



Oversight and Governance

Chief Executive's Department

Plymouth City Council

Ballard House

Plymouth PL1 3BJ

T 01752 305155

www.plymouth.gov.uk/democracy

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Delegated Decisions

Delegated Executive/Officer Decisions

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

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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 Nick Kelly, Leader of the Council:

- I.1. URGENT DECISION - Household Support Fund: Expenditure Plan **(Pages 1 - 38)**


EXECUTIVE DECISIONmade by a **Cabinet Member****REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER**

Executive Decision Reference Number – L18 21/22

Decision				
1	Title of decision: Household Support Fund: Expenditure Plan			
2	Decision maker (Cabinet member name and portfolio title): Councillor Nick Kelly, Leader of Plymouth City Council			
3	Report author and contact details: Rachel Silcock, Community Empowerment Lead, 01752 307176			
4	Decision to be taken: To approve the Household Support Fund spending plan as outlined in the attached report			
5	Reasons for decision: Funding from central government for the Household Support Grant was confirmed on the 6 th October to support vulnerable households during the winter months including with food, energy and other essentials costs. The attached plan describes the proposals for the use of this fund to target people at risk of fuel and financial insecurity, based on the learning from similar grant funding received last winter. This plan needs to be returned to the DWP by October 29 th .			
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, with at least 50% of the funding targeted on households with children and young people. To not use or accept this funding would be to the detriment of Plymouth people. Option 2: Proposed plan attached with areas for expenditure based on previous experience of providing this type of support			
7	Financial implications and risks: The funding is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. The total grant for the Council is £2,294,796.82, to cover the winter of 2021/22. There are no other financial implications for Plymouth City Council			
8	Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which: 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	

			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
			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 Forward Plan of Key Decisions			
9	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 food.	
10	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)		None	
Urgent decisions				
11	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes	√	(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No		(If no, go to section 13a)
12a	Reason for urgency: We were notified of this expenditure on October 6 th and there is a requirement that an expenditure plan is returned to government by October 29 th .			
12b	Scrutiny Chair Signature:	Approved by email	Date	27/10/2021
	Scrutiny Committee name:	Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
	Print Name:	Councillor Chris Penberthy		
Consultation				
13a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes		
		No	√	(If no go to section 14)
13b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?			
13c	Date Cabinet member consulted			

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	√					
15	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Ruth Harrell					
		Job title	Director of Public Health					
		Date consulted	21st October 2021					
Sign-off								
16	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	DS63 21/22					
		Finance (mandatory)	djn.21.22.139					
		Legal (mandatory)	MS/22.10.21					
		Human Resources (if applicable)	N/A					
		Corporate property (if applicable)	N/A					
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A					
Appendices								
17	Ref.	Title of appendix						
	A	Household Support Fund Paper						
	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 publication by virtue of Part I 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)				
		No	√					
		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	27 October 2021			
Print Name	Councillor Nick Kelly, Leader of Plymouth City Council						

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND



Background

On 6th October 2021 the DWP announced a fund of £421 million for local authorities to support those most in need over the winter 'during the final stages of economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic'. Plymouth's allocation of the Household Support Fund is £2,294,796.82

The DWP guidance states that Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in the guidance. The expectation is that it 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

Authorities have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food, or issuing grants to third parties

The DWP guidance further advises:

- 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
- Funds should be spent or committed before 31 March 2022 and cannot be held over for future usage.
- At least 50% of the funding is for vulnerable households with children. The remainder of the funding (up to 50%) is available for vulnerable households without children (including individuals).

During the first phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, over the winter 2020/21, the government funded two similar programmes: the Emergency Food & Essential Supplies grant and the Winter Grant. In addition, further funding was also received for holiday food for children at Easter and summer 2021.

The following is a summary of the outcomes from these programmes which will inform the implementation of the Household Support Fund:

Emergency Food & Essential Supplies Grant 2020/21

- A food aid co-ordinator was funded and continues to be in place, linking food aid organisations to training, mapping food aid in the city, providing co-ordination of food supply and providing data to the Local Authority
- The Aid Redistribution Centre (ARC) in Honicknowle was funded as a stop-gap venue for food surplus storage from supermarkets such as the Co-op and Sainsburys, while a FareShares depot is in the process of being set up by December 2021
- 36 grants worth a total of £140,957 went to a range of smaller and grassroots organisations who distribute food to particularly vulnerable groups
- Funding went to 3 projects to support people to increase their incomes and sustainable alternatives such as growing and cooking food: Advice Plymouth, Grow, Share, Cook and the Healthy Start take-up campaign
- A report into future co-operative models of food supply is due to launch in November 2021

Winter Grant 2020/21

School Holiday food: PCC purchased and distributed eVoucher codes for schools, Early Years (EY) settings and entitled Further Education (FE) students either on the Free School

Meals Register or considered to be at risk of hardship and food poverty. For Christmas 2020, February half-term and Easter, eVoucher codes to the value of £15.00 per week for each child or young person could be redeemed at Sainsbury's, Tesco, Morrison's, Asda, M&S Food and Waitrose. At PCC request, Aldi was added to the portfolio of supermarkets from February half-term onwards

Other vulnerable groups:

- £8,723 allocated for white goods for the homeless via Community Connections;
- Community Connections and Caring for Carers distributed winter warmth packs to young and adult carers
- Community Connections distributed food and essentials to Asylum Seekers and Refugees
- A further £76k was distributed to food aid organisations via a small grants programme

Energy: Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) distributed £290k worth of support for energy costs as follows:

- Grants for fuel bills
- Prepayment meter vouchers
- Boiler repairs/gas safety checks
- Winter warmth packs - blankets, oil filled radiators etc. for distribution and for partners like the Red Cross, Covid volunteers, Children's Centres

Impact of COVID and Rationale for use of Grant

In June 2021 Devon County Council commissioned some research into food insecurity which included a primary research survey of residents. The research demonstrated that COVID has had a negative impact on the food security status of many households. The main groups at risk are low income households with children, in particular single parents and those with higher numbers of children, and people with mental health issues. This is also the outcome of national research which suggests that this will also be the case in Plymouth. The research recommended that there are creative ways to reduce the feelings of shame associated with needing food aid such as:

- Combining food support with other activities such as a drop-in café
- Emphasize the waste reduction element of food redistribution
- Pre-emptively identifying families through schools before they reach crisis point
- Increasing the extent to which families can choose the contents of their own food parcels
- Encouraging community larders where people can pick up food surplus locally – a 'sharing' culture

We will use this above research in our grant making process as recommended below.

