

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	14 May 2024
Title:	Department for Work and Pensions Household Support Fund - April 2024 to September 2024
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. The decision:

1.1. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves the following grants totalling £4,728,768:

- a discretionary grant of £1,185,742 be available for schools, colleges and early years settings as described in paragraphs 20 to 23 of the report;
- grants to a total value of £1,835,527 are distributed to District and Borough Councils across Hampshire, such that they can provide one £25 food voucher to households in receipt of council tax support and £40 to households in receipt of housing benefit only, as described in paragraphs 32 to 33 of the report;
- funding to organisations that support unpaid carers and young carers in Hampshire up to the value of £421,250, inclusive of £26,250 administrative costs during the six-month period;
- a grant of £483,569 is made available to Citizens Advice to support the most vulnerable households in Hampshire with utility costs and eligibility checking, supporting 2,800 households;
- £525,525 is distributed to District and Borough councils to support households with exceptional housing costs during the Funding Period in accordance with paragraphs 47 to 51 of the report;
- a grant to Hampshire Library Service of £57,155 to extend and develop its current community offer including signposting to relevant services, chat about groups for the elderly and infirm and the provision of warm and welcome resources and sanitary products;
- a grant of £220,000 to the Environment Centre for providing direct guidance and support to households of any tenure on a range of energy-related topics, which would be delivered through a mix of remote help as well as provision of practical household items, depending on need; and to provide capital grants to 75 households.

1.2. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves the allocation of £824,100 to deliver or commission direct support to households as follows:

- £4,300 is allocated to enable one £100 food voucher to be distributed to 43 families open to children's social care teams whose children are educated other than at school to contribute to the cost-of-living pressures;
- £48,400 is ringfenced to award food vouchers to the value of £100 to each Hampshire Foster Carer household with a child or children currently in placement to contribute to the increase in cost of living, and that £16,400 to be awarded to 164 families where there is a Looked After Child placed at home, to be provided in the form of one £100 food voucher per household;
- food vouchers to the value of £100 are awarded to 946 eligible special guardians or connected carers where children are placed either on a temporary or permanent basis, and who are currently receiving financial support, at a total cost of £94,600;
- £18,000 is distributed to children's social care district-based and out of hours teams across Hampshire, so that financial assistance can be given at their discretion to vulnerable families as described in paragraph 27 of the report;
- £88,700 is awarded for individuals open to Care Leavers teams to receive two £50 food vouchers across the six-month period to contribute to the increased cost of living;
- to distribute food vouchers to the total value of £21,500 to unaccompanied asylum seeking children aged 16-18 during the six-month period;
- £56,200 is ringfenced to provide one £100 food voucher to families open to the Disabled Children's Team and £476,000 to provide direct fuel support to 8,000 adults open to social care not in residential accommodation, those that do not have any care and vulnerable adults who present in crisis at the front door to Adult and Health Care services.

1.3. It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services to award grants up to the total value of £1,395,000 in respect of the following initiatives, and in accordance with the grant criteria as set out in paragraphs 13 and 14, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member:

- award up to £125,000 to organisations best placed to deliver advice services, which may include Citizens Advice and community-based organisations;
- award £720,000 through grants for organisations who wish to support vulnerable residents county-wide or within their local area with food and fuel poverty and wish to apply for a community grant. In addition, this allocation would enable applications to be made for a 'crisis grant' whereby professionals working with vulnerable individuals can make applications for support, for example in respect of those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events;
- approve grant awards to organisations for the delivery of community pantry network schemes and to develop sustainable approaches to food support up to the value of £550,000 throughout the Funding Period.

1.5 It is recommended that the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services approves £176,259 to be retained by the County Council, in accordance with

the grant guidance, to meet the costs of administering the Household Support Fund between April and September 2024.

- 1.6 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 Fund remaining or underspent funds from initiatives set out in paragraphs 4 to 6 of the report, to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant in consultation with the Executive Lead Member.

2. Reasons for the decision:

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed approach for allocation of £7,124,127 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund across Hampshire for the grant period April 2024 to September 2024. This report seeks approval from the Executive Lead Member for six months of spend and grant funding to organisations in support of vulnerable households via the connect4communities programme.
- 2.2. The DWP expectation is that the grant should primarily be used to support households in the most need, particularly those not eligible for the other support Government has recently made available but who are nevertheless in need. The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food and water bills.
- 2.3. Whilst immediate needs should be prioritised, Local Authorities are encouraged to use the Fund to provide support that has a long-term sustainable impact, for example household items that would reduce bills in the long term. This can also include support with income maximisation through advice and signposting to benefit, debt and employment services.
- 2.4. The proposed programme contributes to all aspects of the Strategic Plan.

3. Other options considered and rejected:

- 3.1. None.

4. Conflicts of interest:

- 4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: None
- 4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: None

5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: Not Applicable

6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: Not Applicable

7. Statement from the decision maker: Not Applicable

Approved by:

Date:

Councillor Edward Heron
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services

14 May 2024