

Public Document Pack

Executive Decision Records

Please find set out below a number of Executive Decisions taken at the HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Decision Day held remotely on Thursday 25th November 2021

1. **DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT GRANTS**

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Item 1

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	25 November 2021
Title:	Household Support Grant
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Suzanne Smith, Assistant Director, Children's Services

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1. The decision:

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member approves the grant of £1,673,010 funding to schools, colleges and early years settings for them to purchase and provide food vouchers of up to £15 per child, per week for the Christmas and February half term. Vouchers will be available for all children eligible for benefits related free school meals (FSM), all children with a social worker, all children open to early help, all 16–18-year-olds previously eligible for FSM and all 2–4-year-olds accessing childcare and eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member approves the purchase of one £50 food voucher and, where appropriate, one £50 fuel voucher for each care leaver not forming part of the extended FSM cohort identified in paragraph 20 of the report, to a total value of up to £38,200.
- 1.3 It is recommended that a grant of £223,000 is made available to the Citizens Advice Service to provide emergency financial support to vulnerable households with fuel bills over the winter period. Such grant will be provided on terms to be agreed by the Director of Children's Services and in accordance with the grant criteria set out in paragraph 14 of the report.
- 1.4 It is recommended that food vouchers, fuel vouchers and slow cookers are issued to community pantries and early help hubs for distribution to vulnerable households, up to the value of £100,000.
- 1.5 It is recommended that funding of up to £525,000 is provided in grants to expand existing community pantry provision and to organisations seeking to establish additional community pantries in areas of need. Community pantries will ensure a sustainable source of support for food poverty is in place beyond the period of the grant. Such grant will be provided on terms to

be agreed by the Director of Children's Services and in accordance with the grant criteria set out in paragraph 14 of the report.

- 1.6 It is recommended that a total of £1,000,000 is allocated to district and borough councils for exceptional housing support which meets the DWP grant criteria described in paragraph 42 of the report. Such grant will be provided on terms to be agreed by the Director of Children's Services and in accordance with the DWP grant criteria set out in paragraphs 14 and 42 of the report.
- 1.7 It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services to approve community grants to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant (as set out in paragraph 14 of the report) for targeted financial support for those in need in consultation with the Executive Lead Member up to the total value of £1,750,000.
- 1.8 It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member delegates approval to the Director of Children's Services to approve the reallocation of any Household Support Grant remaining or underspent funds from initiatives set out in paragraphs 2-8 to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant set out in paragraph 14 of the report in consultation with the Executive Lead Member.

2. Reasons for the decision:

- 2.1 On 30 September 2021, the Government announced a significant package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. Guidance and grant determinations were confirmed on 5 November 2021.
- 2.2 The £421 million Household Support Fund is being distributed through county and unitary councils and is to be used primarily to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills. It can also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and with wider essential costs. Additionally, in exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.
- 2.3 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) - the Government department that is providing the funding - expects top tier local authorities to administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. Rather than focus on one specific vulnerable group, authorities should use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households in their area. Support is not restricted to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits. Therefore, authorities should also use other sources of information to identify vulnerable households, including advice from professionals who come into

contact with vulnerable households such as social workers and Supporting Families advisors.

2.4 The conditions of the Household Support Fund are that at least 50% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, with up to 50% of the total funding to other households genuinely in need of support this winter. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits.

2.5 Hampshire's share of the Household Support Fund is £7,124,127.25, to be spent between 06 October 2021 and 31 March 2022.

3. Other options considered and rejected

3.1 Hampshire County Council could have delegated all funding to schools and/or district councils to administer locally. This option was rejected as these organisations are already administering other schemes and by working across the County with a range of partners, it was felt that an offer complementary to other schemes could be delivered, with the aim of reaching more vulnerable households.

4. Conflicts of interest:

4.1 Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: N/A

4.2 Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: N/A

5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: N/A

6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: N/A

7. Statement from the decision maker: N/A

Approved by: ----- Councillor Roz Chadd Executive Lead Member for Children's Services	Date: 25 November 2021
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