



**Notice of a public meeting of
Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance, Performance,
Major Projects and Equalities**

To: Councillor Lomas

Date: Thursday, 25 April 2024

Time: 3.00 pm

Venue: The Thornton Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G039)

AGENDA

Notice to Members – Post Decision Calling In:

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item* on this agenda, notice must be given to Democratic Services by **4:00pm on 2 May 2024**.

*With the exception of matters that have been the subject of a previous call in, require Full Council approval or are urgent which are not subject to the call-in provisions. Any items that are called in will be considered by the Corporate Services, Climate Change & Scrutiny Management Committee.

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5:00pm on Tuesday 23 April 2024**.

1. Declarations of Interest (Pages 1 - 2)

At this point in the meeting, Members and co-opted members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, or other registerable interest, they might have in respect of business on this agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

[Please see attached sheet for further guidance for Members].

- 2. Minutes** (Pages 3 - 4)
To approve and sign the minutes of the Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities Executive Member Decision Sessions held on 19 March 2024.

- 3. Public Participation**
At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. Members of the public may speak on agenda items or on matters within the remit of the committee. Please note that our registration deadlines have changed to 2 working days before the meeting. The deadline for registering at this meeting is at **5.00pm on Tuesday 23 April 2024.**

To register to speak please visit www.york.gov.uk/AttendCouncilMeetings to fill out an online registration form. If you have any questions about the registration form or the meeting please contact the Democracy Officer for the meeting whose details can be found at the foot of the agenda.

Webcasting of Public Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this public meeting will be webcast including any registered public speakers who have given their permission. The public meeting can be viewed on demand at www.york.gov.uk/webcasts.

During coronavirus, we've made some changes to how we're running council meetings. See our coronavirus updates (www.york.gov.uk/COVIDDemocracy) for more information on meetings and decisions.

- 4. Household Support Fund 5** (Pages 5 - 52)
This report provides an update on Household Support Fund 5.
- 5. Urgent Business**
Any other business which the Executive Member considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democratic Services Officer

Angela Bielby

Contact Details:

Telephone – (01904) 552599

Email – a.bielby@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 (01904) 551550

This page is intentionally left blank

Declarations of Interest – guidance for Members

- (1) Members must consider their interests, and act according to the following:

Type of Interest	You must
Disclosable Pecuniary Interests	Disclose the interest, not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Directly Related) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Directly Related)	Disclose the interest; speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.
Other Registrable Interests (Affects) OR Non-Registrable Interests (Affects)	Disclose the interest; remain in the meeting, participate and vote <u>unless</u> the matter affects the financial interest or well-being: (a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interest or well-being of a majority of inhabitants of the affected ward; and (b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest. In which case, speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak, but otherwise do not participate in the discussion or vote, and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.

- (2) Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.
- (3) Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

This page is intentionally left blank

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities
Date	19 March 2024
Present	Councillor Lomas (Executive Member)
In Attendance	David Walker (Head of Customer and Exchequer Services) Susan Wood (Welfare Benefits and Strategic Partnership Manager) Laura Williams (Assistant Director Customer, Communities and Inclusion)

17. Declarations of Interest (10:03)

The Executive Member was asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that she might have had in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

18. Minutes (10:03)

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Sessions of the Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, and Equalities held on 24 January 2024 and 21 February 2024 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

19. Public Participation (10:03)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

20. Council Tax Debt Pilot (10:03)

The Head of Customer and Exchequer Services outlined the report noting that the pilot for was for York residents with potentially complex issues using council tax debt as a way to engage with residents to explore and try and support the broader problems. In terms of council tax debt he said that the council would look at texting residents regarding the payment of council

tax arrears and the team would be looking at the wording used in council tax reminders. The Welfare Benefits and Strategic Partnership Manager explained the ongoing work for council tax recovery in the context of its legal framework. She detailed work undertaken council teams and other partners in supporting residents.

The Executive Member welcomed the report and commented that she was impressed by the compassionate support and multiagency work supporting council tax. She was interested to see the impact of the changing of wording on reminders regarding council tax recovery and she was pleased to see the input of the Poverty Truth Commission on the pilot. She then;

Resolved: That approval be given to:

1. Set up a voluntary non-cost multi-agency debt group including community sector partners – to look in more detail during 2024 at all the issues raised by residents in the debt pilot.
2. The establishment of non-cost debt surgeries at West Offices following issue of Council Tax (CT) reminders during 2024 – there is little resource for one-to-one support across the city so establishing a surgery with partners may help in dealing with a larger number of residents issues.
3. To issue text messages to all residents getting CT reminders about continuing to pay something and inviting them to attend a debt surgery. This is to help prevent residents getting further into arrears through the debt recovery process and provide broader advice and support.
4. To review the wording on CT reminders and summons and pilot alternative wording to see if there is any beneficial effect. This also responds to and supports recent comments from the Poverty Truth Commission.

Reason: In order to provide immediate support at the point a resident may fall into debt following good practice early intervention; and to help residents affected by debt and address the broader linked issues within our communities.

Cllr Lomas, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.03 am and finished at 10.14 am].



Meeting:	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, and Equalities
Meeting date:	25/04/2024
Report of:	Pauline Stuchfield Director of Customer & Communities
Portfolio of:	Councillor Katie Lomas Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects and Equalities

Decision Report: Household Support Fund 5

Subject of Report

1. The Government has made £421m available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need with the cost of essentials via Household Support Fund 5 (HSF5). This funding covers the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive. The objective of the fund is to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need.
2. City of York Council has received £1.037m of the £421m fund to support its qualifying residents with meeting immediate needs and help for those who are struggling to afford household essentials including energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials. The funding must be spent by 30th September 2024.

Benefits and Challenges

3. The level of funding provided is the same as the 2023/24 HSF4 funding pro rata for 6 months. The council have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope of the government guidance set out at Annex A.
4. The money should be used to support qualifying residents with Energy & Water bills, Food, and where appropriate wider essentials. The council must establish a discretionary application scheme (*“As part of their offer, every Authority must operate at*

least part of their scheme on an application basis – in other words, people should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support”) and we have done with every HSF scheme to date.

