, trauma-informed and anti-racist ways of working they adopt to meet the presenting need and work with complexity. These include place-based organisations but also those working with particular communities, e.g. black-led organisations.
- 5.21. The Council has recently completed the redesign of its Voluntary and Community Sector Core Grants programme. We will ensure that, as far as possible, the CRF and the Core VCS Grants Programmes work in tandem to reduce the administrative burden on VCS partners, help streamline grant-making processes and ensure we maximise the value of Council funding to the voluntary and community sector.
- 5.22. We recognise that the introduction of the Crisis and Resilience Fund, with its emphasis on longer-term advice and resilience, represents a significant shift for our own services as well as for partner organisations who deliver on our behalf. We are therefore proposing to continue funding to the Voluntary and Community Sector partners funded via the Household Support Fund for the first two quarters of 2026/27 from our 2026/27 Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation as outlined under 'Recommendations' in Section 3.5 of this report. Cost: £289,680. It will also enable us to implement the voluntary and community sector grants programmes outlined in section 5.19 of this report, avoiding gaps in provision.

## *Resilience services*

- 5.23. Here to Help staff will directly support financial resilience through activities such as benefit maximisation. Since its establishment in November 2022, Here to Help has achieved:
- £6.9m in additional benefits uptake;
  - Distributed over £10m in crisis payments, housing payments and Council Tax reductions.
- 5.24. We will undertake a funding programme for community advice and financial resilience activities along similar principles to those in the current Hackney Person Centred Advice Grant programme for residents, to start delivery from October 1st, 2026. Organisations will be offered funding up until the end of March 2029. Cost in 2026/27: £295,789, rising to £798,750 in Years 2 and 3. In 2024/25, organisations funded through the Council's Advice Grants programme reported achieving over £18m worth of benefits to residents, including:
- £9,236,497 additional benefits;
  - £3,600,000 in rent arrears managed;
  - 349 residents supported into employment
  - £1,500,000 in debts written off.
- 5.25. In addition, we intend to support advice capacity development in the sector by funding costs associated with training for Advice Workers and accreditation for Advice Quality Standard, as well as wider support stipulated within funding conditions. This will be allocated through the CRF grants programme.
- 5.26. Our work to support residents out of poverty during the Pandemic and beyond has taught us the importance of building strong relationships between frontline staff and organisations to build knowledge and expertise, provide peer support, and strengthen referral pathways, enabling residents to access services quickly and seamlessly. We recognise that effective networks and referral pathways can be digital as well as in-person and that residents and frontline services require reliable information about available services digitally, in-print and by word-of-mouth. We will therefore continue to fund two System Convenors to continue this facilitative work.

## Options appraisal

5.27. A range of options was considered as part of the development of this programme.

- **Option 1: Deliver the Crisis and Resilience Fund programme along the same lines as the existing Household Support Fund programme.** This option was rejected as it was not in line with CRF guidance and it was fragmented, making data collection and coordination more difficult.
- **Option 2: Outsource to the VCS:** This was rejected as there is not currently a VCS organisation with the necessary infrastructure to administer significant numbers of crisis payments. Also, there were thought to be benefits in administering crisis payments alongside housing payments and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, administered by the Here to Help service, which also has links with wider Council-administered benefits such as Housing Benefits, Free School Meals and School Uniform Grants. Here to Help can also refer residents into Council services such as housing, social care and employment support.
- **Option 3: Multiple points of access + single application point + resilience services.** This option was chosen as it has the potential to offer a streamlined application process for residents and referring organisations, whilst also enabling residents to access a range of resilience services, as well as crisis payments, and provide routes out of financial hardship.

### Equality, inclusion, diversity and belonging (including statutory equality impact assessment)

5.28. While Hackney is becoming less relatively deprived overall, it is still one of the most deprived areas in England and London. Income deprivation overall and for older and younger people is particularly high, largely driven by high housing costs. Poverty is widespread across Hackney, but the north east, east and central parts of the borough contain the highest concentrations of highly deprived neighbourhoods.

5.29. Economic activity in Hackney is generally higher than average, but claimant count unemployment, especially for older and younger workers, is higher than the national and London average. There are high levels of self-reported financial hardship. In the latest Hackney Resident Survey, 35% of residents said they would not be able to meet an unexpected £100 bill. Local and regional data suggest that poverty is highest among families with children,

older, younger, disabled and black and global majority residents. The English Indices of Deprivation found that while deprivation was relatively widespread throughout the borough, it was particularly concentrated in the north east, eastern and central parts of the borough.

- 5.30. Our Equality Impact Assessment sets out the various ways in which Hackney's diverse communities are impacted by poverty and sets out a series of mitigations to ensure that the most impacted communities gain access to the support they need through this programme.

