



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department

Plymouth City Council

Ballard House

Plymouth PL1 3BJ

T 01752 305155

www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy

Published 20 March 2025

Delegated Decisions

Delegated Executive/Officer Decisions

Delegated Executive and Officer decisions are published and are available at the following link - <https://tinyurl.com/ms6umor>

Cabinet decisions subject to call-in are published at the following link - <http://tinyurl.com/yddrql6>

Notice of call-in for non-urgent decisions must be given to the Democratic Support Team by 4.30 pm on 27 March 2025. Please note – urgent decisions and non-key Council Officer decisions cannot be called in. Copies of the decisions together with background reports are available for viewing as follows:

- on the Council's Intranet Site at <https://modgov/mgDelegatedDecisions.aspx>
- on the Council's website at <https://tinyurl.com/jhnax4e>

The urgent decision detailed below may be implemented immediately.

Delegated Decisions

I. Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities):

- I.a. Urgent Decision - HCDC05 24/25 - Household Support Fund Round 7 **(Pages 1 - 16)**

URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a **Cabinet Member**



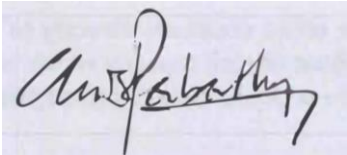
REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

Executive Decision Reference Number – HCDC05 24/25

| Decision | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Title of decision: Household Support Fund Round 7 |
| 2 | Decision maker: Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) |
| 3 | Report author and contact details: Zoe Sydenham (Community Empowerment Operational Lead) 01752 307849 |
| 4 | Decision to be taken: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. To approve the distribution of the latest round of Household Support Fund monies (£4,044,511.26) through the proposed Framework for April 2025 – March 2026. |
| 5 | Reasons for decision: An extension of the Household Support Fund (HSF) has been approved by DWP on 4 March 2025. There is therefore an urgent need to agree on a framework for the next year of HSF. The particular focus will be on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families in crisis, with children in need and/or with a cash shortfall or multiple debt. (This includes funding for food vouchers for children entitled to free school meals in the Easter holidays which is in 4 weeks' time). This will continue to be administered through a contract with Wonde. • Prevent households from becoming homeless and support those affected by homelessness and/or in crisis • Grants for energy, with a particular focus on supporting older people. • Preventative work which supports people falling into crisis in the future <p>The level of funding for the full year is £4,044,511.26 for the full FY 25/26</p> |
| 6 | Alternative options considered and rejected: Option 1: Do Nothing This is not an option as the Council has been awarded grant funding to support vulnerable households. To not use or accept this funding would be to the detriment of Plymouth households at a time of an ongoing cost of living crisis. Option 2: Provide cash payments or post office vouchers directly to claimants This option would require a significant amount of staff capacity which wouldn't be in place in time to deliver the funding. Additionally, the procurement of pre-payment cards would incur service charges. |
| 7 | Financial implications: Distribution of Household Support Fund monies (£4,044,511.26) through the proposed Framework for April 2025 – March 2026. The funding for this contract is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| 8 | Legal Implications: None | | | |
| 9 | Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice) | Yes | No | Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which: |
| | | | X | in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total |
| | | | X | in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1 million annually |
| | | X | is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority. | |
| | If yes, date of publication of the notice in the <u>Forward Plan of Key Decisions</u> | N/A | | |
| 10 | Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget: | This proposal links to the Child Poverty agenda for the city and also A Bright Future 2021 – 26 in supporting children to stay safe and well, through the provision of adequate nutrition. The decision links to the Corporate Plan priorities of Keeping Children, Adults and Communities Safe, and Spending Money Wisely. | | |
| 11 | Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact) | None | | |
| Urgent decisions | | | | |
| 12 | Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public? | Yes | x | (If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice) |
| | | No | | (If no, go to section 13a) |
| 12a | Reason for urgency: The Department of Work and Pensions has recently provided notification that the Household Support Fund would be extended by a further twelve months, from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. Nationally, communications for this scheme were approved for the 19 March 2025. In order to provide adequate notice for partners preparation to deliver the scheme, the Monitoring Officer has agreed that an urgent decision is required. This includes notification to Schools by 21 March 2025, to ensure school food vouchers are distributed in time for the school holidays, beginning 05 April 2025. This timeframe does not allow for a call-in period for this decision. | | | |
| 12b | Scrutiny Chair Signature: | <i>John Stephens</i> | | Date 20/03/2025 |
| | Scrutiny Committee name: | Scrutiny Management Board | | |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Print Name: John Stephens | | | |
| Consultation | | | |
| 13a | Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision? | Yes | X |
| | | No | (If no go to section 14) |
| 13b | Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision? | Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture and Communications) | |
| 13c | Date Cabinet member consulted | 20/03/2025 | |
| 14 | Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision? | Yes | If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer |
| | | No | X |
| 15 | Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted? | Name | Professor Steven Maddern |
| | | Job title | Director of Public Health |
| | | Date consulted | 13 March 2025 |
| Sign-off | | | |
| 16 | Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted: | Democratic Support (mandatory) | JSI 15 24/25 |
| | | Finance (mandatory) | DJN.24.25.184 |
| | | Legal (mandatory) | LS/00001312/2/AC/15/3/25 |
| | | Human Resources (if applicable) | N/A |
| | | Corporate property (if applicable) | N/A |
| | | Procurement (if applicable) | |
| Appendices | | | |
| 17 | Ref. | Title of appendix | |
| | A | Briefing report | |
| | B | Equalities Impact Assessment | |
| Confidential/exempt information | | | |
| 18a | Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? | Yes | If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | | No | X | publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain) | | | | |
| | | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 18b | Confidential/exempt briefing report title: | | | | | | | |
| Background Papers | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box. | | | | | | | |
| Title of background paper(s) | | Exemption Paragraph Number | | | | | | |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Cabinet Member Signature | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached. | | | | | | | |
| Signature |  | | Date of decision | | | 19.3.25 | | |
| Print Name | Councillor Chris Penberthy (Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities) | | | | | | | |