5. The discretion within the scheme is a real benefit for the council. However, despite this the funding level is not high compared to the ongoing cost of living crises facing residents and this can be seen in more detail in the table at paragraph 12.

Policy Basis for Decision

6. The new Council Plan, which was adopted in September 2023, contains four core commitments to enable it to deliver the vision for the next four years. This includes ‘affordability’.
7. The commitment states - ‘We will find new ways so everyone who lives here benefits from the success of the city, targeting our support at those who need it most, supporting communities to build on their own strengths and those of the people around them.’
8. The approval of this scheme will contribute to supporting the commitment to affordability by helping residents with their ongoing cost of living financial pressures helping them to live better lives, participate in the success of the city and improving their wellbeing.

Financial Strategy Implications

9. This is a government funded scheme and does not affect the council’s revenue budget or financial strategy. Effective use of this money will help support residents’ financial resilience and potentially alleviate cost on the council’s stretched welfare support services.

Recommendation and Reasons

10. The Executive Member for Finance, Performance, Major Projects, and Equalities is asked to approve the HSF5 scheme as set out at paragraph 12 – 17 and in detail at Annex B. The reason for this is to help alleviate the ongoing cost of living pressures being experienced by financially vulnerable residents.

Background

11. This is the 5th HSF scheme following on from the local covid support schemes aimed at assisting residents with cost-of-living pressures. The scheme is funded through Government grant and has no revenue costs to the council. The scheme requires council approval, and the details of the scheme are set out in the paragraphs below and in details at Annex B of this report.

HSF5 Scheme

12. The intention of the scheme is to make the best use of the funds available to help assist qualifying residents. As set out in the government guidance we must provide a discretionary element, and this is something that has been provided in all City of York council schemes to date. The key support provided through the scheme includes:
 - a) £200k – Food & Fuel Vouchers
 - b) £200k – Discretionary application scheme
 - c) £40k – Community Food support
 - d) £50k – Administration including support for two Talk Money campaigns.
 - e) £10k – York Energy Advice
 - f) £500k – Support with Council Tax for working age CTS customers. (£110 per qualifying resident)
 - g) £37K - Contingency
13. In terms of supporting pensioners, priority will be given to pensioners applying to the discretionary scheme. Pensioners still receive up to 100% council tax support (CTS).
14. Council Tax Support (CTS) customers over the last two years have benefited from Government grant to cushion the impact of the annual increase in council tax. There is no Government grant this year meaning that low-income residents face an increase of nearly 15% in real terms in their council tax bill. Providing this support will help CTS customers in paying utility and other bills by minimising the level of their council tax bills.

15. The HSF4 scheme helped to provide support to Care Leavers and Foster Parents. Funding of £15k and £30k respectively remains within the Charis food voucher support scheme for these residents.
16. The HSF5 discretionary scheme will also provide access to residents with no recourse to public funds in line with the Government guidance.
17. Any wider essentials set out in the guidance will be considered through the council's discretionary scheme.

Consultation Analysis

18. The development and guidance in relation to the scheme has been undertaken by central government. In terms of the local scheme internal consultation has been undertaken with Communities, Revenues, and the Welfare Benefits Manager.
19. Externally consultation has been undertaken with the council's Advice York community partners. The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the scheme is attached at Annex C.

Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

20. The development of HSF schemes to provide effective financial support to low-income residents has been matured over nearly four years. Across this time the council has worked and continues to work in partnership with local advice agencies in developing and delivering its HSF schemes.
21. The scheme (Annex B) reflects the learned experience from prior schemes. The Government grant is not sufficient to meet and resolve all the poverty issues in the city and HSF5 focuses on trying to help those residents most in need with their bills, heating, and food. There are no options to deliver anything outside of the Government guidance.

Organisational Impact and Implications

22. The implications of the scheme have been considered during consultation along with demand on resource and longevity of support.

23. As with all HSF schemes the guidance was provided just days before the scheme was due to go live. The comments from implication officers are set out below.

- **Financial**, the funding for HSF5 is direct Government grant there are no council revenue budget costs associated with delivering the scheme.
 - **Human Resources (HR)**, There are no HR issues with regard to establishing and delivering the scheme.
 - **Legal** *The decisions in this report do not carry legal implications for the council, as the Council is effectively 'passporting' the funds from central government to affected individuals. As such, providing the approved scheme is implemented in accordance with Annex A, the Authority is acting within its discretion.*
 - **Procurement**, there are no procurement activities involved with delivering the HSF5 scheme.
 - **Health and Wellbeing**, the scheme is there to provide support with food and utility bills which will directly contribute to better health & Wellbeing.
Poverty and financial insecurity has a direct and/or indirect impact on both physical and mental wellbeing and a negative impact on health inequalities. Supporting those residents at greatest risk through the HSF5 scheme contributes to closing the health inequality gap across the city.
 - **Environment and Climate action**, This report relates to the delivery of welfare support and will have no impact on the environment or climate.
 - **Affordability**, As set out at paragraph 6 – 8 this report decision directly supports the 'affordability' priority.
 - **Equalities and Human Rights**, the paper has an EIA attached setting out any impacts on Equalities and any consultation that has been undertaken in designing the scheme. The guidance for what the money can be spent on is set by Central Government and the scheme operates within this guidance.
- Data Protection and Privacy**, Data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) are an essential part of our accountability obligations and is a legal requirement for any type of processing under UK data protection and privacy legislation. Failure to carry out a DPIA when required may leave the council open to enforcement action, including

monetary penalties or fines. DPIAs helps us to assess and demonstrate how we comply with all our data protection obligations. It does not have to eradicate all risks but should help to minimise and determine whether the level of risk is acceptable in the circumstances, considering the benefits of what the council wants to achieve.

