

Rt. Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
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**London Borough
of Newham**
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30th January 2024

Dear Chancellor,

Reintroduce Household Support Fund (HSF) ahead of Spring Budget

I am writing to urge you to reintroduce the Household Support Fund (HSF) which is due to be discontinued on 31st March 2024 ahead of the Spring Budget.

According to Trust for London 44% of Newham children are growing up in poverty and the housing crisis is most acute in Newham with over 37,000 households on the waiting list and over 6,000 in Temporary Accommodation. There are estimated to be over 10,000 Newham residents with No Recourse to Public Funds who would be disproportionately impacted by the loss of the HSF and have nowhere else to turn for support.

As the Mayor of Newham, I am deeply concerned about the impact that the disappearance of the HSF will have on families and children in our Borough. Through Our Newham Money – a service exclusively for Newham residents - and the Council's financial wellbeing service providing free and confidential support to residents, we have helped over 30,000 households who have benefited from Hardship Payments since the HSF was introduced in 2021. We have also used the fund for Holiday Food Vouchers provided for 19,000 children for each holiday period and an allocation of £300,000 was distributed to 12 Children's Centres directly reaching families with young children including those aged 0 – 5 years with SEND for food and energy. We have also supported 68 care leavers who have no recourse to public funds, helping them with their living costs whilst they await a decision on their status.

As you are aware, Local Councils are facing important financial pressures and the Household Support Fund has allowed us to support our residents who need it most at times of genuine hardship and stress. This is why I am urging you, ahead of the Spring Budget, to reverse the decision taken to stop the Household Support Fund for the next year and instead confirm that it will continue to be available to provide a key lifeline to those facing hardship, ensuring they can be supported and families are not put in a position where they must choose between feeding their children or heating their homes.

In considering this, I would also urge you to listen to the Westminster Hall debate taking place tomorrow led by Newham's MP, Sir Stephen Timms MP, which will debate the importance of the continuation of this fund.

Newham remains committed to support our residents, particularly in their greatest need. But we need the funding to be able to do so. I would be happy to discuss how Our Newham Money is doing so successfully and share some case studies of how the Household Support Fund has helped our residents.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rokhsana Fiaz', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Rokhsana Fiaz OBE
Mayor of Newham

cc Sir Stephen Timms MP
Lyn Brown MP