#### Sustainability and climate change

- 5.31. Developing a programme that provides long-term environmental and social sustainability is one of our guiding principles.
- 5.32. The purpose of this programme is to ensure residents move from financial hardship to long-term financial sustainability. Provision through voluntary and community sector grant-funded organisations will include the provision of energy-saving advice and equipment so that residents can both manage the high cost of fuel bills and reduce their carbon footprint.
- 5.33. We also intend to explore food sustainability as part of this programme. We know that significant numbers of Hackney residents use food banks. We want to move towards more sustainable models of food provision like low-cost food shops, but we also want to ensure that we make the best use of waste and maximise opportunities for food growing in the borough, to create a sustainable and affordable food system for all our residents.

#### Consultation/engagement

- 5.34. The design of this programme is based on learning gained from resident experience and feedback from service providers since the Pandemic. For example, a review of the Household Support Fund programme was undertaken by the University of Sheffield in 2024, which included in-depth interviews with 25 resident beneficiaries and 80 case studies submitted by services participating in programme delivery.
- 5.35. Colleagues from Strategy, Equalities and Community Partnerships meet on a fortnightly basis with frontline workers from across the system for learning and peer support and with the 25 services that have been referring residents for crisis payments as part of our Trusted Referral Partners programme.

- 5.36. Our System Convenors continuously engage with grassroots community organisations and residents throughout the borough to understand what is working. They bring learning back to the Council and wider system, so that issues can be resolved.
- 5.37. In 2025, the council conducted significant engagement and consultation on its voluntary sector grants programme, and wider Voluntary Sector Strategy, which has informed the approach
- 5.38. Further engagement is planned between now and July with key stakeholders to inform and ensure effective transition plans from the current arrangements around holiday time provision, and ensure these can be communicated. This will include engagement with parents, schools, voluntary and community sector partners.

### Risk assessment

- 5.39. As noted above, the Crisis and Resilience Fund marks a significant shift from an approach largely focused on crisis support to one focused on longer-term financial resilience. Services engaged in delivering this programme will need to shift their focus.
- 5.40. Some groups, most notably free-school-meals eligible households, who previously received holiday food support, will no longer receive support in this way.
- 5.41. This report sets out mitigations to help ease the transition, for example, funding current holiday time provision through the summer holidays and extending funding for VCS providers involved in delivering the Household Support Fund for the first two quarters of 2026/27. This will allow time for further engagement with an update provided to Cabinet by September.

## **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1. This report outlines the proposed use of the Crisis and Resilience Fund across the financial years 2026/27 to 2028/29. The Crisis and Resilience Fund replaces the Housing Support Fund and the Housing Payments (previously Discretionary Housing Payments) grant that were previously separate grants.
- 6.2. Provisional allocations of the new grant are outlined in Table 1 above (£6.1m in 26/27, £6.1m in 27/28 and £5.9m in 28/29).

- 6.3. It is expected that the council will also receive in addition the balance in table 1 (£148k) for the administration of Housing Payments. It is noted that the element related to Housing Payments and the administration element reduces in 28/29 - the council will need to carefully plan for this via the medium term financial planning process.
- 6.4. The new grant comes with both grant conditions and guidance in its use. It is important that the council adheres closely to these conditions and takes action to ensure that the grant is utilised in full.
- 6.5. The report requests approval for the use of £132k from reserves in 26/27. These are one-off funds. It should be noted that the Council is facing very challenging times in the current year and medium term. It cannot be assumed that reserves that were available in 2025/26 will be carried forward into future years. Use of reserves will be considered by the Group Director Finance as part of the annual closing of accounts process and in the context of the Council's medium-term financial plan.

Financial Implications prepared on behalf of the Group Director Finance & Corporate Resources by John Holden, Assistant Director of Finance - Sustainability, Public Realm and Special Projects,  
[john.holden@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:john.holden@hackney.gov.uk)  
Date: 2 March 2026

**7. HR/OD implications**

- 7.1. This report recommends the retention of posts within the Strategy, Equality and Community Partnerships Service in the Chief Executive's Directorate, as well as the retention and creation of posts within the Here to Help Service, located within the Benefits and Homeless Prevention Service.
- 7.2. The postholders will enable the Council to deliver this programme of work through programme management, grants administration, system convening, advice, income maximisation and the administration of housing and crisis payments.