The DPIA screening questions were completed for this report and as there is no personal, special categories or criminal offence data being processed for the options set out in this report, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at this time. However, this will be reviewed where required, on the approved options from this report.

- **Communications**, there is likely to be a requirement on the Communications Service to deal with media enquiries both proactively and reactively in relation to this report.
- **Economy**, there are no direct economy implications associated with the recommendations in this paper.

Risks and Mitigations

24. There are no specific risks related to the HSF5 scheme other than the demand for support (as with previous schemes) may be higher than the funding provided. To mitigate this risk the direct support for working age CTS customers has been calculated based upon the claimant base and the food and fuel voucher scheme amended to manage supply and demand.

Wards Impacted

25. All Wards are affected by this decision but in a positive way through providing cost of living support.

Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

Author

Name:	David Walker
Job Title:	Head of Customer & Exchequer Services
Service Area:	Customer & Communities
Telephone:	01904 552261
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	16/04/2024

Co-author

Name:	Susan Wood
Job Title:	Welfare Benefits and Strategic Partnership Manager
Service Area:	Customer & Communities
Telephone:	01904 555610
Report approved:	Yes
Date:	16/04/2024

Background papers

Household Support Fund 4:

[Agenda for Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Major Projects on Friday, 24 March 2023, 10.00 am \(york.gov.uk\)](#)

Annexes

Annex A – Government Guidance Document

Annex B – HSF5 Scheme

Annex C – EIA

Abbreviations

HSF5 – Household Support Fund 5

HSF4 – Household Support Fund 4
CTS – Council Tax Support
EIA – Equalities Impact Assessment
DWP – Department for Work and Pensions
UC – Universal Credit
HPG – Homelessness Prevention Grant
HB – Housing Benefit
DHP – Discretionary Housing Payment
IT – Information and Technology
MI – Management Information
TPO – Third Party Organisation
IR – Income Related
ESA – Employment Support Allowance
MoU- Memorandum of Understanding
LWP – Local Welfare Provision
HPG – Homelessness Prevention Grant
PRMS – Performance Relationship Managers
LA-PED – Local Authority Partnership Engagement and Delivery
PDF – Portable Document Format
CFO – Chief Financial Officer
NINO – National Insurance Number
AP – Assessment Period
CC – County Council
CC – City Council

Household Support Fund: Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England (1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024)

Contents

Introduction	2
Objective and key principles.....	2
Types of support and eligible spend.....	3
Administrative Costs and Scheme Evaluation	5
Establishing eligibility	7
Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds	8
Routes of support	9
Public Sector Equality Duty	9
Communication	10
Working with other organisations	10
Delivery Plans.....	11
Reporting and Management Information	11
Access to data.....	11
DWP Searchlight	12
Monthly data share	12
Unused funding returned from a TPO	13
Funding overlap	13
DWP engagement.....	14
DWP funding arrangements	14
Managing the risk of fraud	16
Complying with Subsidy (previously State Aid) rules	17
Contact.....	17

Introduction

1. £421m has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need with the cost of essentials via the Household Support Fund (“The Fund”). This funding covers the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 inclusive (“The Fund Period”).
2. This guidance sets out the required collaboration between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), County Councils and Unitary Authorities, including their delivery partners (such as District Councils as well as any charitable or third-party organisations (TPOs)) to successfully meet the policy intent within the agreed framework. It also provides the framework that County Councils and Unitary Authorities need to work within and the arrangements for distribution of funding and reporting.
3. DWP is providing funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs – hereafter referred to as “Authorities”), under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer The Fund and provide assistance to households most in need.
4. Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in this guidance and the accompanying Grant Determination.
5. Although this is informally considered an extension to the previous four Household Support Fund schemes, it is a new grant subject to its own grant conditions as is set out in the Grant Determination letter. Any underspends from the previous scheme cannot be carried forward.
6. This guidance sets out the objectives and framework within which The Fund should be used, and requirements for reporting to ensure The Fund successfully meets its policy intent.
7. This guidance applies to Authorities in England only and should be read in conjunction with the Household Support Fund Grant Determination issued alongside it.

Objective and key principles

8. The objective of The Fund is to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need with the cost of essentials. Authorities are expected to offer support throughout the duration of The Fund Period and must develop delivery plans to reflect this.
9. When administering The Fund, Authorities are encouraged to adopt the following principles:
 - use the funding from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford household essentials including energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials. Authorities can also use funding to support households with housing costs where existing housing support does not meet this need, and to supplement support with signposting and advice.

- **Note:** this includes payments made, or committed to, by the Authority or any person acting on behalf of the Authority, from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

- use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need, taking into account a wide range of information.
 - work together with District Councils and TPOs including, where necessary and appropriate, other local services. This may include local charities. This may also incorporate intelligence and data from wider children's social care systems to help identify and support individuals, families and households within the scope of The Fund. It may also include receiving referrals for support and applications made on behalf of an individual from professionals working with vulnerable individuals such as: social workers; keyworkers delivering early help and family support; housing officers; health visitors; and housing support officers.
10. Whilst immediate needs should be prioritised, Authorities are encouraged to use The Fund to provide support that has a long-term sustainable impact, for example household items which would reduce bills in the long-term. Subject to the considerations around advice services, this can include support with income maximisation through advice and signposting to benefit, debt and employment services.
11. Funds should be spent or committed before 30 September 2024 and cannot be carried over for future usage. All Authorities are encouraged to ensure, wherever possible, that any vouchers issued are redeemed before the end of The Fund, or shortly thereafter, or consider recycling unused vouchers. It is acceptable for vouchers that have been purchased and delivered to households before the end of The Fund to be spent shortly thereafter (see paragraphs 87 to 91 on committed spend).
- **Note:** this includes payments made, or committed to, by the Authority or any person acting on behalf of the Authority, from 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

Types of support and eligible spend

12. The Fund is expected to support vulnerable households with energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials, and Authorities should prioritise support which offers an immediate impact to those in need. Support can be delivered through cash, vouchers or in kind. There is no prescriptive list which provides a comprehensive definition of eligible spend, but it may include spend on:
- **Energy and Water.** This may include 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 water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, as well as for sanitary purposes and sewerage.
 - **Food.** This may include through vouchers, cash or in kind.
 - **Essentials linked to energy, water and food.** The Fund can be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy, water and food (for example insulation or energy efficient items which reduce bills, the purchase of equipment such as fridges, freezers, ovens, slow cookers or costs associated with obtaining these essentials such as delivery and installation). We encourage Authorities to consider

supporting households on low incomes to repair or replace white goods and appliances with more energy efficient ones, or to invest in simple energy efficiency measures which will pay back quickly, such as insulating a hot water tank, fitting draft excluders to a front door, or replacing energy inefficient lightbulbs or white goods. The intention of this is to provide sustainable support which results in immediate and potentially long-lasting savings for the household.

