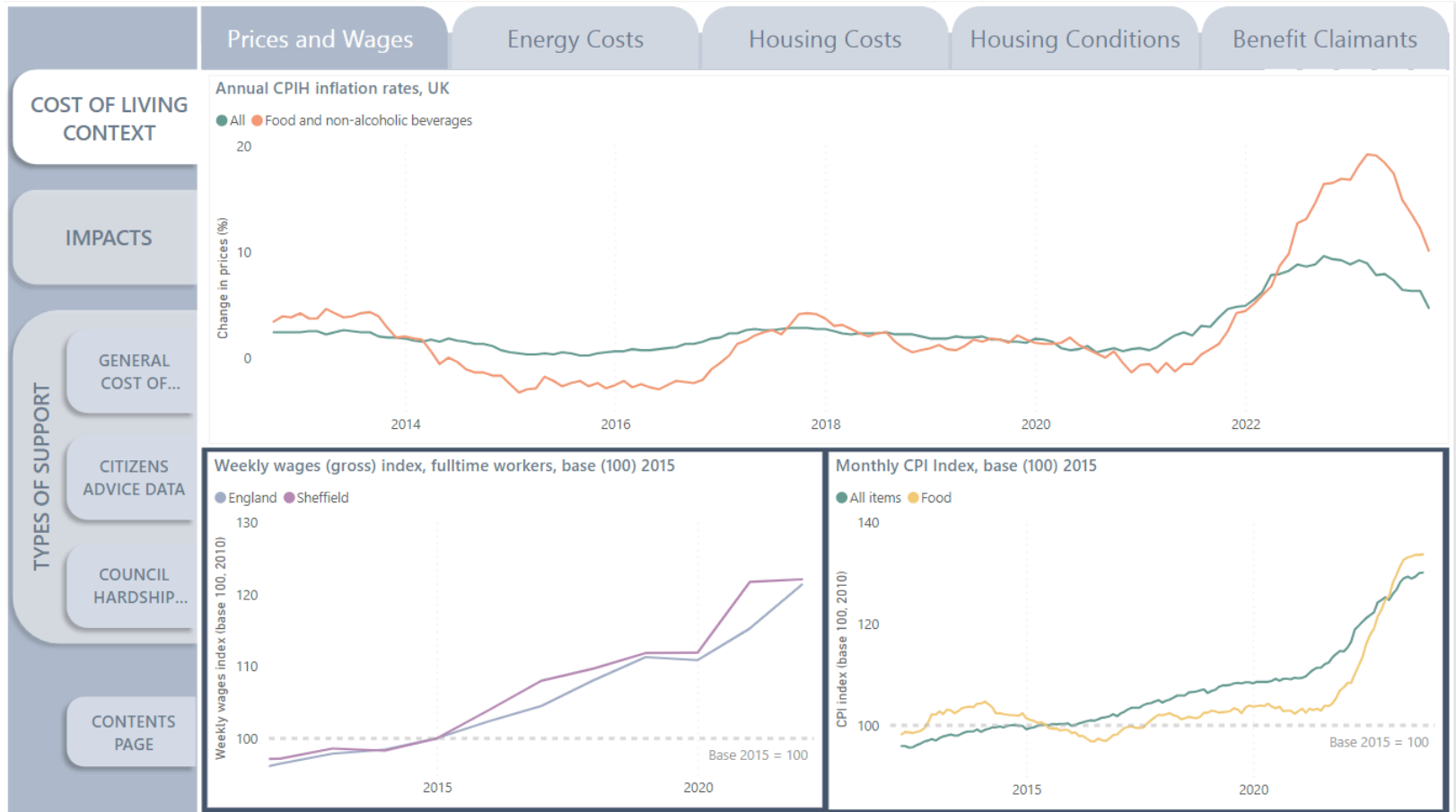


# Supporting Sheffielders through the cost-of-living crisis – Update