It is difficult to provide people with direct funding towards their water bills as South West Water provide their own support to vulnerable groups, such as reduced tariffs etc. However, it is likely that if people are supported with reducing their fuel bills then this will leave them with additional disposable income to pay for their water. Whilst the Household Support Grant cannot be used for debt advice, Advice Plymouth have been raising awareness within local food aid organisations about their benefits and debt advice services and they work closely with PEC. We can continue to promote these services during this winter for people in water debt.

As has been flagged in the media, there is likely to be a significant increase in energy bills over the next few months. This will particularly affect people when their winter bills arrive in February/March. It is therefore proposed to allocate a significant proportion of funding to this element of the programme.

Household Support Grant Recommendations:

Due to the upcoming October half-term and the urgent need to ensure families with children can access food, it has already been agreed to allocate funding for food vouchers via an Executive

Decision signed by the Leader for delivery by Wonde Limited, to a maximum value of £1m for the school holidays. This will cover October half-term, Christmas, February half-term and Easter. The proposal is to purchase eVoucher codes for use in supermarkets to the value of £15 per week per child or young person. We are waiting for confirmation from the DWP that we can purchase eVoucher codes for Easter 2022 as this falls in April, outside of the timescales of the grant, however, indications from a conference call with the DWP are that this will be acceptable. The number of children expected to benefit each week is between 11,000 and 12,000. The food vouchers will be directed to those children on the Free School Meals register or considered to be at risk of hardship and food poverty. The new voucher company have a longer list of supermarkets than previously.

Recommendation for use of Household Support Grant from October 2021 to March 31st 2022 in addition to school holiday food, as follows:

The proposed budget is based on the expenditure from last winter, but with some increases in particular for energy costs. It is also proposed to hold back some funding as a 'contingency' which will enable the position to be reviewed in the New Year and also to respond to any emerging needs. This will also enable a decision to be made on whether or not to fund Community Meals based on the available budget.

1. To open a grants scheme for Food and other Essential Supplies which will have the following aims:
 - (i) To encourage organisations to consider ways in which they can reduce the stigma that people feel in needing food aid as outlined above
 - (ii) To increase the capacity of smaller and grassroots organisations to cope with likely increased demand for food aid during the winter as people face increases in the cost of living and fuel bills
 - (iii) To provide funding to organisations who are able to reach particularly vulnerable groups of people including: the newly unemployed and those applying for Universal Credit, the homeless, frail older people, families with young children on low incomes, people with disabilities, mental health issues and long-term conditions, Refugees, Asylum Seekers with no recourse to public funds and the financially insecure. To also ensure that anchor organisations such as Wellbeing Hubs and Children's Centres can distribute food to local people and families who are struggling. All of this funding will be awarded with agreed outcomes, for example, to increase the opening hours of the food banks and the number of times that people can access support.
 - (iv) To support organisations which are developing self-help approaches to food, in particular growing and cooking food, food clubs, community larders etc
2. To fund the administration costs of Food Plymouth to provide support to the food grant application process, in particular supporting smaller food aid organisations to apply and providing advice on sustainable models
3. To fund Plymouth Energy Community to provide support as previously:
 - Grants for fuel bills
 - Prepayment meter vouchers
 - Boiler repairs/gas safety checks
 - Winter warmth packs - blankets, oil filled radiators etc. for distribution and for partners like the Red Cross, Covid volunteers, Children's Centres
4. Carers – Adults and Young Carers

To fund winter warmth and essentials packs as a ‘thank you’ to adult and young carers and to keep their fuel bills down, to contain for example quilts, pillows, hot water bottles, clothing etc

5. Community Connections – Homeless and ASRs
White goods and help with fuel debt to enable people to move on from B&B and temporary accommodation; help with emergency housing costs (rent) within the scope of the grant
6. Housing costs – there is an element of the fund allocated to this and proposals will be worked up for how this will be used. It is unlikely that it can be used to top-up the Discretionary Housing Payments fund, but could be used for people who are not eligible to apply to that fund who have rent arrears.
7. Community Meals – to be decided based on available budget

Table 1. Household Support Grant - Breakdown of Funding

All of these budget figures are based on indicative costs and will be flexed up and down depending on emerging need

Element	Funding / £
Purchase of eVouchers for school holiday periods	1,050,000
Food, Essentials, and Wider essentials Grants	208,000
Housing grants (not eligible for DHP)	60,000
Community Connections – care leavers, homeless and ASRs	20,000
Carers	30,000
Plymouth Energy Community	500,000
Community Meals	25,000
Contingency/unallocated	229,500
Administration at 7.5%	172,300
Total	£2,294,800

Appendix I: Grants Scheme

Eligibility

Grants will only go to organisations not to individuals. Grants will be given to constituted groups, Charities and social enterprises who can provide food and essential items to individuals and families in need either through buying, storage or distribution; or who are providing sustainable approaches to food such as growing and cooking food

- a. Open to any organisation that can help to achieve the aims and objectives listed
- b. The organisation will need to be constituted, not for profit and have a bank account

Delivery

- a. Web-page on POD
- b. PCC Email address for information/help
 - i. FAQs
 - ii. Record keeping
- c. Use PCC Firmstep for Grant Application and distribution.

- d. Authorisation panel membership to be decided – will need to include a minimum of Food Plymouth, the Director for Public Health, Families and Children representative, Economic Development Representative to provide business support.