- **Wider essentials.** The Fund can be used to support wider essential needs not linked to energy, water or food 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, period and hygiene products, essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle, or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive. It can also include one-off payments to prevent a crisis.
- **Advice services.** The Fund may be used to provide supplementary advice services to award recipients, including debt, benefit and/or employment advice, where Authorities consider this appropriate. Authorities are reminded that the primary intention of The Fund is to provide support for those households most in need, and we would expect any advice services to complement this. We would not expect a large portion of funding to be spent on advice services. We would expect to see a connection between the funding provided for advice services and the practical support provided through The Fund. We anticipate that a significant proportion of this will be through signposting to existing advice services funded through other routes, such as the Help to Claim scheme which supports those making a claim to Universal Credit (UC).
- **Housing costs.** The Fund can be used to provide support with housing costs to those in need. However, where eligible, ongoing housing support for rent must be provided through the Housing cost element of UC and Housing Benefit (HB) rather than The Fund. In addition, eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) must first be considered before housing support is offered through The 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). It is expected that the focus of support should be on bills and that support for housing costs should only be given where existing housing support schemes do not meet need. Beyond this, Authorities have discretion to determine the most appropriate use of The Fund for their area, based on their understanding of local need and with due regard to equality considerations.
 - Households in receipt of HB, UC, or DHPs can still receive housing cost support through The 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 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 energy, food, 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. Those who are in receipt of or

treated as receiving a qualifying benefit could be entitled to [Support for Mortgage Interest](#).

- 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 UC and HB. This is because these arrears are excluded from the criteria for DHPs. However, support with rent arrears is not the primary intent of The Fund and should not be the focus of spend.
13. 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, the intention that The Fund provides support throughout The Fund Period, and the risk of fraud and error. Awards to any given household can cover several or only one of the spend eligibility categories listed above.

Administrative Costs and Scheme Evaluation

14. Authority allocations also include reasonable administrative costs incurred administering The Fund. In all cases, Authorities should keep administrative costs to a reasonable level. In previous iterations of The Fund, average administrative spend was around 5% of the total allocation. We expect some variation in administrative costs between Authorities but spend should reflect the intention of the scheme to support those most in need.
15. Administration costs for each Authority will be published on www.gov.uk alongside detail of all spend and volumes related to The Fund.
16. Authorities should deduct their administration costs from the total allocation to determine the amount remaining. These include:
- staff costs
 - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of The Fund (this includes costs to make material more accessible, such as translation costs, providing diverse formats, etc.)
 - web page design
 - printing application forms
 - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production.
 - reasonable costs for evaluating the impact of the scheme at a local level, should Authorities wish to do so.
17. Authorities will be able to use a limited proportion of their allocations to conduct (and either fully or partially fund) local evaluation of their scheme. This will be considered as an administration cost. We would not expect there to be any significant increase in overall administrative costs because of this activity.
18. It is at the discretion of Authorities whether they choose to conduct such evaluation activity. Authorities are encouraged to consider conducting local evaluations of their schemes to provide evidence of impact and inform the best use of funding within the local area.

19. Some Authorities may deem that conducting evaluation is not proportionate given the resource and cost required relative to the size of their allocation, or if existing local evaluation evidence is already available.
20. The main focus of an evaluation funded in this way should aim to understand the characteristics and experiences of those who are and/or have been in receipt of support from The Fund and the impact this has had on them. To support this, Authorities could also consider the effectiveness of the different ways in which funding is administered and used.
21. Local evaluation activities may include: data collection (for example, quantitative surveying and/or qualitative interviewing with recipients, recipient representatives and/or delivery partners of The Fund) and analysis and report writing.
22. All DWP-funded evaluation activity (where this is either fully or partially funded from the Authority's allocation) must:
 - Be undertaken robustly, with regard to the Social Research Association guidance for conducting high-quality research ([What is high-quality social research.pdf \(the-sra.org.uk\)](https://www.sra.org.uk)) to ensure meaningful and usable insights can be drawn from the findings, which are representative of the local area as far as possible.
 - Be carried out with regard to the Government Social Research ethical assurance for Social and Behavioural research: [GSR Ethical Assurance for Social and Behavioural Research - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) to ensure appropriate ethical standards and compliance with GDPR for anyone involved in the research process.
 - Be based on voluntary participation via informed consent. Receipt of support from The Fund must in no way be dependent on individuals participating in evaluation research.
23. To enable evaluation activities, Authorities may wish to consider informing HSF recipients that they may be contacted in future for evaluation activities to enable collection of relevant contact details for follow-up research.
24. Subject to interest, DWP can provide further analytical advice and support on evaluations to Authorities.
25. If the Authority will be spending, in accordance with this guidance, any of the Fund on evaluation activity, this must be reflected in their delivery plan. This spend should be captured within total administrative costs in the MI returns, and also reported there separately so that the dedicated amount spent on evaluation can be determined.
26. If allocation funds are used to carry out evaluation activities, aggregated and anonymised findings must be shared with DWP, and DWP/the Authority may also choose to share these with other Authorities to collate learning.
27. Completed findings from any evaluation activity (fully or partially funded from Authorities' allocations) must be shared with DWP by the deadline of submitting the final MI return in October 2024.