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

Round 7 April 2025 – March 2026

Briefing March 2025



SUMMARY OF FUND AND GUIDANCE

On 30 October 2024, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Household Support Fund (HSF) would be extended for a further twelve months, from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. It is expected that this will be the final round of HSF. Although this is informally considered an extension to the previous six Household Support Fund schemes, it is a new grant subject to its own grant conditions as is set out in the Grant Determination.

Plymouth has been allocated a total of £4,044,511.26.

The **primary objective** of The Fund is to provide **crisis** support to vulnerable households in the most need with the cost of essentials. The **secondary objective** is to provide **preventative** support to prevent vulnerable households from falling into – or falling further into – crisis. This includes low-income households in need, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people, larger families, single-person households, and those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events. These target groups reflect existing local priorities.

Authorities are expected to offer support throughout the duration of The Fund Period and must develop delivery plans to reflect this, with the discretion to determine the most appropriate scheme for their area, based on their understanding of local need and with due regard to equality considerations.

Eligible spend

- 1 Eligible crisis support includes:
 - Essentials – eg energy, water and food support
 - Wider Essentials eg bills, clothing, hygiene products, transport related costs. Authorities are encouraged to consider how this support could deliver longer-term prevention of crisis. This may include, for example, insulation or energy efficient household items which reduce bills, the purchase of equipment such as fridges, freezers, ovens, slow cookers or costs associated with obtaining these essentials, for example, delivery, installation.
 - Housing costs with the focus of support on bills and that support for housing costs should only be given where existing housing support schemes do not meet need.
- 2 Eligible preventative support includes:
 - Advice services
 - Join-up between service providers, such as co-location points
 - Any support with the aim of providing longer-term and sustainable solutions eg assistance with and/or access to affordable food such as subsidised food pantries and community kitchen and provision of cooking lessons with an emphasis on cost-effective methods.

Routes of support

Authorities can deliver the scheme through a variety of routes, including but not limited to:

- proactive support by identifying households in need
- application-based support where individuals have the opportunity to come forward to ask the Authority (or Third Party Organisation) for support – this is a requirement
- issuing grants to Third Party Organisations to provide support on behalf of the Authority.

