

Report to: Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Date of meeting: 15 September 2023

By: Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Title: Household Support Fund (Four)

Purpose: To note the proposed Adult Social Care and Health use of a proportion of the latest fourth 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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the proposed use of £2,000,568 of the Fund, to provide support to households with pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households between 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2024; and
 - 2) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health 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 round to support those most in need. The extension runs from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

1.2 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) 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 funding for HSF4 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 HSF funding for the last six months would be considered in September 2023.

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

- Beneficiary groups are households with children, households with pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households. 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 exception is the inclusion of the provision of advice services 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 of

'application based' is flexible, and applications can be made directly via the local authority or via third parties.

2 Supporting information

2.1 Distributing the grant funding to the same partners (see Allocations Table below) that ESCC worked with last time is intended to 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 Fund 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) Hugg 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	Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) managed
Districts and Boroughs	1,050,568	ASCH managed
Foodbanks and Food Partnerships	250,000	ASCH managed
Total	3,896,568	

2.3 The portion of the Fund that the Adult Social Care and Health Department will manage for the six-month period (October 2023 - March 2024) is £2,000,568 and this will be allocated to the 5 Districts and Boroughs, VCSE sector partners and Food Banks and Food Partnerships.

2.4 Distributing the grant to the same VCSE partners that ESCC worked with last time ensures continuity in the allocation of support to the full range of beneficiary groups outlined in Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Guidance. Utilising VCSE partners to implement the scheme adds considerable value in terms of local community knowledge and an ability to engage with vulnerable households that may not be reached by statutory services.

2.5 The DWP guidance also states that ESCC and partners should consider the needs of various households, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people. Eligible spend includes:

- Energy and water
- Food
- essentials linked to energy and water

- wider essentials
- advice services
- housing costs

2.6 The grant is monitored through quarterly monitoring returns completed by managers and signed off by the Chief Finance Officer.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The scheme provides a further opportunity to extend the 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 £2,000,568 of the Household Support Fund, to provide support to households with pensioners, households with a disabled person and other vulnerable households and to delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to implement the scheme.

MARK STANTON
Director of Adult Social Care and Health

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None