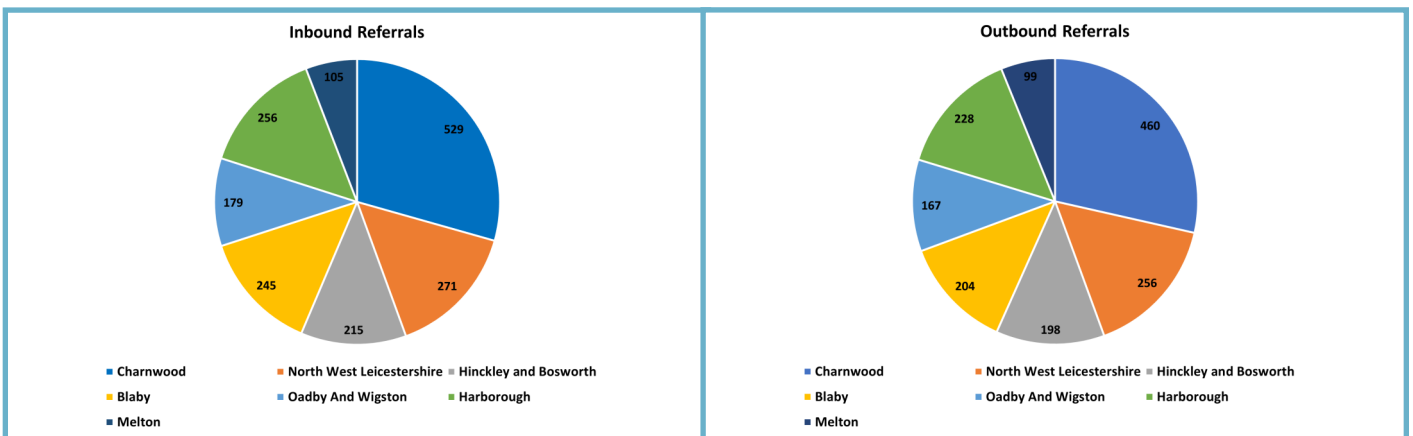




You are receiving this information update as one of Leicestershire County Council’s First Contact Plus partners. If you need us to add/remove a colleague from this list, please email FirstContact@leics.gov.uk

First Contact Plus offers an information, advice, signposting and referral service for residents in Leicestershire. We offer a holistic telephone conversation where we make appropriate referrals to partner agencies who specialise in a wide range of support areas. We offer information and advice to additional pathways for a customer to be able to research particular service offers, and determine which service is most suitable for their needs at that time. We also provide a follow up call with the customer to ascertain their needs have been met. First Contact Plus works in partnership with other professionals who are helping adults across the county by working together to make access to services much easier and helping customers to live as independent and fulfilled life as possible.

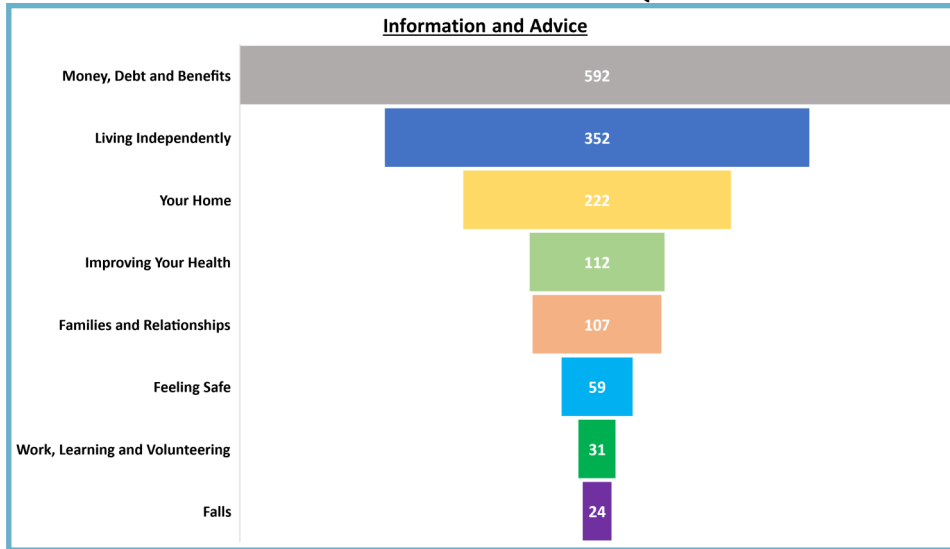
Referral Data Q3



During the past few months we have welcomed new referral partners onboard to FC+ and have seen a continued increase in reach of referrals to new customers in new localities. Charnwood and North West Leicestershire continue to be the highest referral partners for both Inbound and Outbound referrals and our referral categories are spread across a number of areas but with an increase in referrals around the ongoing cost of living crisis. The highest amount of referrals that we received were from the Adult Social Care Customer Service Centre with other significant amounts of referrals coming from the Social Prescribing Team, Health and Wellbeing Team and HART Charnwood.



Information and Advice Data Q3



(The top three areas are Benefits, Debt and Managing Money and Warm Homes.)

Information and advice is a core part of the First Contact Plus offer and its value can be evidenced in the chart above. Our Information and advice has continued to increase over the past few months specifically in pathways associated with the cost of living crisis, primarily Debt and Managing Money, Benefits and Warm Homes. In addition we have also seen a significant increase in information being provided to carers through our Caring for Others pathway and for people seeking information on Community Groups and Transport within their local area which they wish to access. This includes being advised of their Local Area Coordinator or Community Recovery Worker who can support customers with accessing these services.