Further information for grant applicants:

- Maximum amount of grant awarded will be £10k, but most grants will be smaller than this
- The money to be spent by March 2022
- We expect applicants to demonstrate how this funding will provide additional support to those in need through an expanded service or an increase in numbers. The funding will not pay for current levels of activity
- Successful applicants will need to keep records, detailing expenditure, evidence of impact and compliance against national grant conditions

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Household Support Fund: – Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England

Introduction

1. £421 million has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need this winter during the final stages of economic recovery. This funding covers the period 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 inclusive. Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in this guidance and the accompanying grant determination. The expectation is that it 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 Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is providing funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs), under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to households most in need. It is important to stress this covers a wide range of vulnerable households including those with children of all ages and those without children. **Note: County Councils and Unitary Authorities will be referred to as ‘Authorities’ throughout the remainder of this guidance.**
2. Authorities have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food, or issuing grants to third parties (with the exception of debt advice provision). Authorities have the local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those most in need. County Councils are expected to work together with District Councils to provide support and ensure the funding meets its objectives by identifying those most in need.
3. This guidance sets out the required collaboration between DWP, Authorities, including their delivery partners, such as District Councils and charitable organisations etc., to successfully meet the policy intent within the agreed framework. It also provides the constraints that Authorities need to work within and the distribution of funding and reporting arrangements.
4. 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. Authorities have access to DWP’s Searchlight portal which provides information on individual citizens’ entitlement to (and confirms receipt of) DWP welfare benefits. From June 2021 we started to provide Authorities with information relating to Universal Credit claims with limited capability for work or, earnings below the free school meals and free prescription thresholds in their area. Authorities may find this information useful in identifying those most in need.
5. However, 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.

6. This guidance applies to Authorities in England only and should be read in conjunction with the Household Support Fund Grant Determination issued alongside this guidance.

Communication

7. The Authority must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases.

Objective and key principles

8. The objective of the Household Support Fund is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support this winter as the economy recovers.
9. This is a new grant and underspends from previous DWP grants cannot be carried forward.
10. Funds should be spent or committed before 31 March 2022 and cannot be held over for future usage.
11. When administering this scheme, you are encouraged to adopt the following principles:
 - use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need, taking into account a wide range of information;
 - use the funding from 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food, energy and water bills, and other related essentials. You can also use the funding to support households who are struggling to afford wider essentials;
 - 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, subject to the provisions at paragraph 17 below.
 - This includes payments made, or committed to, by the Authority or any person acting on behalf of the Authority, from 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022. For example, this would allow any vouchers issued before the end of the funding period to be redeemed in April 2022. All authorities are encouraged to ensure that any vouchers issued are redeemed before the end of the scheme, or shortly thereafter, or consider recycling unused vouchers;
 - work together with District Councils including, where necessary and appropriate, other local services, such as social and care workers to help identify and support households within the scope of the scheme.
12. When deciding how to help people, you should consider:
 - how you plan to provide support to vulnerable households, i.e. paying into bank accounts, use of cash and vouchers;
 - any risks associated with these payment methods – see section Managing the risk of fraud.

Working with other organisations

13. Authorities should develop a 'local eligibility framework and approach' to enable them to distribute grant funding that best supports households most in need. At least 50% of the funding is for vulnerable households with children (see the definition of a child under paragraph 21). The remainder of the funding (up to 50%) is available for vulnerable households without children (including individuals).
14. Authorities have flexibility to develop a local delivery approach that best fits the scheme's objectives. Where Authorities choose to work with multiple organisations to provide a local delivery network or where Authorities engage with District Councils to deliver this grant on their behalf, detailed arrangements and funding should be made available to those organisations as soon as possible so that support for vulnerable households can be provided as soon as is practically possible.
15. County Councils are expected to work collaboratively with District Councils and other organisations in their area who may come into contact with those households who are eligible and would benefit from this grant. Authorities that do not have the mechanisms in place to administer this grant should consider whether District Councils are better placed to do so on their behalf. If Authorities decide to engage with District Councils in this way they are encouraged to do so as quickly as possible to ensure roles, responsibilities and effective arrangements are put in place to deliver the scheme promptly and efficiently. Where Authorities are working with Third Party Organisations (TPOs), this should be done on an objectively fair, transparent and non-discriminatory basis, having regard to the time available to deliver the scheme.

Establishing eligibility

16. Authorities have the flexibility within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility. Authorities can request applications for support or can proactively identify households who may benefit or can take a mixture of the two approaches. There is no requirement for Authorities to undertake a means test or conduct a benefit check unless this specifically forms part of the Authority's local eligibility criteria. However, in relation to housing costs, Authorities must establish whether other forms of support are available to the household, such as Discretionary Housing Payments. In accordance with their general legal duties, Authorities must have a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining their approach including how they are defining eligibility and how households access the scheme. We expect Authorities to review any existing approach and to have a strong rationale for their targeting so that funding is available to the households who most need it.
17. Awards must be based on the following framework:
 - 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;

- Eligible spend includes:
 - Food. The Fund should primarily be used to provide support with food whether in kind or through vouchers or cash.
 - Energy and water. The Fund should also primarily be used to support with energy bills for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. It can also be used to support with water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, and sanitary purposes and sewerage.
 - Essentials linked to energy and water. The Fund can be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy and water (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.), in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access food, energy and water.
 - Wider essentials. The Fund can be used to support with wider essential needs not linked to energy and water should Authorities consider this appropriate in their area. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive.
 - Housing Costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Fund can be used to support housing costs. Where eligible, ongoing housing support for rent must be provided through the housing cost element of Universal Credit (UC) and Housing Benefit (HB) rather than the Household Support Fund. In addition, eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) must first be considered before emergency housing support is offered through the Household Support Fund. The Authority must also first consider whether the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
 - In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, households in receipt of HB, UC, or DHPs can still receive housing cost support through the Household Support Fund if it is deemed necessary by their Authority. However, the Fund should not be used to provide housing support on an ongoing basis or to support unsustainable tenancies.
 - Individuals in receipt of some other form of housing support could still qualify for the other elements of the Household Support Fund, such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials.

- The Fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support, though homeowners could still qualify for the other elements of the Fund (such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials). Where a homeowner is having difficulty with their mortgage payments, they should contact their lender as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances as lenders will have a set procedure to assist.
- The Fund can exceptionally and in genuine emergency be used to provide support for historic rent arrears built up prior to an existing benefit claim for households already in receipt of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. This is because these arrears are excluded from the criteria for Discretionary Housing Payments. However, support with rent arrears is not the primary intent of the fund and should not be the focus of spend.
- Reasonable administrative costs. This includes reasonable costs incurred administering the scheme. These include for example:
 - staff costs
 - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme
 - web page design
 - printing application forms
 - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production
- Eligible spend does not include:
 - Advice services such as debt advice;
 - Mortgage costs.
- It is expected that the focus of support should be on food and bills and that support for housing costs should only be given in exceptional cases of genuine emergency. Beyond this, Authorities have discretion to determine the most appropriate scheme for their area, based on their understanding of local need and with due regard to equality considerations.
- Individual awards can be whatever type and amount is deemed appropriate by Authorities for the receiving household, bearing in mind the overall spend eligibility priorities listed above and the risk of fraud and error. Awards to any given household can cover only one of the spend eligibility categories listed above, or can cover several.
- Authorities should not make Household Support Fund eligibility conditional on being employed or self-employed, or directly linked to a loss of earnings from employment or self-employment. This will ensure that there is no National Insurance Contribution liability payable on any payments by either the claimant, the Authority or employer.

