

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME (CLAS)

To: **Adults Committee**

Meeting Date: **15 September 2016**

From: **Adrian Loades, Executive Director:
Children, Families and Adults Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **Not applicable** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **The purpose of this report is:**

**To provide an update on the future arrangements for
CLAS and the research carried out.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is recommended to:**

- a) Agree the procurement of the proposed scheme in accordance with the outline service specification that is detailed in Section 5.**
- b) Agree the procurement of a 3 year contract with the option to extend for a further 2 years.**

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Adults Committee on 17 May 2016 resolved to support further research into an alternative approach for the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS), focused on the provision of information and advice as well as recycled goods and household items. It was the intention to design and launch a tender in early autumn with a new approach implemented from April 2017.

2.0 DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

- 2.1 Our research and proposals for the revised scheme are based around the following drivers for change:
- The budget for the scheme has reduced. Contingency budget allocated to this area has not been needed and a set budget of up to £316k is available in future. The budget going forward is anticipated to be a maximum of £300k.
 - Cambridgeshire County Council Business Plan 2016-2017¹ and three strategic priorities:
 1. Developing the local economy for the benefit of all
 2. Helping people to live independent and healthy lives
 3. Supporting and protecting vulnerable people
 - Think Family² principles; improving outcomes for children, young people, adults and families by considering and understanding the needs of all family members
 - Transforming Lives³ principles; a proactive, preventative and personalised approach that aims to enable the people of Cambridgeshire to exert choice and control and ultimately to live healthy, fulfilled, socially engaged and independent lives.
- 2.2 Consideration has also been given to the Care Act which states:
“Information and advice helps to promote people’s wellbeing by increasing their ability to exercise choice and control, it is also a vital component of preventing or delaying people’s need for care and support.”

3.0 THE NEW APPROACH

- 3.1 From the research detailed in section 4, the new approach to CLAS was developed to deliver a proportionate response to client needs that prioritises prevention. This includes the provision of information and advice, offering joined up solutions with other support services. The scheme will facilitate access to a range of low cost furniture and white goods, making use of reliable, refurbished and reused items as part of an effective, linked intervention. This will be different to the current scheme which is primarily about the provision of new white goods, beds, and vouchers for food, clothing and utilities.⁴

4.0 RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN TO DEVELOP THE NEW APPROACH TO CLAS

- 4.1 Work was undertaken across agencies to research, design and test out the proposal for the new approach as discussed with Committee in May.

¹ <http://goo.gl/SVSOs9>

² <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/thinkfamily>

³ <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/careact>

⁴ <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/clas>

4.2 **Surveys and consultation**

The CLAS Task & Finish Group has representatives from housing, district/city councils, advice providers and VCS. Working with the group, surveys were created to gather views from the Authorised Agents currently registered to apply for CLAS, their clients and the public.

4.3 From the results of the surveys, overall the proposed approach was supported. There was some concern that the scheme was seeking to duplicate information and advice provision, however we are aware from other pieces of research see paragraphs 4.25-4.28 that although there are some Agents with a good range of knowledge, this is not consistent and very much dependent on the client already being engaged with the right professional. There is a need for a more joined up approach and this will form part of the service specification. Appendix 1 provides more detail on the findings from the surveys.

4.4 The need to continue to provide access to goods was seen as important, with the majority favouring the use of reused items. A few people were worried that recycled/refurbished goods would be unreliable and unclean; however, our research into this provision indicates that this is not necessarily the case if the goods are from a reputable source. See paragraphs 4.17-4.24.

4.5 **Schemes in other areas**

We looked at how other local authorities operate their schemes. We chose Peterborough, Gloucestershire and Hampshire as they all operate their schemes differently.