Eligibility

Our support will focus on suggested households identified by the funding guidance:

- Households with at least one child under 18 who resides in the property on a permanent basis.
- Families with children on low incomes, including single parent households.
- Single adults on low incomes, in particular those living in private rented/ HMOs.
- People with physical disabilities and serious health/mental illness on low incomes
- Households where someone has reached pension age.
- Households with an unpaid carer
- Households with a care leaver
- People at risk of homelessness or in temporary accommodation
- Households who are eligible for children's Free School Meals
- Households with very vulnerable families (Children's Social Care, Refugee organisations, Young Parents service)
- Single homeless and private sector tenant support service

DELIVERY PLAN

Food vouchers for school holidays for children entitled to free school meals and other struggling families as identified by schools.

During previous rounds of HSF, it was found that there was an increasing number of children identified by the schools as needing this support. This increased from 12,516 children to 13,000 children during the year 2023/24. During the HSF delivery plans for 1 April to 30 March 2025, it was agreed to offer £10 on food vouchers during the summer months and £13 during winter holidays to reflect the need for additional food, and hot food, for children over the winter period. Feedback from parents has indicated that they would prefer the amount to remain consistent throughout the year to prevent confusion. Therefore this round we will provide £11 per voucher throughout the year. This will ensure the budget available remains similar and ensure a clearer offer for families.

Targeted Crisis and Prevention work for eligible households through a collaborative multi-agency approach

In HSF 6, we trialled an initiative to target households using LIFT (Low Income Families Tracker) data and Parity data (homes at high risk of cold and damp) to ensure support was directed at those people who were at risk of falling into crisis. We will continue to develop this targeted approach working across multiple agencies to ensure people get the right support for their needs. Working with wider organisations we will also take a preventative approach through ensuring wraparound support. This will include:

- Financial and benefits advice and support from Citizens Advice Plymouth
1. Energy saving measures and damp and mould treatment packs to support the aims of the Cold Homes Task Force action plan enable residents to take action before winter and lessen poor health impacts.
 2. Adult Carers, Veterans and households where there is a physical disability or mental ill-health

Self-Referral Routes

Alongside targeted work, there will be application-based support where individuals have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support. These will include:

- Drop-in advice sessions by Citizens Advice at agreed outreach locations across the city
- Telephone referrals through Citizens Advice Plymouth, Age UK and PEC

Emergency Food

There remains an ongoing need to support the supply of emergency food, particularly during the cost-of-living crisis. The new guidance provides an opportunity to fund preventative food work. This will enable us to fund:

- Emergency Food for people in absolute crisis via the Soup Run, Plymouth Food bank, Provide Devon, Eldertree
- Food education work and provision of essential cooking equipment essentials at targeted locations including social supermarkets in Stonehouse and Whitleigh. As well as tackling food poverty this approach will help to build skills, knowledge and social capital.

Households at risk of becoming homeless

To prevent households from becoming homeless, or who live in temporary accommodation with no access to cooking facilities, or to aid resettling into permanent accommodation or otherwise in need as identified by Community Connections and other partners including PAUSE, PDAS and PATH. This work can also be supported by targeted work using the LIFT data dashboard going forward and we are in discussion with the team as how best to do this.

Care Leavers, Young Carers, Children's Social Care families in need

Children's Social Care will continue to target families in crisis or with children in need, as well as care leavers and young carers.

Welcoming Spaces and Co-location points

As per previous rounds of HSF, we will provide grants to support the VCSE to deliver welcoming spaces within the community during the winter months through an open application process.

We will also work with the VCSE, libraries and Wellbeing Hubs to identify appropriate co-location points where advice services, healthcare and wellbeing/social activities are provided for a range of people in one location, enabling us to support households in crisis as well as put in preventative measures.

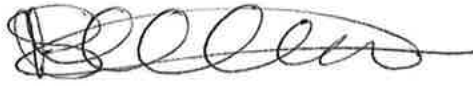
Communication

Details of the support available from this round of the Household Support Fund will be shared in line with DWP guidance through PCC website, VCS promotion and Social Media.

