



PARTNER UPDATE

New Approach to Customer Advice & Support

This briefing outlines an upcoming change to the way we deliver post-crisis advice to customers supported by the Fuel Bank partner network. It explains what is changing, why we are making this change, and what it means for you.

Background

When you refer eligible customers to Fuel Bank for support, a fuel voucher is issued and customers are given a copy of two printed leaflets:

- How to use your fuel voucher
- Let's talk about extra support

These leaflets were intended to provide immediate advice and guidance to the customer on how to access further support.

Why are we changing how we provide advice to customers?

Over the past two years, we have been testing different approaches to delivering advice, exploring how it is shared with customers, how it can be better tailored to individual needs, and how to ensure it is received in a way that is timely, relevant, and meaningful for the people we support.

This work has shown that:

- Customers in crisis are not always in the right position to engage with longer-term advice at the point of referral
- Timing and delivery method significantly impact engagement with advice
- Digital and tailored messaging can improve accessibility and relevance of support

As a result, we are evolving our approach to ensure advice is delivered at a more appropriate and effective point in the customer journey.

What is changing?

1. Advice will now be given to all Fuel Bank customers, including:

- Fuel voucher recipients
- Heat Fund customers

(Previously, advice was only provided to fuel voucher customers.)

2. Advice will now be delivered after crisis support has been received, specifically:

- Once a fuel voucher has been redeemed, or
- Once Heat Fund fuel has been ordered

This ensures customers receive advice at a time when they are better placed to engage with and act on it.

How will customers receive advice?

Customers will receive a series of advice messages over a 4-day period via their preferred contact method, which is given as part of the referral process.

These messages will include practical guidance on:

- Managing their utilities
- Boosting income
- Accessing extra support

All messaging will direct customers to the Fuel Bank Advice Centre at fuelbankadvice.org, where they can access tailored guidance and resources to help address the underlying issues that led to fuel crisis and support longer-term financial resilience.

Ongoing and tailored support

Following crisis support, Fuel Bank may also offer:

- Tailored onward support where appropriate
- Additional products to help customers avoid fuel crisis in the long term and to improve safety and home efficiency (e.g. heated throws)
- Referrals to specialist advice and partner services

At the point of referral, we are unable to determine exactly who will receive which specific follow-on support, as this is tailored based on individual need and engagement.

What this means for you

At the point of referral, please can you:

- Inform customers that further support and advice will follow once they have redeemed their fuel voucher or once they have been approved for Heat Fund support.
- Encourage customers to engage with follow-up communications we send and explain the value in doing so
- Reinforce that advice is an integral part of the overall Fuel Bank support offer and will help them build long-term financial resilience.

Customer communication

You no longer need to give the two printed leaflets to customers. All advice and support will be sent directly to the customer as part of the new process.

However:

- Printed materials can still be requested for customers who are digitally excluded by emailing partnersupport@fuelbankfoundation.org
- Please consider customer needs when deciding whether to request leaflets.

Keeping customers updated on their referral

To help keep customers informed about the progress of their fuel voucher referral, a new SMS or email will be sent to customers following each fuel voucher referral, excluding applications that have received a hard rejection.

The message will be sent while the referral is being reviewed. It reassures the customer that it has been received and is being processed, explains what they can expect next, and provides a link to an FAQ page with further information.

Customer message:

Thank you for applying for an emergency fuel voucher. We're reviewing your application and will be in touch if you're eligible. There's no need to contact us while we do this. For more information, please visit www.fuelbankfoundation.org/faqs

This will help manage customer expectations and provide reassurance that their application is being actively reviewed. It should also help reduce the number of customers contacting you or Fuel Bank to chase an update while they are waiting for an outcome.

The aim is to make sure customers have clear information about what is happening with their referral, without needing to take any further action while their application is being reviewed.

Please note:

- Advice will be delivered within 2 weeks, following the referral
- We may contact customers again with relevant updates that would help improve their situation, eg. in response to external changes impacting the people we support, such as energy-related updates, a change to government funding etc. This may happen within 6 months of the referral to ensure ongoing support is provided.
- We understand there will be occasions where a customer doesn't have access to a mobile phone or email address, and you may need

to use your own details so you can share the voucher with them. However, in these circumstances, the customer may miss out on important advice and support sent directly to them as outlined above. **Wherever possible, please use the customer's own contact details so they can receive the full support available to them.**

If you have any questions, please email us at
partnersupport@fuelbankfoundation.org