4.6 We found that schemes meet their own local needs and acknowledge that these may be different to Cambridgeshire's.

4.7 The emphasis of the Peterborough and Hampshire schemes is predominantly around information and advice. Gloucestershire's scheme makes use of recycled furniture and appears to have more stringent controls on eligibility. The following table sets out a comparison between these schemes and CLAS

	Current CLAS	<i>Future CLAS</i>	Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme	Gloucestershire Welfare Support Scheme	Hampshire Welfare Assistance Scheme
Focus on information & advice	x	✓	✓	x	✓
Brand new goods provided	✓ Beds, fridges, freezers, cookers	x	x	✓ White goods	x
Recycled goods provided	x	✓ <i>A range of household items and white goods</i>	✓ A range of household items and white goods	✓ Furniture	x
Other	✓ Food, new clothing, utility vouchers	✓ <i>Clothing, food banks, utility vouchers</i>	✓ Clothing, food banks, utility payments	✓ Food parcels, carpets & rugs, rent arrears, utility vouchers	x Referrals made to other agencies

- 4.8 The Peterborough model benefits from its geography and relationship with CareZone and WEEE Reuse. We recognise that the approach for Cambridgeshire could not completely replicate this model but we can align our scheme to it and develop the use of recycled goods across the county.
- 4.9 Peterborough City Council is undertaking a procurement exercise through an Innovation Partnership and looking to agree a ten year contract with a provider(s). Part of the focus of the contract will be looking at how a provider(s) can do more around early intervention/prevention to reduce the number of people entering crisis. Details of the current Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme (PCAS) can be viewed on their website: <https://goo.gl/9BLh3Y>
- 4.10 Gloucestershire County Council's scheme is very similar to the current CLAS scheme. The administration of Gloucestershire's scheme has recently been procured at a cost of £70k. Clients must have checked that they cannot be supported by other means, e.g. budgeting loans.
- 4.11 The scheme provides recycled furniture via local charity shops and brand new white goods which are sourced by the administrator. The scheme requires all applications to submit proof of benefits, bank statements and other verification of their situation, such as letters from health professionals if citing a health issue as the reason for applying.
- 4.12 Background about the scheme is available on their website: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/welfarereformfund>
- 4.13 Hampshire County Council's scheme funds two dedicated Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) staff to run a telephone helpline from Basingstoke Citizens Advice Bureau at a cost of £55k/year, providing support to all Hampshire residents.
- 4.14 Clients who contact the phone line have an in depth conversation to help understand the caller's situation. The approach focuses on what the caller can do for themselves, identifying existing local support and services and informing future commissioning based upon need, utilising the remaining LWA budget. If further support is identified, an appointment is made for the client to visit their local CAB.
- 4.15 Clients are directed to local providers for new and second hand household items and white goods which may offer discounts to people on benefits or low income. Hampshire CC does not fund the provision of these goods.
- 4.16 Hampshire County Council is currently working with its Environment and Waste Management service and Hampshire Furniture Reuse Network to provide a co-ordinated approach and a central 'warehouse' as, like Cambridgeshire, storage is limited at recycling centres. Clients would be referred to buy reduced cost goods or receive 'free' items depending on their level of need. Working with local businesses to enable access to Corporate and Social Responsibility funding and resource. They are piloting fuel poverty payments in the coming months, aligning this work to their Supporting Troubled Families Programme. <https://connectsupport.hants.gov.uk/financesupport>

- 4.17 **Further research into recycled furniture and goods**
To understand how we could maximise our budget and make use of reused and refurbished goods, we visited CareZone and WEEE Reuse who currently provide recycled items to PCAS.
- 4.18 **CareZone**
The charity provides free furniture and household items to people who have been referred by Peterborough' Community Assistance Scheme (PCAS). Goods are donated by the public and they have an arrangement with Ikea whereby returned, but otherwise new, flatpack furniture is built in their workshop and then provided free to clients in need. Their workshop is for service users to learn skills such as basic woodwork, furniture repair and upcycling with a view to helping them into work. Some become volunteers at the centre.
- 4.19 They provide, volunteer-led, holistic support to clients, including help with job seeking, improving skills and signposting to other support. CareZone also takes referrals from other agencies registered with them who have received their training.
- 4.20 **WEEE Reuse**
This facility is run by Amey Cespa. They rebuild and reuse white goods (mainly fridges and washing machines). Some goods are manufacturer 'seconds' which may be dented but otherwise brand new.
- 4.21 They are open to the public to purchase items at prices that are far lower than retail. They provide fridges and washing machines free of charge to PCAS clients who present a voucher which will have been provided to them by the CAB. Payment for goods is settled by PCAS.
- 4.22 A lot of the goods are A+ rated for energy efficiency and all have a 3 month warranty. WEEE Reuse stated that there have not been any more issues or causes to claim on the warranty with these products than they would expect from a brand new item.
- 4.23 From the research with WEEE Reuse and Carezone, it would appear that there are opportunities to develop these approaches into Cambridgeshire. As part of the specification, it is expected that the new provider(s) would support work to develop these approaches and support making the most of reusing/recycling opportunities.
- 4.24 The Council's Waste Management team is interested in supporting these proposals. Discussions have taken place and the next step is to engage with Amey's WEEE Reuse manager regarding the service specification.
- 4.25 **Financial capability forum workshop**
The forum includes representatives from housing, district councils, Citizens Advice Bureau, DWP, local charities and others working with vulnerable families and individuals. It shares information about anything that may impact on local people's financial wellbeing.
- 4.26 Discussion with the CLAS Task and Finish Group had revealed that there was an assumption that all CLAS Authorised Agents could provide the same level of information and advice. There was a need to understand what advice Authorised Agents (AA) who aren't money 'experts' can/do provide.