28. Authorities are still able to independently conduct their own self-funded evaluation activities on The Fund. In that case, they may still wish to adhere to the above guidance as a matter of good practice.

Establishing eligibility

29. The Fund is intended to support a wide range of low-income households and is not limited to those in receipt of benefits. Authorities have the flexibility within The Fund to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility.
30. Authorities are encouraged to work together with neighbouring Authorities to help prevent double provision and/or no provision, especially where the allocation of provision may take place in one area but the award recipient has a residential address in another area.
31. 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 Fund. 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.
32. As part of this, Authorities should make clear in an accessible format who is eligible for support and how those seeking support can access The Fund. This should align with The Fund's communication requirements outlined in paragraphs 49-51.
33. Rather than focus on one specific vulnerable group, Authorities should use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal, including through engagement with relevant TPOs, to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households to prevent an escalation of problems. It is important to stress that The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people, larger families, single-person households, and those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events.
34. Disabled people in particular may be facing acute challenges to meet additional needs in order to manage their conditions, remain independent and avoid becoming socially isolated. For example, some disabled people may have increased utility bills due to the usage of equipment, aids or adaptations associated with their disability. They may also have additional heating, water or transport costs. Authorities are therefore strongly encouraged to explore ways in which this group may be supported and must record the total value of awards granted to disabled people in their Management Information (MI) returns for this grant.
35. Authorities should also consider providing support to care leavers in their area. Care leavers can face particular barriers as they leave the care system and begin to live independently. For example, care leavers may not have access to the same familial networks as others in their cohort and subsequently will not have the same financial, emotional or social support systems that enable them to live independently, respond to crisis or avoid becoming socially isolated.

36. Authorities should also consider providing support to people with caring responsibilities in their area. People with caring responsibilities may be facing acute challenges incurred through their fulfilling these responsibilities for vulnerable citizens. For example, they may have additional heating, water or transport costs. Authorities are therefore encouraged to explore ways in which this group may be supported.
37. DWP is providing data and information to Authorities to support them to identify those in need in their area as follows:
- information relating to UC claims with limited capability for work or earnings below the Free School Meals and free prescription thresholds;
 - data on people receiving the Guarantee Credit and/or Savings Credit elements of Pension Credit;
 - data on people on income-related (IR) Employment and Support Allowance (ESA IR);
 - data on people who are in receipt of HB only.
38. However, support is not restricted only to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits. Therefore, Authorities should also use other sources of information to identify vulnerable households, including by taking advice or application referrals from professionals who come into contact with vulnerable households such as: social workers; keyworkers delivering early help and family support; health visitors; and housing support officers.
39. Where Authorities proactively identify households who may benefit from support, they should consider how they can ensure that they are focusing on those in the most need to prevent an escalation of problems. 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 DHPs.
40. Authorities should not make 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 citizen, the Authority or the employer.

Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds

41. 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
42. 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. The Fund does not create new, or restrict existing, Authority powers or duties to support people with No Recourse to Public Funds but provides additional funds which Authorities can use on a case-by-case basis for expenditure on their existing powers and duties (where the support also falls within the scope of The Fund).

Routes of support

43. Authorities have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including: proactive support by identifying households in need; application-based support where individuals approach the Authority for support; or issuing grants to TPOs to provide support on behalf of the Authority.

44. As part of their offer, every Authority must operate at least part of their scheme on an application basis – in other words, people should have the opportunity to come forward to ask for support. There is flexibility on exactly how this can be run, including through TPOs rather than directly by the Authority. We expect Authorities to offer application-based support throughout the duration of The Fund, either continuously over the majority of The Fund Period, or at regular intervals throughout the scheme. If delivering application-based support through TPOs, the Authority remains accountable for the eligibility criteria of these partners and must work with them to establish these (please see Working with Organisations for further information). Authorities can make the entirety of their scheme application-based if they so wish. Authorities must make sure that this support is clearly advertised and is inclusive and accessible.

45. When deciding how to help people, Authorities should consider how they plan to provide support to vulnerable households, such as by paying into bank accounts, use of cash and vouchers, provision of goods. When determining the most appropriate mechanism of providing support for households, Authorities should consider:
 - any potential risks to vulnerable individuals, for example the risk of holding cash;
 - any fraud risks associated with these payment methods (see section 'Managing the risk of fraud' at paragraphs 93 -104 for further information).

Public Sector Equality Duty

46. In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, DWP has had due regard to the potential equalities impacts of this grant.

47. 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.

48. When developing your local delivery frameworks, you should ensure people are not disadvantaged or treated unfairly by The Fund. For example, any application process should be easy to access and to navigate.

Communication

49. It is mandatory for Authorities to reference that the grant is funded by the UK Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases. This includes use of logos as per the [Funded by UK Government Branding Manual](#) provided to all Authorities. This requirement extends to other public bodies (such as District Councils) delivering the scheme on behalf of the Authority, and the Authority is responsible for ensuring that this responsibility is met.
50. It is mandatory for Authorities to make public their plans for The Fund, including how and when they intend to deliver the application-based portion of their scheme. This should be through a website page dedicated to The Fund headed with 'Household Support Fund' on their Authority website. This webpage must be easily accessible and outline the Authority's plans for funding, including with details of who is eligible in the area, as well as how and when people might be able to apply for the application-based element of the scheme. It should include a specific reference that the grant is funded by the UK Government as per the [Funded by UK Government Branding Manual](#).
51. Authorities should consider inclusive and accessible ways in which they might advertise the availability of The Fund to local people for example in local family or community hubs and GP surgeries. We expect Authorities to advertise the scheme – and in particular the application-based element of their provision – through various channels and not just online.

