Dear Susan Hinchcliffe

**Supporting people in financial hardship in after the Household Support Fund.**

I am writing to you as a representative from [XX]  regarding the future of local crisis support in our area. We are concerned that the UK Government has not yet committed to further funding for the Household Support Fund

Local crisis support, delivered by the council in partnership with our communities, has been a lifeline in Keighley for people facing hardship, hunger, and unexpected costs. As an organisation who supports people who are unable to afford the essentials, we have seen first-hand the impact of the Household Support Fund in our community – [**Try and add concrete examples to this**]

We are worried that if the scheme comes to an end, it will leave a gap in support which will leave people in our community falling further into crisis and needing to turn to a food bank as a result. Research from the Trussell Trust has shown that the impact of unexpected costs is magnified when people are unable to get the help they need from their local council. This should not be the case.

We recognise that the financial pressures placed on the council mean you have to make difficult decisions about the future of our services. This needs to be weighed against the fact that we are in a time of extreme hardship, where rising costs have pushed too many families into hardship and through the doors of our food bank. In the past financial year, we provided [x] food parcels to families facing crisis, which represents an [x%] rise on the previous year.

Without any form of support from the council, these numbers will sadly increase – with more families falling into arrears on council tax, facing homelessness, or being unable to pay the increased cost of bills.  We hope that we can work with you to design a local crisis support system rooted in our communities needs beyond the Household Support Fund.

**We would be delighted to meet with you and your colleagues to discuss the council’s plans beyond March 2024 for supporting people facing financial hardship.**

Our food bank is part of the **Feeding Bradford and Keighley** network, who recognise that local authorities like ours need sufficient, long-term funding to support people in financial hardship. We would like to see the UK Government commit to a multi-year settlement of funding for the Household Support Fund, alongside a new long-term strategy for local crisis support to safeguard this route to support for households in need right across the country.

We also urge you as the leader of the council to write to the Chancellor, calling on him to extend the Household Support Fund beyond March 2024, underpinned by a multi-year settlement and a long-term strategy for local crisis support. If you would like any support with the content of this letter you can contact **XXX**

Yours sincerely,

**XXX**