4.27 Testing this out through a workshop event confirmed that:

- There is a wide range of information and advice available.
- The ability of individual workers to identify and join up with wider or specialist support is variable.
- Professional support is sometimes dependent on the geographical funding, their knowledge, training and area of expertise.
- Individuals who are not yet at the point of needing a support worker can slip through the net.
- Practical interventions are still required.

4.28 These findings have been built into the new approach and will be addressed in the service specification.

4.29 **Other findings**

It is expected that providing more information and advice will reduce the need to access goods. Using reused/recycled goods will also help to continue to operate the scheme on a reduced budget. This is supported by research carried by Citizens Advice Rural Cambridgeshire (CARC) as part of the 2015/16 CLAS investment funding which was detailed in the CLAS paper to Adults Committee on 17 May 2016.

4.30 CARC used the £23.5K investment to fund their contact centre, covering all calls to Citizens Advice in Cambridgeshire. CARC matched part of the funding with £7K from local donations.

4.31 During the period 1 October 2015 to 31 March 2016, of the 3197 calls answered only 7 applications were made to CLAS, there were 11 applications made to other sources and of those 3197 calls, 81 were recorded in the case notes as needing household items but the advice process confirmed for all of these 81 clients the presenting need of needing household items was never the primary issue. This underlined that the provision of sound information and advice should reduce the CLAS spend on goods.

4.32 This is reinforced by the figures provided by Peterborough City Council for 2015/16. 3081 clients visited Citizens Advice under their PCAS scheme and 192 reused/refurbished white goods were issued. Advice given enabled clients to maximise their financial outcomes to a value of approximately £1.9m (for example, increased benefits and allowances).

4.33 Taking everything into account, the research concluded that the requirements of the scheme should include:

- A scheme that suits Cambridgeshire and recognises the good information and advice provision within the county and how this should feed into the new approach
- A proportionate response that includes information and advice plus access to reliable, reused and refurbished goods
- Joined up solutions; not a standalone intervention
- A scheme that is accessible to all who are eligible; not just for those already in receipt of support from services.

5.0 DEVELOPING THE SERVICE SPECIFICATION

- 5.1 A service specification will be drawn up to meet the procurement deadline of 26 September. The specification is being drafted in collaboration with partners who work directly with vulnerable people and will set out the key outcomes that we require and ask potential providers how they would work in partnership to deliver these.
- 5.2 The focus of the specification will be a person-centred, preventative approach. This will include a judgement of need that hastens a proportionate response. We expect that the provider will ensure that any intervention is not in isolation of other support. The service specification will ask potential providers to show how they would do this.
- 5.3 We will expect that the provider to assess the needs of vulnerable individuals and provide information and advice that helps people to help themselves, maximising their financial capability and building their skills.
- 5.4 The specification will expect the provider will make use of reliable, refurbished and reused items as part of an effective, linked intervention. It will cover the following topics:
- Encourages providers to submit a competitive price for delivery of the scheme within the maximum envelope available
 - Facilitates access to support such as food banks and utility vouchers
 - Seeks creative solutions that make use of a range of resources
 - Supports key messages such as Transforming Lives, Public Health, Think Family
 - Demonstrates a robust performance measurement system
 - Supports other agencies and shares/exchanges information to ensure a joined up approach to support