Working with other organisations

52. Authorities should work collaboratively with District Councils and organisations to meet the objectives of identifying and supporting those most in need. This includes working closely with the third sector and other partner organisations who may come into contact with people in need.
53. 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. Authorities are encouraged to engage with District Councils as quickly as possible to ensure roles, responsibilities and effective arrangements are put in place to deliver The Fund promptly and efficiently.
54. TPOs may include but are not limited to:
- registered charities and voluntary organisations
 - schools
 - food banks
 - general practitioners
 - organisations providing support in particular circumstances (such as but not limited to "baby banks")
55. Where Authorities are working with TPOs, this should be done on an objectively fair, transparent and non-discriminatory basis whilst having regard to the time available to deliver The Fund. As with District Councils, Authorities should make arrangements with any TPOs as quickly as possible.

56. Where Authorities are delivering their application-based support through a TPO, transparent eligibility criteria should be agreed with the TPO. Where organisations are acting only as a referral partner, Authorities should ensure the referral partners and the individual applicants are made aware that Authorities remain the ultimate decision maker on the provision of any support from The Fund.

Delivery Plans

57. Authorities are required to complete a delivery plan to outline their intentions for The Fund, clearly setting out their priorities and approach for use of the Fund, and to demonstrate the ways in which they intend to allocate their funding.
58. Authorities are required to send the delivery plan to DWP by 10 May. At the end of The Fund Period we will also ask for a summary of spend against the final delivery plan with this due at the same time as the final MI in October 2024. Delivery plans must be signed off by the Authority's Section 151 Officer. Delivery plans must include the contact information of the Section 151 Officer/Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and responsible Cabinet Member before submission to DWP. Authorities are responsible for informing DWP of changes to Section 151 Officer/CFO or responsible Cabinet Member.
59. Authorities are required to appoint an appropriate Senior Responsible Officer who will be accountable for ensuring a strong delivery plan is developed and agreed through necessary decision-making mechanisms including engagement with the relevant Cabinet Member and ensuring compliance with and progress against their commitments in the delivery plan. Responsible Cabinet Members in each Authority are obligated to have read and agreed to their local delivery plan before its submission to DWP.
60. We understand that local priorities for The Fund may change over the course of The Fund Period, including in response to local feedback such as from professionals working with households. Authorities should engage with DWP if they wish to revisit their delivery plan during The Fund Period.

Reporting and Management Information

61. Authorities are required to comply with DWP's reporting and MI requirements. For full details of MI and reporting requirements, see Household Support Fund (April 2024 – September 2024) MI Reporting Requirements.

Access to data

62. The Household Support Fund is being classified as Local Welfare Provision (LWP). The provision of DWP data to Authorities is under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the 'Department for Work and Pensions and LAs (Access, handling, exchange and protection of DWPs' and HM Revenue and Customs' data)'.

63. 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, Pension Credit, ESA (IR) and HB only data through a monthly data share for the purpose of The Fund.
64. Authorities 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 data sources for LWP.
65. Staff accessing Searchlight will need to be registered with the Employee Authentication System. 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

66. 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 and target those families and individuals to support. Authorities may also wish to establish if other forms of support are available to the household. In relation to housing costs this must include checking whether the household could receive DHPs. The Authority must also first consider if the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and, therefore, owed a duty of support through the HPG.
67. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential claimants who may be eligible for The Fund 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).

Monthly data share

68. The UC, Pension Credit, ESA (IR) and HB only data will be provided monthly via Transfer Your File.
69. Authorities will receive two data shares on a monthly basis:
- **File one** - contains individual data of the National Insurance number, names and addresses (where available) of UC claimants within the Authority area and:
 - income below the thresholds of £7,400 per year for FSMs 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
 - the number of children in the household.
 - those whose award is subject to the benefit cap
 - those with a deduction for Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy and who receive Local Housing Allowance

- the National Insurance number, names, addresses and contact telephone numbers of those in receipt of Guarantee Credit and/or Savings Credit element of Pension Credit and their appointees if appropriate, as well as for all claimants on ESA (IR).
- the National Insurance number, names, addresses and contact telephone numbers of customers who are in receipt of HB but not in receipt of a means tested benefit (for example: UC, Income based Jobseekers Allowance, ESA (IR), Income Support and Pension Credit) or Tax Credits.

File two - contains aggregate data showing those UC claimants that are:

- at or below the FSM income threshold
- at or below the free prescription income threshold, and
- in the Limited Capability for Work group.

70. For a full breakdown of the file contents see Local Welfare Provision monthly data share field definitions at Annex A.

71. Authorities also have access to their own non-DWP data to help identify vulnerable households who may be eligible for support under The Fund.

Unused funding returned from a TPO

72. Where a TPO returns unused funding before the end of The Fund Period, the Authority is free to spend that funding in any eligible category for the duration of The Fund Period.

73. Where a TPO returns unused funding after The Fund Period has ended the Authority can re-issue any returned funding within a reasonable timeframe, but only under the same category that the spend was originally reported against. Authorities are able to distribute this funding themselves and do not have to go back through the original TPO.

74. For audit purposes, where an Authority re-issues returned TPO funding after The Fund Period has ended, they must confirm the following by email to lawelfare.pdt@dwp.gov.uk (copying in their Section 151 Officer/CFO):

- the amount that has been returned;
- reason for the return (for example TPO underspend);
- what the original spend was reported against in their **final** MI return;
- the intention to spend the total unspent amount against the same category of spend for the same group.

Funding overlap

75. Authorities should consider household circumstances when making a decision on how to spend The Fund. Households could be receiving other forms of support, and this should be taken into account to avoid duplicating provision where possible. However, households receiving other forms of assistance are not excluded from receiving support through The Fund.

DWP engagement

76. LA Performance Relationship Mangers (PRMs) from DWP's LA Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division will contact Authorities to provide support and gather information throughout The Fund. LA-PED will contact Authorities for initial compliance (where necessary) including where:
- the MI templates have not been copied to the Authority's Section 151 Officer or Chief Finance Officer.
 - an incorrect template has been used – MI should only be returned on the MI template provided. No local versions or PDF copies are acceptable.
77. 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.
 - 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.
78. They will look to identify good practice and identify case studies where appropriate.
79. DWP will continue to respond to questions we receive via the designated inbox as quickly as possible. DWP will also continue to engage with Authorities throughout the course of The Fund Period and will provide opportunities to engage with the department and other Authorities to share good practice and work collaboratively. DWP may host Ministerial engagement roundtable events as required. Where Authorities are invited to these events, an appropriate representative will be expected to attend.
80. 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

81. The Fund is ring-fenced to be spent as detailed in this guidance and the accompanying Grant Determination. 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.

