



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

All replies:
Oldham Office
11 Church Lane
Oldham OL1 3AN
Tel-0161 626 5779

Ms Carolyn Wilkins
Chief Executive
Oldham Council
Civic Centre
West Street
Oldham
OL1 1UG

Our Ref: MM/OMBC01002/01140740

21 August 2014

Dear Carolyn

Re; Local Welfare Provision

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the resolution on Local Welfare Provision moved by full Council on the 16 July and asking for my support.

I am frankly appalled at the government's decision to remove this funding and whilst I recognise that many authorities have underspent their allocation I recognise that this is down to the bedding in of the scheme and possibly the rigorous rules regarding the way schemes are expected to run.

To cease funding for any type of scheme and to expect local authorities to pick up the bill is in my view shocking and yet completely in line with this government's inability to accept that there is a very real need to help people with short term, emergency assistance.

I have written to the DWP Secretary Iain Duncan Smith on the Council's behalf (please see attached) and assure you that I will do everything possible to support the Council's position regarding this matter.

Yours sincerely

The Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP
Oldham West & Royton

Encl.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP
Secretary of State
Department of Work & Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9DA

All replies:
Oldham Office
11 Church Lane
Oldham OL1 3AN
Tel-0161 626 5779

Our Ref: MM/OMBC01002/01140740

Your Ref:

21 August 2014

Dear Iain

Re: Local Welfare Provision

I am writing to you to in support of Oldham Borough Council's opposition to the plans to abolish Government funding for local welfare provision. Oldham's award of £1,038,000 2013/14 (which includes £180.995 administration costs) was 9% below that paid out by Oldham's DWP office in 2011/12.

The expectation that local authorities take responsibility for providing schemes to assist the vulnerable is in my view shocking. There have been underspends but it is reasonable to assume that Councils have only recently had to manage the provision and any underspend is due in my opinion to the fact that they have had to adjust to the changes and deal with the rigorous guidelines surrounding the fund.

To remove all funding will cause extreme hardship for many people, as the Council will not be able to afford to make provision, particularly when you take into accounts the further budget cuts due to be made by central government. Crisis/budget loans/community grants and emergency provision have always been available to people needing short term help and to remove all provision will cause extreme hardship.

We cannot turn our backs on the vulnerable, and those in need of assistance to help them through difficult times, without risking the very fabric of society and I would therefore ask that you reinstate the funding to local authorities as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

The Rt Hon Michael Meacher MP
Oldham West & Royton