This page is intentionally left blank

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------|
| Author(s): The person completing the EIA template. | Zoe Sydenham | Department and service: | Public Health | Date of assessment: | 11.3.25 |
| Lead Officer: Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director. | Steve Maddern | Signature: |  | Approval date: | 11.3.25 |
| Overview: | <p>On the 3 March 2025, the City Council has received the final grant determination and guidance/framework for the next iteration of the HSF for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026</p> <p>It is confirmed that Plymouth City Council will receive £4,044,511.26 for the 12 months to be spent or committed between 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.</p> <p>The priorities for spend reflect existing city priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families in crisis, with children in need and/or with a cash shortfall or multiple debt • Prevent households from becoming homeless and support those affected by homelessness and/or in crisis • Grants for energy, with a particular focus on supporting older people with fuel payments over the winter. • Preventative support to prevent people from falling into crisis <p>A detailed Delivery Plan will be submitted to the DWP by the 31 May at the latest.</p> | | | | |
| Decision required: | To approve the distribution of the latest round of Household Support Fund monies (£4,044,511.26) through the proposed Framework for April 2025 – March 2026. | | | | |

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

| | | | | |
|---|------------|--|-----------|----------|
| Potential external impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities or residents with protected characteristics? | Yes | | No | x |
| Potential internal impacts: | Yes | | No | x |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------|----------|
| Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees? | | | | |
| Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required and you must complete section three) | Yes | | No | x |
| If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not. | The proposal sets out support for cost of living targeted at service users, communities and residents who are most at need. | | | |

SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

| Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010) | Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback) | Adverse impact | Mitigation activities | Timescale and responsible department |
|--|--|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
|--|--|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|

| | | | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------|--|--|
| <p>Age</p> | <p>Plymouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15. • 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64. • 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over. • 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over. <p>South West</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64. • 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over. <p>England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14. • 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64. • 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over. <p>(2021 Census)</p> | <p>None</p> | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------|--|--|

| | | | | |
|--|--|------|--|--|
| <p>Care experienced individuals</p> <p>(Note that as per the Independent Review of Children's Social Care recommendations, Plymouth City Council is treating care experience as though it is a protected characteristic).</p> | <p>It is estimated that 26 per cent of the homeless population in the UK have care experience. In Plymouth there are currently 7 per cent of care leavers open to the service (6 per cent aged 18-20 and 12 per cent of those aged 21+) who are in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The Care Review reported that 41 per cent of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people in the same age group.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are currently 50 per cent of care leavers aged 18-21 Not in Education Training or Employment (54 per cent of all those care leavers aged 18-24 who are open to the service).</p> <p>There are currently 195 care leavers aged 18 to 20 (statutory service) and 58 aged 21 to 24 (extended offer). There are more care leavers aged 21 to 24 who could return for support from services if they wished to.</p> | None | | |
| <p>Disability</p> | <p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a lot' because of a physical or mental health problem.</p> <p>12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited 'a little' because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)</p> | None | | |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|------|--|--|
| Gender reassignment | 0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans women (2021 Census). | None | | |
| Marriage and civil partnership | 40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married. 0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnerships of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnerships with the opposite sex (2021 Census). | None | | |
| Pregnancy and maternity | The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5. | None | | |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------|--|--|
| <p>Race</p> | <p>In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth’s population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census)</p> <p>People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census)</p> <p>92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).</p> | <p>None</p> | | |
| <p>Religion or belief</p> | <p>48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census).</p> <p>Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth’s population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).</p> | <p>None</p> | | |
| <p>Sex</p> | <p>51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).</p> | <p>None</p> | | |
| <p>Sexual orientation</p> | <p>88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).</p> | <p>None</p> | | |

SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

| Human Rights | Implications | Mitigation Actions | Timescale and responsible department |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | |

SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

| Equality objectives | Implications | Mitigation Actions | Timescale and responsible department |
|--|--------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <p>Work together in partnership to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promote equality, diversity and inclusion ▪ facilitate community cohesion ▪ support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together | None | | |
| <p>Give specific consideration to care experienced people to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing.</p> | None | | |
| <p>Build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves.</p> | None | | |
| <p>Support diverse communities to feel confident to report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.</p> | None | | |

This page is intentionally left blank