HR/OD implications prepared on behalf of the Director of HR/OD by Sharon Ould, Strategic HR and OD Business Partner,  
[sharon.ould@hackney.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.ould@hackney.gov.uk)  
Date: 18 February 2026

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1. The recommendations in this Report concern grants from the Council to the voluntary and community sector and provide details of the Crisis and Resilience Fund Allocation. These comprise the making of a key decision under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 as it is an executive decision, which is likely (a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority. Key decisions can be made by Cabinet under Article 13.6 of the Constitution and therefore this decision is being presented to Cabinet for approval.
- 8.2. The award of a grant is a discretionary function. Details of the grant programmes and payments proposed in this Report are set out in paragraph 3 of this Report. It will be important to ensure that all grant payments made to grant recipients under this Report are consistent with the subsidy control principles and other requirements under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- 8.3. Paragraph 2.3 of the Cabinet Procedure Rules states if the Elected Mayor delegates functions to Cabinet, the Cabinet can delegate further to an officer. Therefore, subject to the approval of Cabinet, the Director of Corporate Strategy & Transformation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment, Human Resources and Equalities and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Insourcing and Customer Service is permitted to approve any amendments to the programme and the deployment of resources to respond to any requirements of funding received via guidance and to utilise any underspends from April 2026 to March 2029 pursuant to paragraph 3.8 of this Report.

Legal implications prepared on behalf of the Director of Legal, Democratic & Electoral Services by: Patrick Rodger, Senior Lawyer,  
[Patrick.Rodger@hackney.legal.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.Rodger@hackney.legal.gov.uk)  
Date: 3 March 2026

**Appendix 1 - Voluntary and community sector organisations to be funded in Quarters 1 and 2 2026/27.**

Funding Stream	Organisation	6 month spend on delivery	6 month spend admin	total spend for 6 months CRF
Orthodox Jewish organisations (Free School Meal equivalent)	Bikur Cholim	£16,039.58	£1,782.18	£17,821.76
	North London Bikur Cholim	£36,003.53	£4,000.39	£40,003.92
	Chicken Soup Shelter / Low-Cost Food Shop	£55,067.76	£6,118.64	£61,186.40
	Clapton Common Boys Club	£38,830.18	£4,314.46	£43,144.64
	Hot Line Meals	£33,884.14	£3,764.90	£37,649.04
	Lighthouse Project	£10,603.30	£1,178.14	£11,781.44
	Lubavitch Children's Centre	£21,292.13	£2,365.79	£23,657.92
	Mishon	£36,003.53	£4,000.39	£40,003.92
	S Pinter	£17,720.21	£1,968.91	£19,689.12
	Turning Corners / Young and Inspire	£14,638.54	£1,626.50	£16,265.04
	ZSV / Food Lifeline	£57,309.12	£6,367.68	£63,676.80

Funding Stream	Organisation	6 month Delivery costs	6-month Admin costs (for CI orgs, this is advice)	Total
Community Infrastructure organisations	African Community School	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT) UK	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00

Community Infrastructure organisations

	City of Hackney Carers	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Connecting All Communities CIC	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Groundwork London	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Hackney Playbus	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Misgav	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	New Future Collective Ltd/ Hackney showroom	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Roundchapel	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Shepherdfold Ministry	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Skyway Charity	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
	Together Better, Volunteer Centre Hackney	£ 3,500.00	£1,500.00	£5,000.00
<b>£60,000.00</b>				
Citizens Advice Bureau	CAB Food 72%	£19,958.40	£2,217.60	£22,176.00
	CAB Fuel 28%	£7,761.60	£862.40	£8,624.00
<b>£30,800.00</b>				
Foodbanks and low cost food shops	Woodberry Aid	£11,088.00	£1,232.00	£12,320.00
	H.O.P.E Morningside	£11,088.00	£1,232.00	£12,320.00
	St Monica's Catholic Church	£11,088.00	£1,232.00	£12,320.00
	Stokey Hackney Food Shop	£11,088.00	£1,232.00	£12,320.00
<b>£49,280.00</b>				

Hackney Giving	Hackney Giving	£118,800	£13,200	£132,000
				<b>£132,000</b>
Crew Energy	Crew Energy	£17,600	£0	£17,600
				<b>£17,600</b>
			<b>Total</b>	<b>£289,680</b>

### **Reason(s) for exemption from Call-in**

The Chief Executive has agreed to protect this report from call-in, in accordance with Part 4E of the Council's constitution. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel has been consulted, and the decision will be reported to the next Full Council meeting.

This is because the Crisis and Resilience Fund Programme is due to commence delivery on 1st April 2026. Given the proximity to the pre-election period, the Chief Executive has decided to protect this report from call-in, as any delay could delay implementation of the programme, resulting in residents in financial hardship not receiving the support they need.

### **Background documents**

[Crisis and Resilience Fund Guidance for Local Authorities](#)

[Poverty Reduction Framework](#)