

**Report to:** Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability

**Date of meeting:** 11 September 2023

**By:** Director of Children's Services

**Title:** Household Support Fund (fourth round)

**Purpose:** To note the proposed Children's Services use of a proportion of the latest round of the Household Support Fund ("the Fund") and agree the development of a scheme to distribute grant funding as set out in the report.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the proposed use of £1,896,000 of the Household Support Fund, to provide support to households with children between 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024; and
  - 2) Delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to implement the scheme.
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### **1 Background**

1.1 On 17 November 2022, Government announced in the Autumn Statement that the Fund would be extended for a fourth time to support those most in need. The extension runs from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

1.2 East Sussex County Council has been allocated £7,793,568 for the new grant period.

1.3 The Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability and the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health approved the use of 50% of the Fund for the six-month period 1 April 2023 – 30 September 2023 at their meetings on 27 February 2023 and 2 March 2023. It was agreed that a further report setting out proposals for the use of the Fund for the last six months would be considered in September 2023.

1.4 The criteria for Fund are broadly the same as for the previous round:

- Groups intended to benefit are households with children, households with pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households. Informal i.e. unpaid carers are also included in this round, as a group that Local Authorities should try to reach.
- There is an emphasis on providing support to households that are in the most need – particularly those who may not be eligible for other support that the Government has made available. The Government expects residents to be able to contact authorities to enquire as to eligibility.
- The type of eligible spending remains the same as in previous rounds: helping households with everyday essentials, including food, water, energy bills and, in exceptional cases, with housing costs. The only addition is the inclusion of the provision of supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt and benefit advice, which has become eligible for funding under this scheme. The guidance highlights that energy needs might be of particular concern and that *"Local Authorities should prioritise supporting households with the cost of energy."*
- The guidance also indicates that at least part of the spending should be application based, i.e. that residents should have the opportunity to request support. The definition is flexible, and applications can be made directly via the authority or via third parties.

## 2 Supporting information

2.1 Distributing the grant to the same partners that East Sussex worked with last time would ensure continuity in the allocation of support to the full range of beneficiary groups. The proposal for distributing the grant to partners takes into account the widening impact of cost-of-living pressures.

2.2 The proposed distribution of the grant to households in need for this round is set out in the table below:

**Allocations Table - (1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024)**

Partner	Amount (£)	Note
Free School Meal eligible pupils 20,575 (2-19 years) Huggo food vouchers	1,646,000	£15 for October half term £15 for February half term £50 for Christmas holidays  Total of £80 (40% of total funding)
Children's Services Teams	250,000	
Voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) partners	700,000	
Districts and Boroughs	1,050,568	
Foodbanks and Food Partnerships	250,000	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,896,568</b>	

2.3 The portion of the Fund that the Children's Service's Department will manage is £1,896,000. The proposal is to provide food vouchers to eligible free school meal pupils of £15 for each of the October and February half-terms, and £50 for the Christmas holiday period. There are approximately 20,575 pupils eligible for free school meals. £250,000 will also be distributed via Children's Services teams directly to vulnerable families in need.

## 3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The scheme provides a further opportunity to extend support to households with children, households with pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households within East Sussex who are experiencing financial challenges.

3.2 The Lead Member is recommended to approve the proposed use of £1,896,000 of the Fund, to provide support to households with children and to delegate to the Director of Children's Services authority to implement the scheme.

**ALISON JEFFERY**

**Director of Children's Services**

Contact

Contact Officer: Jessica Stubbings, Head of Education: Participation and Planning  
Email [jessica.stubbings@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:jessica.stubbings@eastsussex.gov.uk)

Telephone            07827 084705

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None