SCPB 19 January 2024

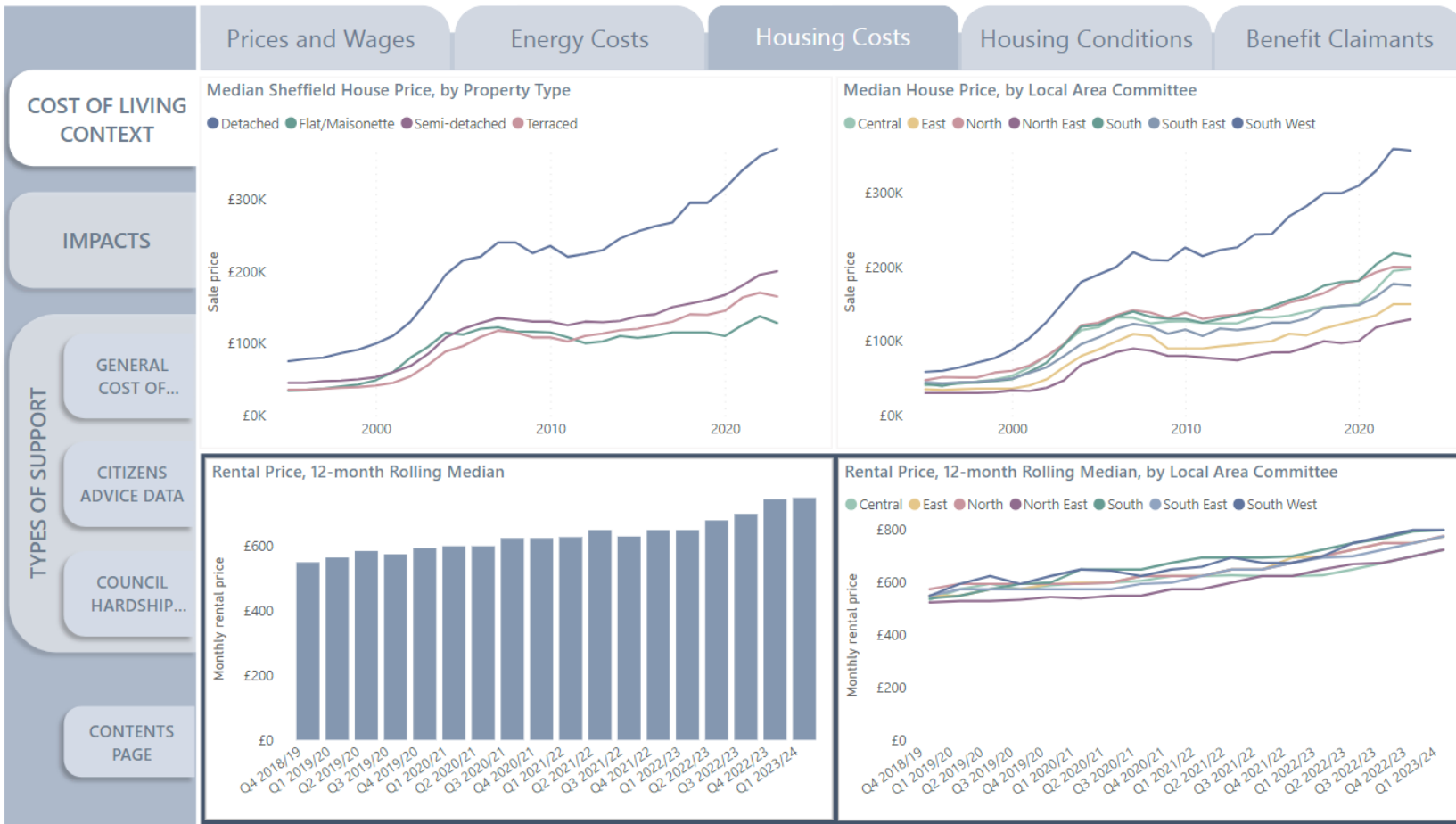
# Cost of Living Context – prices and wages