Funding overlap

18. Authorities should consider household circumstances when making a decision to spend this grant. Households may be receiving other forms of support, and this should be taken into account to avoid duplicating provision where possible. However, families receiving other forms of assistance are not excluded from receiving support through this grant.

Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds

19. Authorities can provide a basic safety net support to an individual, regardless of their immigration status, if there is a genuine care need that does not arise solely from destitution, for example if:

- there are community care needs
- they have serious health problems
- there is a risk to a child's wellbeing

20. The rules around immigration status have not changed. Authorities must use their judgement to decide what legal powers and funding can be used to support individuals who are ineligible for public funds or statutory housing assistance.

Definitions

21. For the purpose of this grant (and without prejudice to other schemes):

- The definition of a child is any person:
 - who will be under the age of 19 as at 31 March 2022 or
 - a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided.

22. Where an eligible child lives on his or her own, they are a household that includes a child covered in the 50% allocation for households with children.

23. Households which include a person aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and/or care leavers may still be eligible for grant support however that support falls within the 50% allocation to households without children.

24. There is no prescriptive definition of essentials. Authorities have discretion to assess what is reasonable to assist those in genuine need this winter with regard to the examples above.

25. Third party organisations may include but are not limited to:

- Registered charities and voluntary organisations
- Schools
- Food banks
- General Practitioners
- Care organisations

Access to data

26. The Household Support Fund is being classified as Local Welfare Provision (LWP). The provision of DWP data to LAs is under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 'Department for Work and Pensions and local authorities (Access, handling, exchange and protection of Department for Work and Pensions' and HM Revenue and Customs' data)'.
27. Local authorities who have signed and returned the relevant section (Annex C) of the current DWP/LA MoU have legal permission to access DWP's Searchlight portal and specific UC data via a monthly data share for the purpose of this grant.
28. LAs will need to ensure they sign future iterations of the MoU and the appropriate Annex to continue to have the legal permission to access the below data sources for Local Welfare Provision.
29. Staff accessing Searchlight will need to be registered with the Employee Authentication System (EAS). Further information on Searchlight can be found in the local authority Searchlight Training Pack available in the Searchlight folder on Glasscubes (the LA/DWP online collaboration tool). If your Authority needs to discuss access to Glasscubes, contact DWP at LAWELFARE.LASUPPORT@DWP.GOV.UK

DWP Searchlight

30. This portal provides information on individual citizens' entitlement to (and confirms receipt of) DWP welfare benefits. Therefore, this data can be used to help Authorities identify those families and individuals to whom to target this support. Authorities may also wish to establish if other forms of support are available to the household. In relation to housing costs they must do so including by checking whether the household could receive Discretionary Housing Payments The Authority must also first consider if the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
31. Authorities do not have permission for the purposes of this scheme to access the 'Income' data provided on Searchlight for the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.
32. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential customers who may be eligible for the scheme from their own records, they can access Searchlight to verify each claimant's DWP benefit entitlement (although benefit entitlement is not a condition of support).

UC data share

33. We are providing Authorities with details of UC claimants in their Authority whose income is below the Free School Meal and Free Prescription thresholds for both individuals and summary level by Ward. We are also providing Authorities with details of UC claimants with a limited capability for work both at individual level and summary level by Ward. The data is provided monthly via Transfer Your File.
34. We are also providing 2 UC claim data shares on a monthly basis.

File one – contains the National Insurance number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants within the LA area and:

- income below the thresholds of £7,400 per year for Free School Meals and income below the Free Prescription threshold of £935 per month as identified in their last UC assessment period;
- those with a Limited Capability for Work indicator within the last assessment period; and
- the number of children in the household.

File two – contains aggregate data showing those people at or below the:

- Free School Meal income threshold;
- Free Prescription income threshold; and
- are in the Limited Capability for Work group.

For a full breakdown of the file contents see **Annex B**

35. Authorities also have access to their own non-DWP data to help identify vulnerable households who may be eligible for support under this scheme.

Reporting requirements

36. Authorities are required to make two Statements of Grant Usage and management information (MI) returns – **see the Grant Determination**. The deadline for completing these returns is shown in the table below. Completed MI returns should be sent to LAWELFARE.PDT@DWP.GOV.UK

37. An interim MI return is required by 21 January 2022 for spend for the period 06 October 2021 to 31 December 2021. The interim MI return will be used to determine eligible spend to 31 December 2021 and an interim grant payment will be made to your LA for this period when the information in your return has been verified.

38. A final MI return is required showing total spend from 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 by 22 April 2022. The final MI return will be used to determine total eligible spend to 31 March 2022 and a final grant payment will be made to your Authority for this period when the information in your return has been verified.

39. Authorities should use the standard MI reporting template provided, which incorporates the Statement of Grant Usage. For the purpose of this section:

- **Grant allocation** – refers to the amount of grant allocated to a TPO to distribute to vulnerable households.
- **Grant award or spend refers** to the amount provided or paid to vulnerable households under the remit of this grant.

MI return	Reporting period		Deadline
Interim MI return	From: 06 October 2021	To: 31 December 2021	Deadline: 21 January 2022
Final MI return	From: 06 October 2021	To: 31 March 2022	Deadline: 22 April 2022

40. It is the responsibility of Authorities to provide the MI returns to DWP. Failure to return the MI by the deadline may result in a delayed payment or a payment being refused.
41. Where Authorities (including District Councils) issue awards directly to vulnerable households they should either obtain information at source or via information or data they have access to, to complete the split of spend and number of awards across the eligibility criteria. i.e. households with and without children and food, energy bills, essentials linked to food and energy bills, wider essentials and (in exceptional circumstances) housing support. Where Authorities decide to deliver support to vulnerable households through TPOs they should use whatever information the TPO holds, or other available data, to split the level of spend and volume of awards across the eligibility criteria to the best of their ability.

The different elements of the MI template are shown below together with guidance on how to complete them.

