



Author/Lead Officer of Report: Mark Sheikh
Head of Service – Children, Young People & Families
Service

Tel: 07805428273

Report of: John Macilwraith
Report to: The Leader of the Council
Date of Decision:
Subject: Household Support Fund

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision: -	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000		<input type="checkbox"/>		
- Affects 2 or more Wards		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Which Executive Member Portfolio does this relate to? Children, Education and Families				
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee				
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? EIA830				
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Purpose of Report:

The Government announced last week (06/10/21) that a new Household Support Fund (HSF) grant will be made available to councils to support those most in need this winter. This new grant will run from 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 and totals £500m.

At least 50% of the total funding must be spent on families with children. In terms of type of support, the expectation is that the Household Support Fund should primarily be used 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. 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.

The grant will amount to £5.2m for Sheffield and we are seeking approval to spend £442.5k to issue Food Vouchers for October half-term (25th - 29th October)

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Leader of the Council:

1. Accepts Household Support Fund grand funding of £5.2m.
2. Approves spend of £442.5k for the purpose of providing free school meal vouchers to those eligible for free school meals, as detailed within this report.
3. Notes that SCC need to produce a delivery plan to be submitted to DWP on how we plan to spend the HSF by 29th October 2021.
4. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of People Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Commercial Services and the Director of Legal and Governance to implement the delivery plan and take such decisions necessary to meet the aims, objectives of the plan and this report which are not already covered by existing delegations in the Leaders Scheme of Delegation.

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.
	Finance: Helen Damon/Liz Gough
	Legal: Henry Watmough-Cownie
	Equalities: Bashir Khan
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission: John Macilwraith
3	Cabinet Member consulted: Jayne Dunn

4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Mark Sheikh	Job Title: Head of Service – Children, Young People & Families Service
	Date: 11/10/21	

1. PROPOSAL

5. The Government announced last week 06/10 that a new Household Support Fund (HSF) grant will be made available to Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need this winter.
6. This new grant will run from 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 and totals £500m. Sheffield has been allocated a sum of £5.2m.
7. At least 50% of the total funding must be spent on families with children. In terms of type of support, the expectation is that the Household Support Fund should primarily be used to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills.
8. The grant 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.
9. This is a new scheme and Authorities are not allowed to carry forward any underspends from previous DWP grants.
10. We need to produce a delivery plan and submit to DWP on how we plan to spend the HSF. This plan needs to be completed and submitted by 29th October. While the planning for broader delivery has started, we need urgent approval to issue Food Voucher to schools/EY eligible cohort for the upcoming half-term holidays.
11. Details of vouchers and costs below:

Cohort	Estimated Number of vouchers	Costs £000's
Provide voucher for FSM eligible cohort. 2 Year and 3-4 years olds	29,500	442.5

Olds and 25 th – 29 th October (1 week)		
Total Costs £15 x 29500 (Max funding required)		442.5

12. Timeline Challenges: As some schools will close from 25th of October, we want to make sure that vouchers are distributed from at least 21st of October to give families and schools a chance to download these vouchers before the half-term break.

13. The cut-off for eligibility will be 24th of October 2021. Families who become eligible after 24th of October will not be considered within the scope of this issue.

14. Edenred was chosen as the supplier of supermarket school meals vouchers for school holidays via a procurement exercise and provided vouchers in last year. The Edenred contract is effectively an exchange service whereby school meal vouchers are provided/exchanged at full value i.e. a £15 voucher costs SCC £15.

15. Our dedicated Free School Meals national call-off contract with Edenred runs until June 2023 and is not capped in terms of monetary throughput. It is therefore commercially and operationally prudent to continue with this arrangement in order to fulfil this and future school meal holiday voucher initiatives whilst the call-off is live.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 Providing vouchers to eligible children and young people during the October half-term will support the wellbeing of families and carers by ensuring they are able to provide a lunchtime meal, and that children and young people receive adequate food, which is an essential component of good health.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 Consultation with members to continue the existing arrangements. No external consultation required.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 Decisions need to take into account the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This is the duty to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the following groups as a protected characteristic: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and highlights that the food voucher provision will continue to provide direct assistance to vulnerable families via food for children who need it over the holidays.

This proposal will positively impact on vulnerable young people, their parents and carers and will ensure that the cohort gets adequate food which is an essential component of good health particularly for children and young people who are growing.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The cost of providing the vouchers will be £442,500, the Household Support Grant will fund this cost.

Key features (not exclusive) of the grant conditions for the CSLG are summarised as follows:

The grant is for the period 6th October 2021 to 31st March 2022.

the Authority must ensure that:

- i) at least 50% of the grant is allocated to support households that include:
- a person who will be under the age of 19 as at 31st March 2022, or
 - a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit is paid or free school meals are provided during the Grant Period, and

- ii) up to 50% of the grant is used to assist other households, and

b) the Authority is to ensure that the grant is primarily allocated to support with the costs of food, energy (for heating, lighting and cooking), water (for household purposes, including sewerage) and other essential living needs in accordance with the Scheme guidance.

A delivery plan must be submitted by the 29th October, covering numbers of households to be supported and types of support.

The grant will be paid in arrears following receipt by the Department of the Statement of Grant Usage (two submissions 21/01/22 and 22/04/22).

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The grant funding will be paid to the Council via Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Council has a general power under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that an individual may generally do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and the power is exercised in accordance with the limitations specified in the Act, this gives the Council the ability to accept the funding.

Under the Childcare Act 2006, local authorities have a duty in relation to the well-being of young children.

It is anticipated that any unspent funding will need to be repaid to the DWP.

When formulating the delivery plan, the Council will need to consider appropriate checks to determine the eligibility and the identity of each applicant and how payments should be made to individuals to reduce the risk of fraud and to ensure that any reporting obligations and information required by the DWP are complied with, although those details are now known at this moment in time.

Grant payments are normally able to be reduced, suspended or withheld or the grant monies paid back in full or in part to the DWP if the Council do not comply with any conditions of the grant. Given the later notice of this funding we have not been provided with any proposed funding conditions or reporting requirements. The funds are not to be used for any economic undertaking, however when working with other organisations, Subsidy Control should be considered, and the rules around Subsidy Control complied with.

The Council must comply with their Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

If further guidance is provided for the scheme or if the current documents are amended, then these should be provided to legal to review.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 Not applicable

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 **None**

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 We have received additional grant from the central government to continue to support vulnerable families over the next six months.

Providing school meals vouchers to eligible children and young people during the half-term will support the wellbeing of families and carers by ensuring they are able to provide a lunch time meal and that children and young people receive

adequate food which is an essential component of good health.