

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

Round 6 October 2024 to March 2025

Briefing note



BACKGROUND

On the 20 September, the City Council received the final grant determination and guidance for the next iteration of the HSF for the period 1 October to 31 March 2025

It is confirmed that Plymouth City Council will receive the same amount as for the last 5 rounds which will be £2,294,796.82 for six months to be spent or committed between October 1st and March 31st 2025.

The priorities for spend reflect existing city priorities:

- 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.

The following details the amount of funding will be allocated to each area of spend, not including administration costs.

PROPOSED DELIVERY PLAN

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

During the previous round of HSF 4 that there was an increasing number of children identified by the schools as needing this support. It has increased from 12,516 children to 13,000 children during the year 2023/24. This will have a significant impact on the amount of funding needed for these vouchers which leaves less money for other households in need, for example, people with high energy needs, people with physical disabilities or mental ill-health, carers, care leavers, pensioners, people at risk of homelessness and people needing crisis food support.

During the HSF5 delivery plan for 1 April to 30 September 2024, there were 9 weeks of school holidays, and it was therefore agreed to lower the amount on food vouchers (from £13 to £10 per voucher) to enable the remaining funds to be distributed elsewhere. Due to reduced number of school holidays (5 weeks) during the Winter period, we are now proposing to increase this once again to £13 reflect the need for additional and hot food for children over the winter period.

(ii) Energy

Grants for energy will be available through Citizens Advice Plymouth and Plymouth Energy Community (PEC). Distributing the bulk of energy support through these organisations will bring significant added values as the beneficiaries will have access to their on-going core offers of support, information and guidance.

(iii) Eligible Households, with an additional focus on Pensioners

An online application process via Citizens Advice Plymouth where eligible applicants will receive food and fuel vouchers, as well as help to purchase essential household goods. Citizens Advice will also employ an Advice Worker that will support the Council in using the Low-Income Family Tracker tool (LIFT) to identify households that live in the private

rented sector and have a cash shortfall, who may also be at risk of homelessness or who are in multiple debt, with a particular focus on people of pension age who are in cash shortfall but fall outside the eligibility for winter fuel payment. HSF can be targeted at these households alongside income maximisation and debt advice.

(iv) Eligible Households, Voluntary Sector targeted groups and Emergency Food

To target the following households as has been done in all previous rounds:

- Adult Carers, Veterans and households where there is a physical disability or mental ill-health via Improving Lives Plymouth;
- Families using the PAUSE and PDAS services to support their resettlement following trauma and domestic abuse.
- PATH for households in crisis or at risk of homelessness in the private rented sector, particularly single people
- Emergency Food for people in absolute crisis via the Soup Run, Plymouth Food banks, Provide Devon, Eldertree

(v) Community Connections

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. This work can also be supported by the LIFT dashboard.

(vi) Care Leavers, Young Carers and Children's Social Care families in need.

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

(vii) Warm & Welcoming Spaces

Grants to support the VCSE to deliver welcoming and warm spaces within the community. Applications will open on 15 October with a simple online application outlining clear criteria. Grants will be awarded to constituted, not for profit organisations, with experience in reaching vulnerable groups, distributing aid, and managing grant funds. As there are limited funds available, not all applications may be funded. Decisions will be based on the imperative to support a wide range of people who will be in need and provide a geographic and community spread. Therefore, some applications may not be funded, not because of quality, but because of the need to support a wide range of people and the Council may approach organisations to make an application should a gap in provision be identified after the submission deadline.