82. Payment of The Fund from DWP to Authorities will be made in arrears after the interim MI returns in July 2024 and the final MI return at the end of The Fund Period in September 2024 after DWP has 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. One interim return and a final MI return will be required, and grant payments will be made in respect of the periods 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024 and 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.
83. MI returns must be endorsed by the Section 151 Officer/CFO in accordance with their statutory assurance responsibility in order for the grant payment to be made.
84. Authorities must copy their Section 151 Officer/CFO into the email.
85. The guidance for completion is provided within the Household Support Fund (April 2024 – September 2024) MI Reporting Requirements document.
86. For MI purposes, the definition of spend is grant funding that has been provided to vulnerable households, within the scope of the eligibility criteria, and within The Fund Period of 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.
87. Spend also includes 'committed spend'. For the purpose of The Fund 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 30 September 2024 to a vulnerable household. It would be unreasonable to expect the household 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 Fund.
88. However, committed spend does not include large volumes of food vouchers, procured quite late in The Fund, which cannot be distributed to vulnerable households within The Fund Period.
89. 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 Fund. Alternatively, Authorities may want to consider:
- purchasing vouchers on a sale or return basis, so that they can return any unused vouchers; or
 - recycling and re-issuing expired vouchers returned to an Authority after The Fund has ended, provided this is done within a reasonable timeframe, under the same categories of spend as originally reported, and under the same terms as The Fund they were issued under.
90. For audit purposes where an Authority recycles and reuses expired vouchers the Authority must confirm by email to lawelfare.pdt@dw.gov.uk, copying in the Section 151 Officer/CFO:
- the amount that has been returned
 - reason for the return (for example, expired voucher)
 - what the original spend was reported against in their **FINAL MI** return

- confirm they intend to spend the total unspent amount against the same category of spend for the same group.

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

92. The timetable for provision of funding is as follows:

Funding:

Payment	Amount	Date	Notes
Interim	Actual grant spend of up to 100% of allocation*	September/October 2024	Payment made in arrears
Final	Actual grant spend up to 100% of grant allocation* less any previous interim payment	December 2024/January 2025	Payment made in arrears

*Subject to eligible spend criteria

Managing the risk of fraud

93. Fraudsters can target funds of this type.
94. 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.
95. To help mitigate this risk, Authorities should involve District Councils and other organisations chosen to administer The Fund to help identify vulnerable families, households and individuals.
96. Authorities wishing to work with TPOs to deliver The Fund 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.
97. Authorities are also encouraged to ensure checks are in place to verify the identity of those eligible.
98. 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.

99. Authorities should ensure that they consider and put in place suitable controls when making use of vouchers as part of The Fund. 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 The Fund.
100. 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, which may be requested and reviewed as set out in the Grant Determination, to ensure they take into consideration household income and rent liability. 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.
101. 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.
102. If the Authority has any grounds for suspecting financial irregularity in the use of any grant paid under the determination, it must notify DWP immediately, explain what steps are being taken to investigate the suspicion and keep DWP 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.
103. If you suspect fraud, you should notify DWP of the:
- number of instances;
 - total amount lost.
104. 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 Fund.

Complying with Subsidy (previously State Aid) rules

105. The funding is intended to benefit households most in need of support with energy bills, food, related essentials, wider essentials and (in limited circumstances where existing housing support does not meet need) housing costs. This is in order to help provide targeted support to those who need it with the cost of household essentials. The funds should not be used for any economic undertaking.
106. 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.

Contact

107. If you have any queries about the content of this guidance or use of the funding, you can contact lawelfare.pdt@dwp.gov.uk

Local Welfare Provision monthly data share field definitions

The definitions will be updated to include information regarding the additional data share of those who are in receipt of HB only when the details are confirmed.

File 1 – The list of Individuals:

Field Name	Description
claimant1_nino	The national insurance number (NINO) of the lead UC claimant
claimant1_surname	The surname of the lead UC claimant in the Household
claimant1_forename1	The forename of the lead UC claimant in the Household
claimant2_nino	If applicable the NINO of the UC partner in the household. In some cases this may be the same as the UC claimant NINO, usually where the partner NINO data is not available.
claimant2_surname	The surname of the UC partner if Claimant 2 NINO provided
claimant2_forename_1	The forename of the UC partner if Claimant 2 NINO provided
ap_start_date	The start date of the household's UC assessment period (AP)
ap_end_month	This will always be the month of the extract.
has_children_latest_ap	Set to 1 if the UC Household is recorded to have children in the AP used for the extract 1= children 0 = no children
total_children	The number of children recorded in the UC Household for the AP used in the extract, null = no children, the field HAS_CHILDREN_LATEST_AP will also be 0 if there are no children
has_lcw_latest_ap	Set to 1 if a member of the UC Household is in the UC limited capability for work group
eligible_prescription_latest_ap	Set to 1 if the UC Household is below the Free Prescription threshold
earnings_below_fsm_threshold	Set to 1 if the UC Household is below the Free School Meal threshold
country_name	England Scotland