Table 1

Table 1: Governance	Response
Local Authority (full name)	
Section 151 officer (name)	
Section 151 officer (email address)	
Is the section 151 officer / CFO copied into the return to DWP? (Y/N)	
Reporting Period	06/10/21-31/12/21
Approved signed off by	
LA Single Point of Contact	
Date Returned to DWP	

42. Each MI return must include your Section 151 Officer's name and email address to provide assurance on validation of funding spend. If they are the same contact, please input details in both response fields.
43. We also require you to copy your Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer into the email, providing this assurance when you return the MI template to DWP.
44. Please indicate that you have done this in row 4 of the table "Is the section 151 officer / CFO copied into the return to DWP?" If the MI is incomplete/incorrect it will be returned to the authority by the DWP for correction and re-submission which must also be copied to your Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer.

Table 2

Table 2: Total Awards	
Item	Spend (£s)
a) Total amount provided to vulnerable households	
b) Administration Costs	
c) Total spend (a+b)	

- **Total Amount provided to vulnerable households** – this is the total amount of the grant fund that has been paid/awarded to vulnerable households. It includes amounts paid by Authorities and by TPOs on behalf of Authorities. It should not include amounts allocated to TPOs that have not been spent during the reporting period.
- **Administration costs** – this includes reasonable costs incurred administering the scheme. These include for example:
 - staff costs
 - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme
 - web page design
 - printing application forms
 - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production
- **Total Spend** – this is the total of the above. It is the amount that will be used to determine the grant funding payment, from DWP to cover the full cost of administering the grant in your area. A single grant payment will be made in arrears on the receipt of a fully completed and verified MI return.

Table 3

	Table 3: Total Value of Awards split by Household Composition			
		a) Households with Children	b) Households without C children	c) Total (a+b)
Row1	Spend (£s)			
Row2	Volumes			

45. Table 3 relates to grant spend and the volume of awards made in relation to families with and without children. Rows 1 and 2 relate to grant awards made by Authorities (including District Councils) directly to vulnerable households, and grant awards to vulnerable households made by TPOs.

46. **Spend (£s)** - this is the amount paid/awarded to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. Authorities should make every effort to gather information to establish whether a child resides in the household (including being the only member of the household) in order to complete the template as fully as possible. This information is important for DWP to evaluate how successful the scheme has been in providing support to households with and without children.

47. Authorities should either gather information or check existing records they hold or have access to, to establish whether the household includes a child (as defined

above) and complete columns a and b accordingly. Responsibility for MI reporting rests with Authorities. Where Shire Counties pass grant allocations to District Councils, District Councils should pass the information relating to columns a and b to the County Council/Unitary Authority to collate the information and send one collated template to DWP.

48. **Volumes** - this is the number of individual/separate payments made to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. If multiple awards are made to the same household throughout the period of the scheme each award should be counted separately. Where an award is made to a household with multiple children, it should be classed as a single award.
49. **Reporting TPO Spend and TPO Volumes** - we acknowledge that some TPOs, for example, charitable and voluntary organisations such as food banks, have limited or no access to household information and may not be in a position to provide this information to the same level of accuracy as Authorities. We are therefore asking Authorities and TPOs to report the actual level of spend and the volume of awards across the different eligibility criteria in rows 1 and 2 to the best of their ability.

Table 4

Table 4: Total Value of Awards Split by Category							
		a) Food	b) Energy and Water	c) Essentials linked to Energy and Water	d) Wider Essentials	e) Housing Costs	e) Total (a+b+c+d+e)
Row 1	Spend (£s)						
Row 2	Volumes						

50. Table 4 relates to grant spend and the volume of awards made in relation to food, energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs.
51. Spend (£s) - this is the amount paid/awarded to vulnerable households in respect of each category.
52. Volumes - this is the number of individual/separate payments made to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. If multiple awards are made to the same household throughout the period of the scheme each award should be counted separately.
53. Rows 1 and 2 relate to awards/payments made directly to vulnerable households by Authorities including District Councils and grant funding spent by TPOs e.g. charitable and voluntary organisations.
54. TPO Spend and TPO Volumes - we acknowledge that some TPOs, for example, charitable and voluntary organisations have limited MI and may not be in a position to provide this information to the same level of accuracy as Authorities. We are therefore asking Authorities and TPOs to provide, the level of spend and the volume of awards across the different eligibility criteria in rows 1 and 2 to the best of their ability.
55. Total - the total spend in Table 2 row a, Table 3 Row 1 column c and Table 4 Row 1 column e should add up to the same amount.
56. When allocating spend and the volume of awards across the eligibility criteria please follow the guidance below.

57. Table 3 and Table 4 ask for spend and award volumes to be recorded against two sets of criteria. Therefore, the details of each award need to be recorded twice once against one set of criteria and then a second time against the other criteria. Shown below is a worked example of how the MI template should be completed.
58. The eligibility criterion is set against the category of spend, at least 50% for households with children. We are collecting information on food, energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs to provide ministers and interested bodies (e.g. the National Audit Office) assurance over how the Household Support Fund is being spent.
59. Authorities are asked to report and manage spend in relation to both these areas. For example, if a £100 award is made to a household with children for food, you would allocate £100 to the 'Households with children' section in Table 3 and £100 to the 'food' section in Table 4. You would also allocate one award in both these sections of Table 3 and Table 4.
60. Each award needs to be allocated twice – one allocation to each of the eligibility category tables so that when you report on the total spent on family composition and the total spent on the type of support, both eligibility criteria categories will total the amount you have paid. The total volume of awards in Table 3 and Table 4 should also be the same.

Additional guidance and examples when working with TPOs

61. Please include, where possible, the amount of spend across the following categories:
- households with or without children, and
 - energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs.
62. For example, if you have allocated:
- grant funding to a food bank to provide food to vulnerable people, establish the amount of that allocation the food bank has spent and enter the full amount spent under food as you know that the grant allocation has been spent in respect of food, and provide the split across households with and without children to the best of your ability in accordance with the example below.
 - grant funding to a charity that specialises in providing vulnerable children with clothing, establish the amount of that allocation the charity has spent and enter the full amount spent in 'households with children' and the full amount of the grant spent in 'wider essentials'. This is because you know that the purpose of the grant is for children and the nature of support is clothing which comes under wider essentials.
63. The amount of MI available will vary considerably across each TPO. Please use whatever information is already available or reasonable to collect to be as accurate as possible.
64. Shown below are some examples of how to complete the template.