6.0 PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE

- 6.1 To enable the contract to be awarded and go live on 1 April 2017, a timetable has been set up by LGSS (Local Government Shared Services) Procurement. The timetable requires the tender documents to be finalised mid-September with a view to publish the tender on 26 September 2016. To meet the timetable, a Service Specification document is being drafted in August.
- 6.2 An event is arranged for 12 September 2016 to provide an initial briefing for interested providers. The final specification will also be informed by the discussion at the Committee meeting.
- 6.3 LGSS Procurement's advice is that the contract is no less than 3 years. On the basis of this, we would like to procure a contract for 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years.

7.0 A NEW NAME FOR THE SCHEME

- 7.1 Adult Spokes highlighted that CLAS should be renamed as the scheme will have a more of a preventative focus which would educate vulnerable people regarding finances etc. This will be discussed with partners.

8.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 8.1.1 The new contract will ensure that having the right information and advice to prevent further financial problems will help people to manage their money and become or remain settled in their local community.

8.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 8.2.1 The new contract will ensure that the provision of information and advice, in addition to access to further support and goods will help to ensure that people are able to live more settled healthy, independent lives.

8.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 8.3.1 The new contract will ensure that providing information and advice and access to appropriate resources and intervention to prevent problems escalating or returning will support this.

9.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Resource Implications

- 9.1.1 The proposed scheme aims to provide a lower cost and more sustainable approach for the Council to fund, and a service which seeks to support people to become more resilient, and enabling the most vulnerable to get financial support if this is imperative.
- 9.1.2 We expect that the provider will identify any efficiency savings and mitigate any increases in demand throughout the life of the contract. To ensure value for money is achieved over the lifetime of the service this contract, Open Book Accounting shall be the mechanism applied to reviewing revenues and costs of different volumes of demand on the service.
- 9.1.3 The shift in the specification to understand people's needs and provide the right information and advice as a key part of the solution and focuses on prevention as well as using recycled goods should help the budget to go further.
- 9.1.4 The performance of this contract will be monitored through contract management arrangements and performance measures that are set out in the service specification.

9.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 9.2.1 Statutory: The provision of a local welfare assistance scheme is not a statutory obligation.
- 9.2.2 Risk: The proposed scheme aims to provide information and advice, along with access to goods and services, to mitigate the risk of a problem or situation escalating or reoccurring
- 9.2.3 Legal: There are no significant legal implications within this category.

9.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.3.1 A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is not required. Changes to the scheme would not impact on people because of equality or diversity. No changes are being made to the eligibility criteria and the same population can apply. A 'relevance test' was carried out and previous CIAs have been considered.

9.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 9.4.1 The report above sets out the implications for this priority in paragraph. See section 4.

9.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- 9.5.1 Providing information and advice, as well as access to appropriate resources, will help people to help themselves, as well as supporting people to settle and remain in their communities.
- 9.5.2 We expect that the provider of the scheme will engage with local partners to work towards a joined up, preventative solution.

9.6 Public Health Implications

- 9.6.1 The provision of information and advice can signpost people to organisations and support groups to help them to manage their health and wellbeing.
- 9.6.2 We expect that the provider will engage with relevant Public Health messages.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Tom Kelly (Adults)
Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Jamie Carr
Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?	No implications Name of Officer: Janet Maulder
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Simon Cobby
Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?	No implications Name of Officer: Simon Cobby
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell/Eleanor Priestnall

Source Documents	Location
Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme paper to Adults Committee 17 May 2016	https://goo.gl/joFNhU

Appendix 1

Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (CLAS) Surveys and consultation responses

The CLAS Task and Finish Group indicated that there was an assumption that all Authorised Agents could provide the same level of information and advice.

Authorised Agents' survey

To evaluate the current CLAS scheme a survey was sent out to 639 CLAS Authorised Agents asking them about the impact CLAS has had on their work and their views of the alternative approach to provide information and advice and recycled goods and household items.

We received 58 responses, which although is low in comparison to the total number of Agents, it is proportionate with the number of Agents who regularly use the scheme.