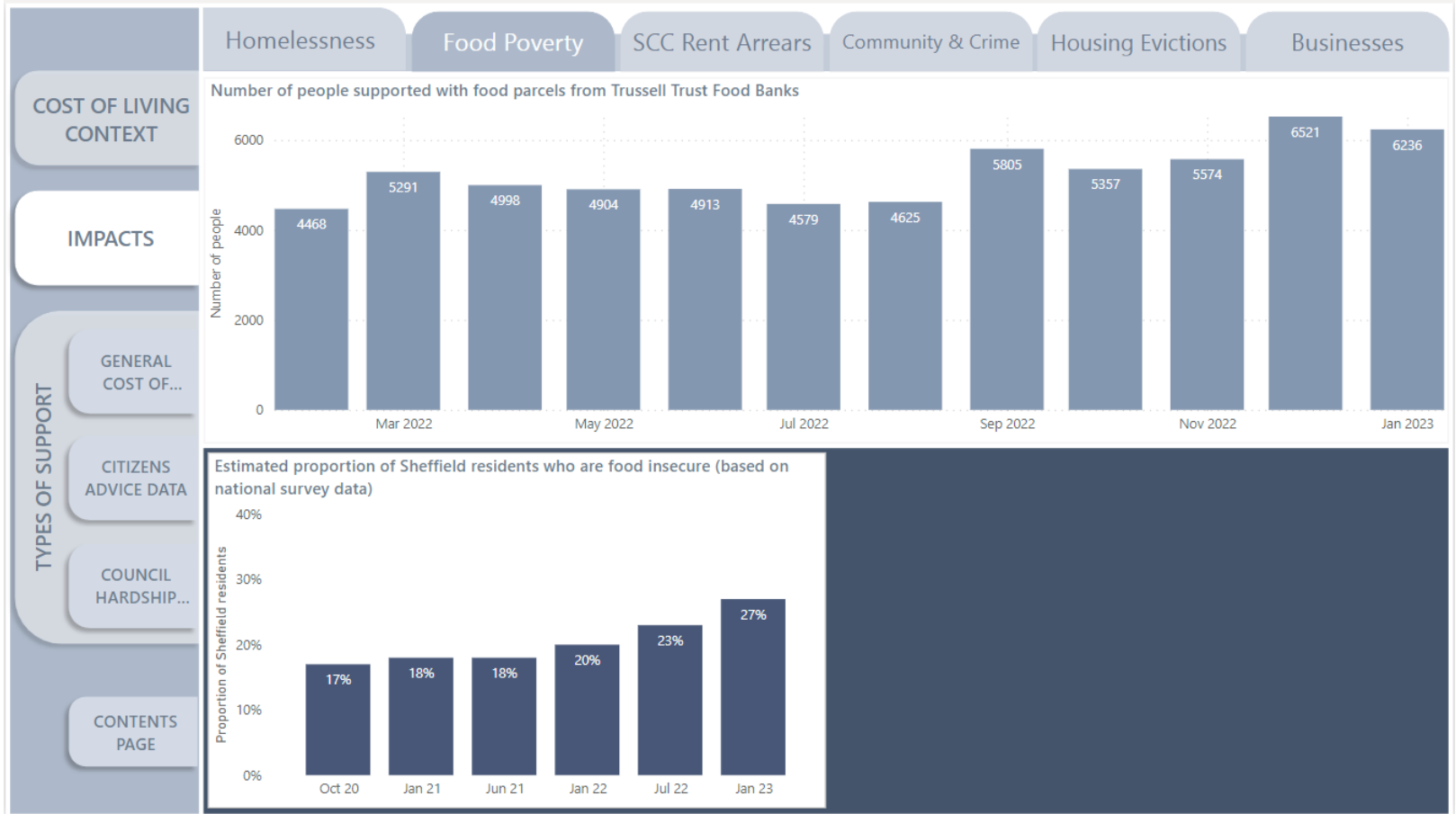
# Cost of Living Context – energy costs



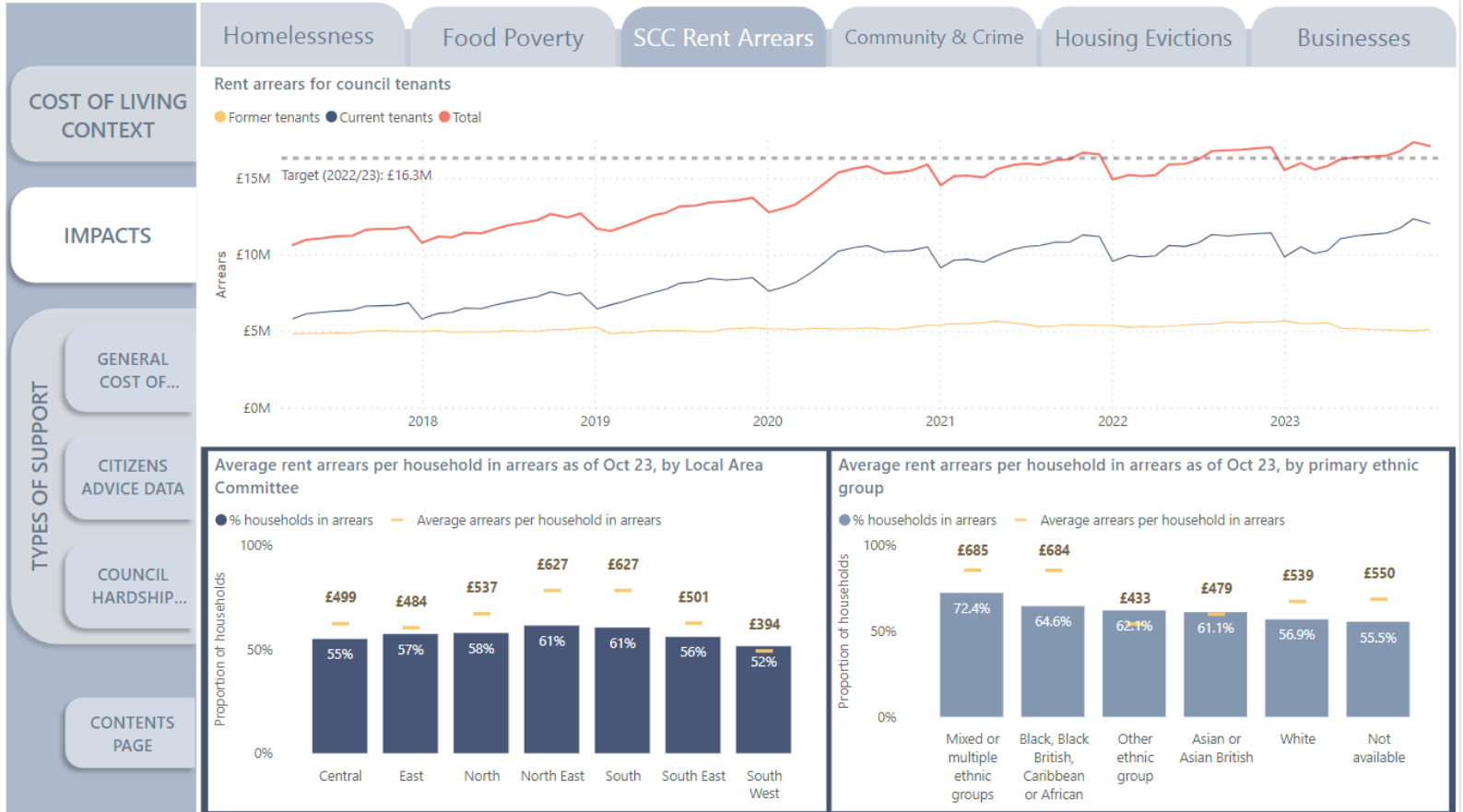
# Cost of Living Context – housing costs



# Cost of Living – impacts (food poverty)



# Cost of Living – impacts (rent arrears)



# The impact of the Cost of Living crisis is disproportionate

The following groups have been disproportionately impacted:

- people on low incomes,
- people on benefits,
- families with children,
- people with disabilities and long-term health conditions,
- young people,
- unpaid carers,
- people from diverse communities,
- tenants in private rented accommodation

Mortgage holders have also been increasingly impacted during 2023.

## Cost of Living citywide response

- Established early 2022: Cost of Living Strategy Group, chaired by Leader, with cross-party elected members, and representatives from across public, private and voluntary sector
- Tactical-level groups working in partnership to respond to the crisis
- Dedicated Cost of Living Hub within Sheffield City Council (formerly Covid response hub)



# Cost of Living Crisis approach

## Aim

Work with the people and communities of Sheffield through the Cost of Living crisis to help mitigate the significant challenges they will be facing, with a particular focus on those who are struggling the most.

## Objectives

1. Support people to make the best possible choices about how they use the income they have
2. Help people maximise their income further (including but not limited to benefits maximisation)
3. Provide a central place to gather information about the scale and nature of the crisis, especially how it is developing over time, in order to prioritise actions and to amplify personal stories
4. Do what we can to ensure that emergency support is available when people are in financial crisis
5. Co-ordinate support for the people and communities that need it the most
6. Put people experiencing the cost of living crisis at the heart of Sheffield's approach to recovery and delivering clean, inclusive growth including supporting people to respond to rising fuel prices, while preparing the whole city for long-term trends.