Example 1

65. A food bank operates on an open basis where anyone can turn up and pick up food and supplies. This is not an award made directly to vulnerable households by an Authority. The cost is picked up by a TPO, for example, the food bank. The MI template should be completed as per guidance below.
66. The total value of grant spent and the volume of awards made by the charity or voluntary organisations providing the food bank should be entered in Table 3 and Table 4. The Authority or food bank provider will need to provide the split between households with and without children to the best of their ability.

Example 2

67. The Authority directly provides vouchers to vulnerable households. These could be redeemable at a number of food outlets including supermarkets or food banks. Food voucher amounts can vary depending on how many children reside in the household. Authorities are expected to collect or verify information to establish whether the award is made to a household with or without children. The MI template should be completed as follows:

- the value of awards should be entered in Table 3 in 'spend' row 1 column a and row 1 column b based on the information the Authority has been capturing to split spend across these categories;
- the volume of awards should be included in Table 3 row 2 (Volumes) column a and row 2 column b based on the information the Authority has been capturing to split the volume of awards spend across these categories;
- the value of awards should be entered in Table 4 row 1 column a because it relates to food;
- the volume of awards should be included in Table 4 row 2 (Volumes) column a because it relates to food;

DWP engagement

68. LA relationship managers from DWP's LA Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division will contact Authorities to provide support and gather information throughout the scheme. Examples where LA relationship managers will contact Authorities for initial compliance include:
- the MI templates have not been completed and returned;
 - the MI templates have not been copied to the Authority's S151 officer or CFO.
69. They will also contact Authorities where further clarification is needed in respect of the information provided on the MI reporting template, if for example:
- critical data is missing, or the data looks odd, or
 - the Authority is reporting a high value of awards where they have not been able to establish the household composition. We may need the Authority to explain why that is the case and provide supporting evidence.

- the Authority is reporting a high value of administration costs. We may need the Authority to explain why that is the case and provide supporting evidence.
- there is a significant gap between actual and allocated spend. We may need the Authority to explain why spend was so low.

70. They will look to identify good practice and identify case studies where appropriate.

71. They will also engage with Authorities around completion of the questionnaire issued with this guidance regarding delivery plans for the grant. Please complete and return this questionnaire to DWP by 29 October 2021.

72. DWP will also continue to engage with Authorities to respond to questions we receive via the designated inbox as quickly as possible.

73. Where Authorities work with District Councils and TPOs it is the responsibility of Authorities to collect and collate MI and complete one collated MI return and submit to DWP.

DWP funding arrangements

74. Household Support Fund is ring-fenced to be spent as detailed in this guidance and the accompanying grant determination, including the specific condition that at least 50% be spent on families with children. To ensure that the objectives of the fund are being met during the course of the grant and reduce administration costs for all concerned, including the need for DWP to recover underspend, grant payment will be made in arrears upon DWP being satisfied with the MI returns. This will enable DWP to adjust the amount of the payment based on the MI returns.

75. Payment of the grant from DWP to Authorities will be made in arrears after the interim MI return in January 2022 and the final MI return at the end of grant period in April 2022 after we have verified the MI. If an Authority feels that the payment arrangements will create significant cash flow problems please notify DWP as soon as possible with supporting evidence. Both an interim and a final MI return will be required and grant payments will be made in respect of the periods 06 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 and 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

76. MI returns **must be endorsed by the S151** officer in accordance with their statutory assurance responsibility in order for the grant payment to be made by copying your Chief Financial Officer and Section 151 Officer into the email.

77. The guidance for completion is provided on a separate tab within the MI template.

78. The definition of spend includes grant funding that has been provided to vulnerable households, within the scope of the eligibility criteria, and within the period of the scheme 06 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

79. Spend also includes 'committed spend'. For the purpose of this scheme committed spend relates to grant funding that has been spent and delivered to vulnerable households even though the vulnerable household may not have used their grant funding. An example would be the award of a food voucher on 31 March 2022 to a vulnerable household. It would be unreasonable to expect the family to be restricted to redeem the voucher on the day of receipt. In this example spend has been committed by the Authority, support has been provided to a vulnerable household and, therefore, should be included as eligible grant spend. It would be

reasonable to expect the vulnerable household to redeem the food voucher during the month following the end of the scheme.

80. However, committed spend does not include large volumes of food vouchers, procured quite late in the scheme, which cannot be distributed to vulnerable households within the period of the scheme.

81. Authorities that plan to order vouchers in bulk should attempt to be realistic in the volumes ordered to avoid holding large stocks of unused vouchers at the end of the scheme. Alternatively, Authorities may want to consider:

- purchasing vouchers on a sale or return basis, so that they can return any unused vouchers, or
- if the Authority wants to use the vouchers after the end of the Household Support Fund scheme they should be funded through other means.

82. The definition of committed spend for the purpose of this scheme does not affect its accounting treatment in accordance with normal rules.

83. The timetable for provision of funding and MI returns is as follows:

Funding:

Payment	Amount (%)	Date	Notes
Interim	Actual grant spend up to 100% of grant allocation*	February/March 2022	Payment made in arrears
Final	Actual grant spend up to 100% of grant allocation*	May/June 2022	Payment made in arrears

*subject to eligible spend criteria

Managing the risk of fraud

84. Fraudsters can target funds of this type.

85. As with any welfare payment to vulnerable recipients there is a risk of fraud, as recipients might appear to be eligible when they are not.

86. To help mitigate this risk, Authorities should involve District Councils and other organisations chosen to administer this scheme to help identify vulnerable families, households and individuals.

87. Authorities wishing to work with TPOs to deliver the scheme must carry out suitable due diligence checks to ensure they are viable and able to deliver the support. So,

for example, ensuring all charities are registered and taking extra caution if they are new organisations.

