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PayPoint applauds government's £500m pledge to UK's poorest households

It urges councils across the country to pay out benefits using its Cash Out voucher scheme for immediate access to cash

After government announced a £500m grant to help vulnerable households in the UK, PayPoint is lauding the decision and now calling on local authorities to provide convenient and immediate access to much needed cash to the financially vulnerable.

Throughout the pandemic, more than 100 local authorities benefitted from PayPoint's Cash Out service to help deliver emergency funds to those in need, with over 2 million vouchers issued with a total value of over £100 million. Cash Out works in real-time to seamlessly enable eligible households to receive vouchers via email, letter or SMS to then be presented to obtain cash or energy credit payments at one of PayPoint's 28,000 retailers. These include Sainsburys, Asda, The Co-op, Spar, and One-Stop, as well as more conveniently placed local shops.

Over 99% of urban households are within one mile of a PayPoint location, and 98.3% of rural households within five miles.

Demonstrating the speed at which people can benefit from the service, a PayPoint Cash Out voucher was recorded as having been presented to obtain cash just over a minute from receipt.

PayPoint has also recently joined forces with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) to deliver payments to those without access to a standard bank account. Previously, many UK benefits recipients, who choose to receive their benefits in cash, collected their payments using a paper-based voucher system or a Post Office Card Account, which is coming to an end.

Danny Vant, Client Services Director at PayPoint said: "Since March 2020, we have seen various government support mechanisms created, and while there has been success, local authorities faced challenges in providing straightforward access to funds. To help with this issue, we made use of our Cash Out solution and network of retailers."

For local authorities, access to the Cash Out facility is via an online portal which removes the need for any development. Not only does this ease the burden on local authorities already facing significant challenges but enables them to utilise Cash Out as a solution immediately.

In South Lanarkshire, the solution was successfully used with the distribution and redemption of school meal vouchers. Stephen Pendrich, Benefits and Revenue Advisor for South Lanarkshire Council explains: "We knew we needed to find a fast and efficient solution to deliver school meal payments to all of our eligible residents in need of financial support. eGift vouchers for large supermarkets were not inclusive enough, particularly considering the geographical challenges in South Lanarkshire.

"To this day, PayPoint's Cash Out remains a vital service for our residents, alongside bank transfer which we later introduced to offer as an alternative way of providing financial support."

Family Fund Business Services used CashOut to meet its ambition of delivering £7.5m to local authority beneficiaries. The organisation was also able to provide access to emergency cash 24/7,

365 days a year.

Jill Wheeler, Managing Director of FFBS, commented: “Our clients and their beneficiaries are at the heart of everything we do, so any solutions we utilise must ultimately best serve them, not just improve our own practices. Importantly, this ethos is mirrored by PayPoint so when lockdown came into force, we were united in stepping up plans to fully digitise our offering and deliver flexible, friction-free payment options.”

Danny Vant concludes: “We adapted quickly to the challenges of the last 18-months and stand in a strong position to continue our support to local authorities across the country without them having to make heavy investment in new systems. The pairing of our Cash Out technology and network of retailers allows us, and the local authorities we work with, to create a framework that suits individual and national needs.”