

Councillor Peter Black
Chair
Scrutiny Programme Committee

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Rob Stewart
Direct Line: 01792 63 6366
E-Mail: cllr.rob.stewart@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: RS/CM
Your Ref:
Date: 8 March 2023

Dear Councillor Black

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 17 January - Scrutiny of Tackling Poverty

We thank you for the opportunity to present the Annual Report on the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty to the Scrutiny Programme Committee. We are also grateful to all committee members for their consideration of the report and feedback provided during the session. The Scrutiny process is valued in informing the further progression of this crucial work.

Further information regarding the issues raised as outlined in your letter are detailed below:

ECO4 Grant Awards

As part of the transition from ECO3 to ECO4 a 'Statement of Intent' was published on the Council's website in October 2022. This made it possible for ECO4 applications to be made to the Council via its procured energy partners. So far 11 applications have been received under ECO4.

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/8844/ECO-Flex>.

All potentially eligible households apply through the Council's ECO4 energy partners to ensure that they can either benefit from the scheme or be assessed for eligibility under any other relevant programme. Potential applicants are initially guided towards Welsh Government's Nest Scheme (www.nest.gov.wales), as the qualifying criteria is easier to satisfy and is aimed at more vulnerable groups. The Council facilitated a mail shot for Nest in October 2022, this resulted in approximately 1000 Swansea households referred for information, advice and support to the Nest scheme.

At this early stage it is difficult to gauge the impact of ECO4, but as the programme becomes established, we anticipate similar results as for ECO3. As a guide, under ECO3 165 households were assisted, with 234 energy measures being installed since the beginning of 2020.

Councillor access to advice/support from the Welfare Rights Team on behalf of residents.

The Welfare Rights and Financial Inclusion Team provides support available to Councillors via their Advice Line which is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9am – 4pm. Councillors are also able to contact the team via email on Welfare.RightsAdviceline@swansea.gov.uk. and emails are responded to on the days that the advice line is open.

The support available to all Elected Members and Council staff (including support workers, Social Workers, and any other staff working with the public) covers a range of queries across all types of benefits. This may include arranging for the experienced and skilled Welfare Rights Advisors to contact clients directly, establish the issues and provide advice and feedback for the Councillor or signposting to other partner organisations such as Citizens Advice.

The team also provides training and awareness raising and this is also available to Councillors.

Efforts to feed those in receipt of Free School Meals earlier in the school day.

Schools are responsible for setting their own timetable, and different year groups can be offered different lunch times to fit the dining space available. For secondary schools, the timetable can also be linked to shared curriculum options with other schools.

All of our primary schools in Swansea receive funding to operate a free breakfast club to ensure all pupils have access to a breakfast prior to the start of the school day.

All secondary schools in Swansea offer breakfast and a mid-morning break. Learners are able to use their free school meal (FSM) entitlement between morning and lunch breaks, many pupils choosing to have a more substantial break item if lunch is scheduled for later in the school day.

13 of our 14 secondary schools in Swansea participate in the Welsh Government's free breakfast scheme for year 7 FSM learners. The other secondary school – Dylan Thomas School - has chosen to offer all pupils in the school a free breakfast prior to the school day regardless of FSM eligibility, and this is funded from grants such as PDG and a grant from Kellogg's.

We hope that this information provided is helpful and we would welcome the opportunity for continuing engagement regarding our work to deliver the Corporate Priority of Tackling Poverty.

Yours sincerely



**Y CYNGHORYDD/COUNCILLOR ROB STEWART
ARWEINYDD/LEADER**



**Y Cyngorydd /Councillor Alyson Pugh
Aelod y Cabinet - Lles
Cabinet Member - Wellbeing**