88. Authorities are also encouraged to ensure checks are in place to verify the identity of those eligible.
89. Authorities are encouraged to ask neighbouring authorities to work together to help prevent double provision and/or no provision – especially where allocation of provision is by school in one area and by residential address in another.
90. It is for Authorities to decide how payments are made to recipients. However, when making decisions, Authorities should consider the risks involved. Although they still carry fraud risks, vouchers should be used instead of cash where possible as this helps to mitigate the risk of the money being spent by the recipient on things outside of the policy intent.
91. Authorities should ensure that they consider and put in place suitable controls when making use of vouchers as part of this scheme. Authorities may wish to consider restricting access to these vouchers; and also consider restricting usage to ensure that they cannot be spent outside the intended scope of this Scheme.
92. It is important to be vigilant to fraud and error risks in relation to housing costs, and to assure yourself that the appropriate checks are in place. Authorities should take appropriate steps to ensure they take into consideration household income and rent liability which may be requested and reviewed as set out in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the grant determination. We expect Authorities to work with district councils to ensure support is going to those with genuine need and to help minimise the risk of fraud on housing support.
93. Where possible, any payments made into a bank account should be in the same name of the person that is eligible for that payment. Authorities have access to a range of data sources, and checks can be carried out against this data to verify the identity of the recipient. Authorities are also encouraged to use existing tools at their disposal to verify personal bank accounts.
94. If the Authority has any grounds for suspecting financial irregularity in the use of any grant paid under this Determination, it must notify the department immediately, explain what steps are being taken to investigate the suspicion and keep the Department informed about the progress of the investigation. For these purposes 'financial irregularity' includes fraud or other impropriety, mismanagement, and the use of grant for purposes other than those for which it was provided.
95. If you suspect fraud, you should notify DWP of the:
 - number of instances
 - total amount lost
96. This will help DWP identify any emerging threats and share them with other Authorities, so they can take steps to prevent and detect any fraud in their schemes.

Complying with Subsidy (previously State Aid) rules

97. The funding is intended to benefit households most in need of support with food, energy bills, related essentials, wider essentials and (exceptionally) housing costs

as the economy recovers this winter. The funds should not be used for any economic undertaking.

98. Whichever way you use the funding, including where you work in partnership with others, you should consider all Subsidy rules (previously state aid) issues. Check whether the 'de minimis' regulation exception applies. You should also follow government procurement procedures where relevant.

Administration costs

99. The Household Support Fund funding allocation includes reasonable administration costs to enable Authorities to deliver the scheme. Authorities should deduct their administration costs from the total allocation to determine the amount remaining.
100. In all cases, Authorities should keep administrative costs to a reasonable level.
101. Administration costs for each Authority will be published on www.gov.uk alongside detail of all spend related to this scheme.

Public Sector Equality Duty

102. In accordance with the public sector equality duty, DWP has had due regard for the potential equalities impacts of this grant.
103. Under the Equality Act 2010, all public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. For the purposes of this grant, you should consider how any support that helps people facing severe financial hardship impacts those with characteristics protected under the Equality Act.
104. When developing your local delivery frameworks, you should ensure people are not disadvantaged or treated unfairly by this scheme. For example, any application process should be easy to access and to navigate.

Questions and answers

105. Questions and answers can be found at Annex A

Contact

106. If you have any queries about the content of this guidance or use of the funding, you can contact DWP: LA-PED.LAGRANTSPROJECTTEAM@DWP.GOV.UK

Annex A

Questions and answers

Q1. Why is DWP asking County Councils and Unitary Authorities to administer this instead of District Councils?

A1. County Councils and Unitary Authorities have a statutory duty regarding children and are generally responsible for Local Welfare Assistance. This is not to suggest that District Councils are not capable of delivering support. It reflects the focus of this grant and that support could take many, broad, forms and, therefore, the funding sits better with County Council and Unitary Authorities.

We expect County Council and Unitary Authorities to work with their district partners, particularly in relation to any support exceptionally provided with housing costs, as well as other organisations, as appropriate, to ensure the most effective support is delivered to as many vulnerable households as possible.

Q2. Is it acceptable to use the grant funding for Free School Meals?

A2. The Household Support Fund is not intended to replicate or replace Free School Meals and Authorities should avoid duplicating provision where possible.

However, Authorities have discretion over how they use the funding within the grant framework and within the stipulated time period.

Therefore, Authorities may choose to offer awards to families in receipt of Free School Meals over the entirety of the school holidays, if they consider this to be appropriate in their area.

Q3. Can the Scheme be used flexibly for more strategic activity such as advice provision around financial hardship?

A3. Advice provision is not included in the scope of this scheme.

Should Authorities choose to fund advice as part of their support they must do so through means other than the Household Support Fund.

Q4. Can we make multiple awards to the same people or families?

A4. A family or individual can be supported on multiple occasions throughout the lifetime of the scheme, should an Authority deem it to be necessary. However, each award should be reported separately. Although multiple awards to the same households are possible, funding should not be used to support unsustainable tenancies. Where eligible, ongoing housing support should be provided through the housing cost element of Universal Credit and through Housing Benefit – and if needed, through Discretionary Housing Payments.

Q5. Can Searchlight information be used by Authorities to help identify suitable recipients?

A5. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Universal Credit award information is available on Searchlight. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential claimants who may be eligible for the scheme from their own records, they can access Searchlight to verify those claimants' DWP benefit details.

DWP is sharing UC data with LAs each month which LAs can use to identify vulnerable households eligible for payments under the Household Support Fund.

Q6. Does there need to be a complaints and appeals process?

A6. The appeals process falls within each Authority's normal complaints and appeals process. Authorities will be responsible for making determinations on eligibility and as such will need to decide how they administer any complaints or appeals.

Q7. Are there any other sources of guidance?

A7. DWP will continue to update a comprehensive Q&A log based on questions raised by Authorities. This will be reissued in due course.

Q8. Why can't we carry over funding from the Covid Local Support Grant?

A8. The Covid Local Support Grant was a separate grant that ended on 30 September 2021.

This new scheme is targeted towards both individuals and families and is not related to Covid in the same way as the Covid Local Support Grant was.

