



HM Government

The Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP
Minister of State

Local authority leaders in Great Britain
CC: Chief Executives

W www.gov.uk
E domesticafp@beis.gov.uk

9 February 2023

Dear local authority leaders,

On 14th November 2022 I wrote to local authority Chief Executives regarding alternative support for household energy bills this winter. In my letter, I requested that local authorities act as the delivery bodies for the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Fund (EBSS AF). I am very grateful for the work that your teams are doing with my officials to prepare for the launch of this scheme by 27 February.

As you know, the Government has also announced the Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP), a £200 support payment for households that use fuels other than gas to heat their homes. Much of the delivery of this scheme will happen via energy suppliers, with eligible households being paid automatically from 06 February 2023 with no action for them to take. Although automated payments can be made to approximately 90% of eligible households, a small group remains which we are not able to pay automatically. This group will need to apply to receive the Alternative Fuel Payment Alternative Fund (AFP AF).

In my letter of 14th November and in the subsequent engagement session on the EBSS AF in December, it was flagged that there would likely be a role that we will ask local authorities to perform in relation to the AFP AF, which would entail providing support with processing applications for the small number of households that will not receive the payment automatically. I am getting in touch to confirm that the Government will be asking local authorities in Great Britain that are responsible for council tax records and collection (“Billing Authorities”) to act as the delivery bodies for AFP AF funding.

In practical terms, our focus is to keep processes as simple as possible for applicants and local authorities. The delivery model for AFP AF will be as similar to the EBSS AF delivery model as possible. As with the EBSS AF, we will aim to reduce the burden on local authorities through a single application form on gov.uk which will centralise as much of the data gathering and validation as possible. The Government will then share applications with local authorities whose primary role will be to verify applicants’ addresses once they have passed through the application portal and to transfer the relevant support to successful applicants. The requirement will be for applicants to prove their eligibility, with local authority efforts being desk-based.

The AFP AF is due to be launched by 27 February. The Government will run a communications campaign to raise awareness of the scheme.

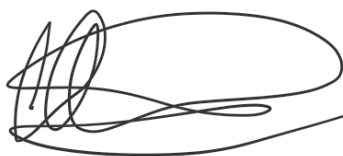
We will be in touch shortly to provide further details of the AFP AF scheme and how local authorities can support its delivery. Given that this scheme will be largely similar to the delivery of EBSS AF, we will join up the preparations for EBSS AF and AFP AF as much as reasonably possible. Where colleagues will be familiar with the administration of EBSS AF, they are likely to be well-positioned to deliver AFP AF, given the similarities between the schemes.

As with EBSS AF, the Government will support local authorities as much as possible in delivering the funding and work closely with them to ensure that appropriate new burdens funding is provided alongside the grants to support people in your areas. Subject to a New Burdens Assessment, the Government will meet the reasonable costs for delivering the funding, including funding for administrative costs.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, which will support households across Great Britain with the increased costs of energy.

I have copied this letter to local authority Chief Executives and Section 151 Officers, the Secretaries of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Scotland and Wales, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government, the Local Government Association, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Welsh Local Government Association.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

THE RT HON GRAHAM STUART MP
Minister of State