Of the 58 responses received to date, 24 were from Agents working in the housing sector, primarily social landlords / housing associations, 15 from the County Council staff working directly with families, and the remainder were from VCS, charity organisations and specialist services.

We asked Agents what they think the purpose of CLAS is.

77% think CLAS is helping people contain financial pressures

75% think CLAS is helping to create a secure base

38% think CLAS is helping people look ahead

40% think CLAS is helping build resilience

Other comments include: meeting basic needs; making life easier to cope with; providing practical support.

Agents told us how CLAS has supported their work with their clients.

Comments include:

“CLAS is extremely important for our clients who have experienced homelessness and need support to set up a new home with little or no funds. It supports families to meet basic needs.”

“It has enabled us to help those clients who have been long term homeless secure furniture for normally their first independent accommodation.”

“Being able to offer financial support for essential household items strengthens a working relationship.”

“This scheme has supported with providing resources for families who are experiencing challenging circumstances. CLAS has helped to ease some pressure for parents so they can focus attention on other pertinent issues such as pre-school attendance and budgeting. In my opinion the scheme has helped to reduce stress and improve wellbeing for adults and children. It has also ensured that children's basic needs -such as a bed have been provided; this has helped the child to experience a sense of belonging and security.”

“Dealing with debt and money problems is our biggest area of work and inevitably we

have clients that need help to get them back on their feet. Before applying to CLAS we will have looked at all aspects of a client's financial circumstances and maximised what we can. So, applying to CLAS (and any other charities that may be able to help) will be necessary because we will have exhausted all other avenues on behalf of the client"

We asked Agents how CLAS could be improved - the most popular suggestions were to:

- increase the variety/range of goods
- using recycled goods/charity shops
- making the application process faster
- allow offline applications

Comments include:

"I feel it should be more flexible to each individual situation."

"Look at including other services - money advice, carers assessments etc."

"Explore recycle / refurbishment / repairs scheme specifically in respect of white goods"

"Being able to do the form in paper format and scan it across so that you can do the paperwork at family's house"

"Simpler and quicker process to apply for goods."

To help us to understand the broad range of information provided to clients, we asked Agents to tick the topics that they provide advice on, and those they would refer or signpost to.

The majority of Agents said they provided some level of debt, budgeting, benefits and housing advice. Other topics such as health, energy schemes, social care, counselling and charities tended to be referred or signposted to.

33 out of 58 agreed that the scheme should provide access to information and advice as well as access to goods. 14 out of 58 disagreed. The remainder did not express a preference.

Comments include:

"Families often lack this [information and advice] and such support would be beneficial. This would also reduce strain in statutory services."

"With less resources available for service users, the more avenues for delivering constant messages about available support the better, to reduce the likelihood of users falling between the cracks."

"More information available for families can only be a good thing and will open up more opportunities and avenues of support."

"Not sure if this is the role of CLAS? Perhaps could provide some signposting advice to other agencies who can then give support and advice."

"Any additional information is good."

"There is a lot of financial hardship out within the community and it would be useful to have an agency who can signpost to support whilst offering goods or vouchers."

"I totally agree I would never do an application for a family who are not trying to make changes so the more support for the family the better."

51 out of 58 agree to the provision of recycled goods and household items.

Comments include:

"Clients are not necessarily looking for, or even need, brand new goods."

"I totally agree with this and am a big advocate of using second hand furniture, reuse facilities and charity shops."

"Whilst brand new goods are great, I think that many people would prefer to have say 3 second hand items than one new item and this would be more impactful."

"The age of austerity we currently endure promotes the idea of recycling goods to be used again. Some of my ex clients get stuff from Freecycle to put in their flats. The 'make do & mend' culture has returned! I believe many disadvantaged clients would readily accept recycled / donated goods in the current economic climate."

"Any idea to recycle has to be a good idea."

"I think it's a really good idea. I also help my clients to get items from gumtree or ebay, or local shops. People are happy to get things cheaper if it saves them money."

"If several good quality and much needed second hand items are available, rather than one brand new item, this would spread the help and make the CLAS money go further. It would enable other items of furniture to be available to clients that are not on offer at present. The delivery aspect is important though. Many very vulnerable people do not have the means to go and collect items themselves."