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – COMMUNITY

COVID Winter Grant Scheme

STAGE I: What is being assessed and by whom?	
What is being assessed - including a brief description of aims and objectives?	<p>When considering this EIA it is important to have due regard to the public sector equalities duties imposed upon the Council by section 149 Equalities Act 2010.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are 9,900 (18.6%) children living in poverty, which is one in five. Data shows that 7,308 children under 16 are living in income deprived households with 79% living in workless households, indicating that they are more likely to be experiencing child poverty. For example, eight out of 10 children living in the Barne Barton neighbourhood are effected by income deprivation.</p> <p>The Household Support Grant has been agreed for the winter of 2021/22, to provide vulnerable people including households with families with support with food and fuel costs during the coldest months of the year.</p> <p>The Household Support Grant enables local authorities to provide extra support to the Free School Meals cohort, but also those families who have been identified by schools and early years settings as vulnerable to poverty.</p>
Responsible Officer	Ming Zhang, Service Director, Children, Young People and Families Ming.Zhang@plymouth.gov.uk
Department and Service	Children's Services, Strategic Cooperative Commissioning
Date of Assessment	12 th October 2021
Author	Emma Crowther, Strategic Commissioning Manager

STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact				
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback)	Any adverse impact?	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible?
Age	There 60,200 CYP aged 0-19 in the city (22.9% 2015). Of the 16 SW authorities, we have the fifth highest percentage of children and young people (under 18). CYP under 18 account for 19.8 per cent of our population, within this 88.8 per cent are under 16. In Plymouth there are 9,900 (18.6%) children living in poverty, which is one in five. Data shows that 7,308 children under 16 are living in income deprived households with 79% living in workless households, indicating that they are more likely to be experiencing child poverty.	No. Our strategic intentions confirm the ambition to truly give every child “A Bright Future” by commissioning and providing place based Integrated Children, Young People and Families services covering wellbeing, physical and mental health, social care and education. Children, young people and families will be supported to stay safe, healthy, achieve and aspire. The Household Support Grant will support our ambitions, during these challenging times, which includes support to other vulnerable groups	Provide assistance and support for our most vulnerable children, young people and families in our society, across the full range of ages.	October 2021 – May 2022 Ming Zhang
Disability	There are 3,142 children with disability. Plymouth schools report that of every 1,000 children 17.5 have a learning difficulty. A total of 31,164 people (from 28.5 per cent of	No adverse disability related impact has been identified.		October 2021 – May 2022 Ming Zhang

STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact				
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback)	Any adverse impact?	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible?
	households) declared themselves as having a long-term health problem or disability (national figure 25.7 per cent of households), compared with the total number of people with disabilities in UK (11,600,000). 10% of our population have their day-to-day activities limited a lot by a long-term health problem or disability. 1,297 adults registered with a GP in Plymouth have some form of learning disability (2013/14). There are 27166 adults with a disability in work. There are 23,407 carers aged between 18 and 64 in Plymouth known to our services. There are 17,937 state pension age people with disability. 2011.			
Faith, Religion or Belief	There is no specific CYP data for this category. However, data shows 32.9% of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. Those with a Hindi,	This projects & its work packages will not discriminate against faith, religion or belief as those affected will have social equality proactively		Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team Commissioning team

STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact				
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback)	Any adverse impact?	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible?
	Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh religion combined totalled less than 1%. 58.1% of those who responded declared themselves Christian. 0.8% declared that they were of Islam, 0.3% Buddhist; 0.2% Hindu; 0.1% Jewish; 0.1% Sikh. 0.5% of the population had a current religion that was not Christian, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, or Sikh such as Paganism or Spiritualism.	enhanced. The in-scope services and functions affected will work with vulnerable children, and families, irrespective of faith, religion or belief.		
Gender - including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	Analysis from the Office for National Statistics shows that one in five women (compared to 4% of men) have experienced some type of sexual assault since the age of 16. Survey results have shown that 59% of girls aged 13-21 have faced some form of sexual harassment at school or college in the past year and almost a third (29%) of 16-18 year old girls have experienced unwanted sexual touching at school.	The project and its work packages will not discriminate against gender, as those affected will have social equality proactively enhanced. The services affected by the requirements of the project and its work packages will work with all vulnerable CYP and families, irrespective of gender.		Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team/Public Health England Child Health Profiles

STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact				
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback)	Any adverse impact?	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible?
Gender Reassignment	There is no specific CYP data for this category, but the average age for presentation for reassignment of male-to-females is 40-49. For female-to-male the age group is 20-29, it is anticipated the number of CYP affected in the city is small.	No gender reassignment related impact has been identified. The services affected by the project and its work packages will work with all vulnerable CYP and families, regardless of gender reassignment.		Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team/Public Health England Child Health Profiles
Race	White British boys are less likely to do well than most Black and Minority Ethnic Communities (BAME) pupils. Pupils from Indian and Chinese communities outperform White British pupils whilst children from Black Afro Caribbean, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi communities do less well. Roma and Irish Traveller children do least well. Some areas of the city are more diverse than others: the area around the university, the city centre, Stonehouse and the East End are among the most diverse.	The in-scope services and functions affected will work with all vulnerable CYP and families, irrespective of race.	PCC will ensure service accessibility via on-going commissioning management. Appropriate measures need to be put in place to ensure that language barriers do not adversely affect person centred assessments and support.	Ongoing. Policy and Intelligence Team/Public Health England Child Health Profiles

STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact				
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback)	Any adverse impact?	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible?
Sexual Orientation -including Civil Partnership	There is no precise local data on numbers of Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual (LGB) CYP in Plymouth.	No adverse impact has been identified in services affected by the project or its work packages.		October 2021 – May 2022 Ming Zhang

STAGE 3: Are there any implications for the following? If so, please record 'Actions' to be taken		
Local Priorities	Implications	Timescale and who is responsible?
Reduce the inequality gap, particularly in health between communities.	<p>The actions identified above will positively impact on vulnerable CYP and families. This project aims to minimise the impact on outcomes of COVID and the winter season, by delivering food support to those that most need it.</p> <p>Vulnerable CYP and families will experience improved support, not only during the winter months, but beyond.</p> <p>Commissioning strategies, action plans and workforce development will continue to focus on innovation and integration between all the services that support vulnerable CYP & their families.</p>	October 2021 – May 2022 Ming Zhang
Good relations between different communities (community cohesion).	No adverse impact on community cohesion has been identified, as statutory requirements will enable vulnerable CYP and families to access good quality support and services whatever their circumstances.	October 2021 – May 2022 Ming Zhang

STAGE 3: Are there any implications for the following? If so, please record 'Actions' to be taken		
Local Priorities	Implications	Timescale and who is responsible?
Human Rights	It is important that all CYP and families are treated fairly, their views are taken into account and that their human rights have been respected. No adverse impact on human rights has been identified.	October 2021 – May 2022 Ming Zhang

STAGE 4: Publication			
		Date	
Director, Assistant Director/Head of Service approving EIA.	Ming Zhang		12 th October 2021

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