First Contact Plus Case Study

Referral received from Children and Family Wellbeing Service for Benefits and Debt and Managing Money support.

Through speaking to a First Contact Plus advisor referrals were sent to the Department for Work and Pensions for an Personal Independent Payment application as well as to Citizens Advice for Debt and Managing Money support. The customer has now been successfully awarded £101 a week as well as back pay of £1117. Citizens Advice also contacted the customer and provided him with managing money advice.

With this financial support and information provided to the customer they feel in a much better place. They have been able to manage their money effectively and purchase appliances that are required for the property. The customer states that they are looking forward to their new life since this intervention from First Contact Plus.



Household Support Fund Overview

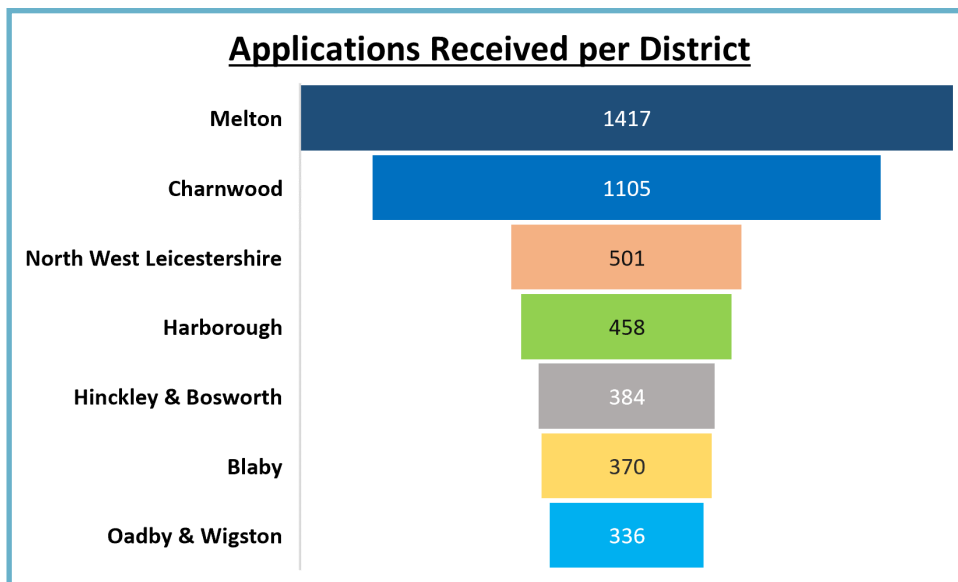
The Household Support Fund has now completed two of its application windows for the financial year 23/24. The Household Support Fund is designed to support Leicestershire residents with food and fuel vouchers if they are in financial difficulty. They will receive a set of vouchers once per scheme and will also be provided with information and advice for support services available to them. We have continued to see an extensive need for these vouchers and this last application window led to the highest amount of customers receiving support. We also saw a greater increase in newer customers receiving vouchers with an almost 50/50 split with returning customers. The current Household Support Fund ended on 26.02.24. We have had no further updates as to whether this fund will continue in financial year 24/25.

Total Referrals: 4571 Applications from October– December 2023

Total Referral Organisations: Received from 165

New Customers: 48.9%

Returning Customers: 51.1%



Household Support Fund Case Study

A successful Household Support Fund application led to the customer being provided with fuel vouchers.

In addition, First Contact Plus provided the customer with a referral to Citizens Advice for a Charity Link application, details on how to apply for the Big Difference Scheme and the Octopus Energy Octo Assist. In addition, we also provided details of the NHS Healthy Start scheme as they were eligible for their new born baby as well as for Helping Hands to make sure she was receiving the right benefit entitlements.

The customer stated how astounded they were at how much advice we could give all in one go and thought the service was amazing.



We are in the position to deliver training to individuals and teams both virtually and in person, as well as, attend events across the county as required.

If this is something that you would like us to facilitate, then please contact the Admin Team on either 0116 305 4286 or email admin.firstcontactplus@leics.gov.uk

In addition, if you are requiring support around your account or are interested in promoting your service via our website then please do contact us.



Residents encouraged to take up Council led Home Upgrade Grant offer

With the average energy price cap increasing by 5% in January, many residents may be concerned about the cost of heating homes and keeping warm this winter. Under the Green Living Leicestershire partnership, local authorities in the county are working together to deliver £6.8m of grant funding to help the most inefficient and expensive to heat households reduce their energy bills and keep warm.

The Home Upgrade Grant is administered by the county council's Warm Homes service together with YES Energy Solutions and E.ON Energy Solutions and can provide homeowners and private tenants (subject to landlord contribution) with fully funded energy efficiency measures improving the warmth and comfort of homes, whilst also reducing energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty across the county.

The scheme supports households that do not have mains gas as a primary heating system such as those with electric, heating oil, LPG or solid fuel heating. Households that only use gas for cooking or secondary room heating can still apply.

For more information on the grants, including the full eligibility criteria, eligible postcode areas or to apply, visit the County Council's Green Living Leicestershire [Home Upgrade Grant webpage](#) or call project delivery partner YES Energy Solutions on 0330 912 6199, who can support residents with their applications.