"Why would you not want to help more people? It is much more common practice to recycle goods nowadays, there is no longer a stigma attached, also if people require these goods I am sure they would be satisfied with anything in good working order, new or recycled."

"Totally agree I have had conversations with applicants who were very surprised to be receiving new white goods and had expected reconditioned goods."

"This is ridiculous. What you are not saying is that the 'Warranty' would only be for 3 months! That is no warranty at all! People deserve to be awarded an item that will last a decent length of time."

Clients' survey

Agents were asked to forward the survey to their clients and some agents had offered to interview their clients. The survey was available in a hard copy, Easy Read version.

There were just 20 responses, and over half of these were from clients supported by one agency.

The results were informative as although 15 clients disagreed that CLAS should provide information and advice, it was clear from their comments that they were or had received information and advice from their Agent as part of the overall CLAS package, which is what the scheme had intended to provide initially.

14 of clients disagreed with the provision of recycled/rebuilt furniture and white goods over new.

Comments include:

"I am able to go to my advisor at [*housing provider*] for ongoing support."

"My advisor does this for me."

"Not necessary, I get this help already."

"I already get this support from [*housing provider*]."

"Not enough help or information available."

"Recipients of CLAS need the support and information to go alongside the items they receive such as budgeting support"

"From experience they don't last and are not that reliable in the long run."

"Because it was my first tenancy and I wanted the cooker to be clean and new as I took pride in the flat."

"Not sure whether it would work as well."

"I have already said that I am very wary about second hand stuff. I don't think it lasts very long and I am worried about bringing in bed bugs on mattresses. It is not for me."

"I do not trust used items, especially after issues with my old second hand cooker."

"It's only possible if enough funding is allocated."

Public consultation survey

A public consultation survey was circulated via parish councils, village newsletters, the Council's website, Twitter and Facebook. The consultation was also available in a hard copy, Easy Read version.

The public were asked to comment on their proclivity towards information and advice and recycled/refurbished goods.

53/58 agree with the provision of information and advice alongside access to goods.

Comments include:

"To help people break out of poverty, they need advice and support."

"It makes sense to signpost to other services and ensure people have all the relevant information. It seems this is an important part of ensuring people receive the support they need to break cycles of problems. While providing goods and vouchers is crucial, only doing this could lead to increased dependency from clients, so it is important they are receiving other assistance to change their situations."

"We need to look at the problems holistically and not simply apply a "sticking plaster" by supplying goods and vouchers. Individuals need wider support to get back to normal."

"I have never heard of this scheme. I suffer with chronic ill health and am carer to my disabled child living in difficult circumstances financially. We have very little support. None of our healthcare workers who are fully aware of our situation have told me that this help is available."

"There is not enough information out there for those who are struggling. But if there is the information they are in aware of where to find it."

"Getting one off items without looking at the person's wider situation means that there will be missed chances to support the person to make changes. It might be applying for extra income, applying for help from a charity or drawing up a new budget."

"People need a one stop shop to get help and advice. Not only for white goods but housing problems rent payments etc."

53/58 agree with the provision of recycled goods and household items

Comments include:

"Recycled second hand items are just as good as buying new. I myself have a second hand fridge bought for the fraction of the price of a new one. Still works as well & would recommend second hand goods to others."

"Several reasons: Better use of resources means more people can be supported. People need help to solve a problem, and second hand goods will do that just as well. Recycling means less white goods going to landfill, better for the planet. I don't really agree with the message that we can fix people's problems by throwing money at them and buying brand new things, the message should really be that we will support you to overcome an immediate issue in the most cost-effective way but that you also have to help yourself. I have lots of second-hand goods, clothes, electrical items etc, they meet my needs!"

"I approve of recycling but only if these items are genuinely good standard and people are not being given dodgy items we wouldn't accept in our homes."

"Everyone deserves a good home containing the basics to live in a dignified way. Luxury is not required, but furniture & equipment should be sound, clean & suitable. - If individuals or families are struggling with shortage of money, family difficulties, health or mental problems, their home needs to be a sanctuary."

"This would make better use of the funds available. However other household goods not just white goods and beds should be considered. Second hand items such as table and chairs, sofas etc. Even a low cost way of getting delivery of such items from other sources would be helpful."