

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

Date of meeting: 25 March 2024

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Household Support Fund

Purpose: To note the update on the announcement of the latest round of the Household Support Fund ("the Fund") and agree to distribute a proportion of the grant funding as set out in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the proposed spend of £615,000 of the Fund for the allocation of food vouchers to eligible free school meal pupils for the 2024 Easter holidays; and**
 - 2) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to implement the scheme on the terms set out.**
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1 Background

1.1 The Government announced an extension of six months for the Household Support Fund ("the Fund") for a fifth time in the Spring Budget on 6 March 2024. The extension will run from 1 April 2024 – 31 September 2024.

1.2 Previous rounds of the Fund have been used to support children, families and adults who are experiencing financial challenges by providing support with the costs of food, energy and other essentials. The Fund has been administered jointly through Children's Services and Adults Social Care and Health.

1.3 Part of the funding has been used for food vouchers for 2-19 year olds eligible for Free School Meals, to cover the school holiday periods.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 The Easter holidays start on 29 March 2024, so a decision to allocate funding for food vouchers is needed prior to the end of March in order to ensure these can be delivered.

2.2 The proposed allocation of Easter food vouchers, follows the same model of allocations used by the Council in administering previous rounds of the Fund. Food vouchers of £30 will be provided through the Huggg voucher scheme. There are approximately 20,500 children eligible for free school meals and the cost of providing vouchers for this period will be **£615,000**.

2.3 Further reports will be brought to the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability and the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health recommending proposals for the use of the full allocation of the Council's share of the Fund for the rest of the grant period.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Fund enables the Council to provide support to vulnerable East Sussex residents including children and families who are struggling financially.

3.2 The Lead Member is recommended to approve the proposed use of £615,000 of the Fund, to provide support to households with children and to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to implement the scheme.

ALISON JEFFERY

Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None