# Cost of Living Crisis approach

## Principles

- Identify where we can pull levers in the city – there are many wider forces which are beyond our control so we need to focus on what we *can* influence.
- Focus on scale of impact - This might be small impact on a large number of people (e.g. communications), or larger impact on people who are struggling the most or who are more vulnerable. This includes understanding and addressing the distinct impacts on different communities in our city.
- Prevention where possible – are there smaller actions we can take together now to prevent more severe crisis later? Recognise, though, that people are, and will be, in crisis and require emergency support too.
- Prioritise actions that enable people to draw on their own strengths rather than treating them as a passive recipient of something that someone else has decided is best for them. Strive to be a gateway rather than gatekeeper to the support people are entitled to.
- Inform our actions using data and intelligence, recognising that sometimes our best knowledge, particularly in a fast-changing situation, is based on personal stories.

## Communications and information sharing

Public-facing cost of living information: [Cost of living | Sheffield City Council](#)

New updated, simplified leaflet [here](#) – printed versions have been delivered to GPs, schools, community organisations, libraries. Email [costofliving@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:costofliving@sheffield.gov.uk) to order a batch.

Frontline worker cost of living toolkit: [Cost of living support | Sheffield City Council](#)

Lots of face-to-face engagement with communities; use of WhatsApp messaging and videos.

## Providing direct and indirect access to support

### Household Support Fund and Community Support Helpline:

- Application scheme to help with essentials
- Free School Meals vouchers during school holidays
- Targeted awards
- 2023: processes have been streamlined and enhanced payments for groups that are disproportionately affected
- Income maximisation offer and work with Yorkshire Water

### Welcome Places Network:

- Over 170 [Welcome Places](#)
- Includes libraries, family hubs and voluntary and community centres, and Moor Market
- Spaces for people to receive a warm welcome, access help or just have a cup of tea and a chat, in their local communities.

## Other Cost of Living Workstreams:

- Data and intelligence
- Support to and from businesses
- Responding as landlord and creditor
- Responding as employers
- Responding to what matters to specific groups
- Funding and Infrastructure

## What we have seen so far this winter

- Increasing public transport fares (though still subsidised)
- Energy prices have remained very high
- Food inflation has dropped off slightly but prices remain much higher than pre-pandemic
- Very high demand for hardship support. Household Support Fund applications: Nov/Dec 2022, average of 59 per day; same period 2023, average of 112 per day

## What we expect to happen over the next few months

- **Living costs** expected to stabilise but remain high
- Government have not announced continuation of **Household Support Fund** from April 2024 – over £10m for Sheffield. Work is underway to identify where there are remaining resources and how we can pivot the CoL response to cushion some of the impacts.
- **Universal Credit migration** – Tax Credits claimants will be invited from late January to apply instead for Universal Credit. They will receive transitional protection, but only if they apply within a 3-month window. 17,500 people in South Yorkshire affected. DWP is leading on communications and support, with messages amplified via CoL networks.
- Cost of living crisis is most recent manifestation of wider **issue of poverty** in the city – how does this fit into City Goals work?

# SPF Building Thriving Communities

Sheffield City Partnership Board update– 19/01/24



# Building Thriving Communities

## 1. Background

Building Thriving Communities is the communities element of Sheffield's SPF programme. We were allocated £2.6m for 2022-25 and developed our approach in partnership with VCS leaders in late 2022.

## 2. Aims

- Support the supporters – sustaining the VCF organisations that are the first point of entry to people
- Build on the Welcome Places approach
- Reduce demand on short term, emergency support
- Create longer term impact, maximise leverage, focus on transformation

This builds on the wider cost of living response.

# Overall approach

## Four elements:

- **Adding funds to the Cost of Living fund held by SYCF**

South Yorkshire Community Foundation (SYCF) has administered 3 rounds of funding for welcome places. 96 grants have been made totalling £675k to date

- **Invest in volunteer support to build skills in communities**

Citizens Advice Sheffield (CAS) have been providing training for staff & volunteers in welcome places. So far they have run 60 sessions, attended by over 200 people

- **support organisations experiencing barriers to accessing funding**

Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS) have collated a team of consultants able to provide support to organisations, focusing on strategic planning. They have assessed 14 organisations to date, 7 of whom are now receiving detailed support

- **Create team of cost of living link workers and community development workers**

We now have a team of 18 workers across the SCC Local Area Committees (LACs) and VCS partners who are offering support to welcome places

## Key messages

- Impact of cost of living “crisis” hasn’t noticeably diminished
- Our approach is moving from crisis management to long term poverty alleviation
- We are linking into wider cost of living work, including Sheffield Poverty Truth Commission
- We have commissioned an external evaluation to assist with proving the impact of our approach
- The overall community development approach is now fully up and running so we will see more impact during 2024
- Beginning to begin to think about what happens when SPF funding ceases in 2025