

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Health and Wellbeing Board
Date:	15 December 2022
Title:	Household Support Fund
Report From:	Suzanne Smith, Assistant Director, Children's Services

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the approach for allocation of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund Extension across Hampshire for the period October 2022 to March 2023.

Recommendation(s)

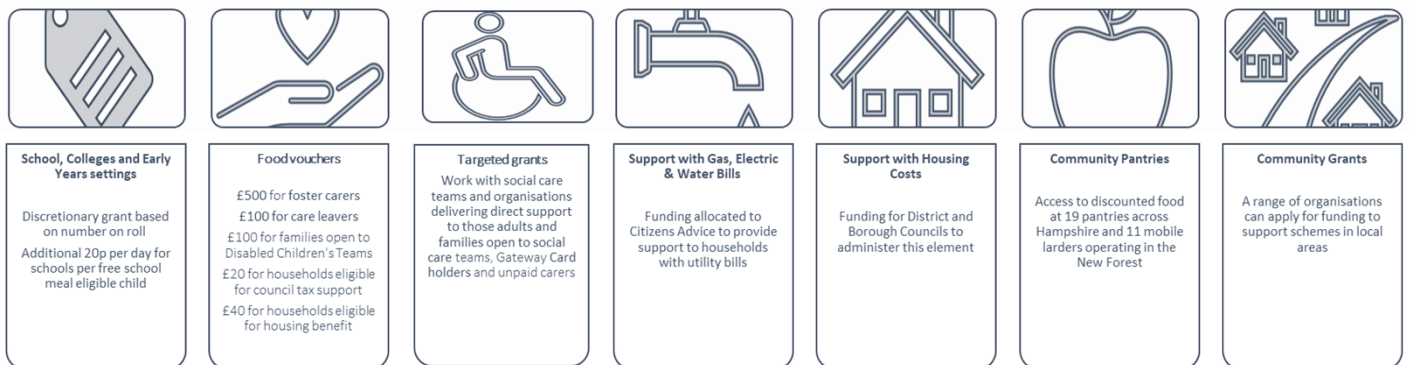
That the Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Board:

2. Note the wide range of schemes available to support vulnerable households during the winter.
3. Share details of the offer and signpost to households who may benefit from the initiatives in place.
4. Encourage local organisations to apply for community grants.
5. Encourage households to use their local community pantry

Executive Summary

6. This report seeks to outline the approach and allocation of funds for the DWP Household Support Fund extension across Hampshire. A key aim for the programme will be to continue to support sustainable and environmentally beneficial food poverty support.

- Although the grant no longer has ringfenced spend relating to types of households, the grant guidance stresses that the fund is intended to cover a range of low income households including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people. The proposed Hampshire offer has initiatives in place to support these targeted cohorts.
- The diagram below summarises the schemes on offer from the scheme.



Contextual Information

- On 26 May 2022 the Government announced, as part of measures to provide help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living, that the £421m Household Support Fund (HSF) would be extended from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023.
- The final guidance relating to the grant extension was shared with local authorities on 30 September 2022 ([Household Support Fund: guidance for local councils - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils)). The guidance confirms that Hampshire County Council's allocation is £7,124,127.25, to be spent between 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. Despite being a grant extension, any grant underspend from the grant relating to the previous period cannot be carried forward and there are some changes to the grant guidance.
- The DWP's expectation is that the grant should primarily be used to support households in the most need particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food and water bills. Energy bills may be of particular concern to low income households during the period of the scheme and Local Authorities should especially consider how they can support households with the cost of energy. It can also be used to support households with essential costs related to those

items and with wider essential costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.

4. The main change to the grant for October 2022 – March 2023 compared to previous Household Support Fund allocations is that there is no ringfence of any proportion of the funding for specific cohorts of people. However, there is a requirement for all Authorities to operate at least a part of their scheme on an application basis. This means residents should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support. There is also an expectation of Authorities to particularly consider those groups who may not have benefitted from any of the recent cost of living support.

Performance

5. All funding granted to third party organisations (including schools, colleges, early years providers and district and borough councils) will be supported by a grant agreement setting out the conditions of the funding as well as reporting requirements.
6. Third party organisations will be required to report to the County Council on how they have spent the funding provided, in line with the DWP grant criteria.
7. The management information required by the DWP for this grant round will require a more granular data collection from grant recipients. For each award as well as the spend and volumes, the number of households is also required. Whereby, if one family received £15 food vouchers from their schools for their 2 children this will be reported as a total spend of £30, with a volume of 2 for 1 household.
8. Spend information is required by;
 - Household composition (household with children, with pensioners, with a disabled person or other)
 - Category (energy and water, food excluding FSM support in the holidays, free school meal support in the holidays, essentials linked to energy and water, wider essentials or housing costs)
 - Type of support (vouchers, cash, third party, tangible item or other)
 - Access route (application based, proactive support, other)

Consultation and Equalities

9. Consultation and engagement have been undertaken as part of developing and delivering the connect4communities programme.
10. School and colleges have previously been consulted regarding their preferred method of supporting children with food by way of a questionnaire.
11. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is included in this report.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Agenda for Executive Lead Member for Children's Services Decision Day on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2022, 2.00 pm About the Council Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)	22 November
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Household Support Fund: guidance for local councils - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

Please use the link below to access the full equalities impact assessment. The implementation of the programme will have either a positive or neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.

[EIA0335-DWP-HouseholdSupportFundExtension-October2022.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)