	Wales
local_authority_name	Your LA name
local_authority_code	the standard lookup code for your authority
tyf_la_id_code	the LA ID code as registered on Transfer Your File for your authority
postcode_outward_code	Postcode sector in the ward
ward_name	Name of the ward
ward_code	Code of the ward
cap_applied	True, False or Null
spare_room_subsidy_removal	True, False or Null
local_housing_allowance_applied	True, False or Null
BENEFIT_TYPE	Will show one of the following: UC PC GC SC SC/GC ESA-IR HB
PC/ESA-IR/HB_NINO	The NINO of the PC/ESA-IR/HB customer
PC/ESA-IR/HB_SURNAME	The surname of the PC/ESA-IR/HB customer
PC/ESA-IR/HB_FORENAME_1	The first name of the PC/ESA-IR/HB customer
UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB_ADDRESS_LINE_1	The UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB customer address as recorded on the PC/ESA-IR/HB claim
UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB_ADDRESS_LINE_2	The UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB customer address as recorded on the PC/ESA-IR/HB claim
UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB_ADDRESS_LINE_3	The UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB customer address as recorded on the PC/ESA-IR/HB claim
UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB_ADDRESS_LINE_4	The UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB customer address as recorded on the PC/ESA-IR/HB claim
UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB_POSTCODE	The postcode as recorded on the UC/PC/ESA-IR/HB customer claim
PC/ESA-IR/HB_TELEPHONE_NO1	The telephone number of the PC/ESA-IR/HB customer as reported on the PC/ESA-IR/HB claim
PC/ESA-IR/HB_TELEPHONE_NO2	The second telephone number (if applicable) of the PC/ESA-IR/HB customer as reported on the PC/ESA-IR/HB claim
PC_APPOINTEE_SURNAME	If appropriate the surname of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim
PC_APPOINTEE_FORENAME_1	If appropriate the forename of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim
PC_APPOINTEE_ADDRESS_LINE_1	If appropriate the address of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim

PC_APPOINTEE_ADDRESS_LINE_2	If appropriate the address of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim
PC_APPOINTEE_ADDRESS_LINE_3	If appropriate the address of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim
PC_APPOINTEE_ADDRESS_LINE_4	If appropriate the address of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim
PC_APPOINTEE_POSTCODE	If appropriate the address of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim
PC_APPOINTEE_TELEPHONE_NO1	If appropriate the telephone number of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim
PC_APPOINTEE_TELEPHONE_NO2	If appropriate the second telephone number of the Personal/Corporate Acting Body as reported on the PC claim

File 2 – The Aggregate file

This shows for your Authority:

Country (England, Scotland or Wales)

Local Authority (the name of your Authority)

LOCAL_AUTHORITY_CODE (the standard lookup code for your authority)

TYF_LA_ID_CODE (the Transfer Your File code for your authority)

For each postcode sector (POSTCODE_OUTWARD_CODE) in a ward (WARD_NAME), (WARD_CODE)

Number of Households in the ward with UC Limited Capability to Work group (HAS_LCW_LATEST_AP)

Number of UC households in the Authority without children (HHS_NO_CHILDREN_IN_LA)

Number of UC households in the Authority with children (HHS_WITH_CHILDREN_IN_LA)

Number of children in the Authority in UC households with children (NO_OF_CHILDREN_IN_LA)

Number of UC households without children in the postcode sector that are below the Free School Meal income threshold and free prescription threshold (HHS_NO_CHILDREN_PRESC_OR_FSM)

Number of UC households without children in the postcode sector that are below the Free Prescription income threshold (HHS_NO_CHILDREN_PRESC)

Number of UC households without children in the postcode sector that are below the Free School meal income threshold (HHS_NO_CHILDREN_FSM)

Number of UC households with children in the postcode sector that are below the Free School Meal income threshold and free prescription threshold (HHS_WITH_CHILDREN_PRESC_OR_FSM)

Number of UC households with children in the postcode sector that are below the Free Prescription income threshold (HHS_WITH_CHILDREN_PRESC)

Number of UC households with children in the postcode sector that are below the Free School meal income threshold (HHS_WITH_CHILDREN_FSM)

Number of children in UC households in the postcode sector that are below the Free School Meal income threshold and free prescription threshold (CHILDREN_PRESCRIPTIONS_OR_FSM)

Number of children in UC households in the postcode sector that are below the Free Prescription income threshold (CHILDREN_PRESCRIPTION)

Number of children in UC households in the postcode sector that are below the Free School meal income threshold (CHILDREN_FSM)

This page is intentionally left blank

City of York Council Household Support Fund 5 Scheme

29 April 24 – 30 September 24

1. York Household Support Fund 5 (HSF) is provided by City of York Council to support vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs.
2. Grants will be provided through two routes

Route 1 – Direct payment to Council Tax account

3. People of working age who are receiving Council Tax Support, around 4500 households, will receive a credit to their council tax account. These payments are intended to help families with household bills.
4. The credit from the Household Support Fund will be no higher than £110 per household.
5. Eligible households will be identified by CYC Revenues & Benefits based on the customers Council Tax Support claim. Eligible credits will be applied direct to the customers Council Tax account. Customers will not need to apply for the credit.

Route 2 - Discretionary applications

6. The discretionary scheme for York residents, who are not eligible for the direct Council Tax credit, and need financial assistance to help with the rising living costs will open on 29 April 24.
7. Applications can be made at **www.york.gov.uk/householdsupportfund**
8. The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need, including
 - families with children of all ages,
 - pensioners,
 - unpaid carers,
 - care leavers
 - disabled people,

- larger families,
 - single-person households, and those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events.
9. Grants will be through a discretionary means tested application which will require applicants to prepare some financial information.
 10. York HSF can provide assistance with
 - Food
 - Energy bills – electricity, gas, oil
 - Water bills (including sewerage)
 - Other essential costs linked to energy or water
 11. Other wider essentials on a discretionary basis, these may include for example
 - a. 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.
 - b. Some exceptional housing costs
 12. Approved awards for assistance with food, energy bills – electricity, gas, oil and Water bills (including sewerage) will be standard amounts based on household size.
 13. Applications can also be made for exceptional financial circumstances relating to other essentials which will be assessed on a discretionary basis. Any exceptional discretionary awards will be made on an individual basis as appropriate.

Who can apply?

14. The scheme is open to City of York residents who are over 16 years of age, who require urgent financial assistance over the period. This includes residents with No Recourse to Public Funds.
15. To be considered you must need financial assistance to help with significantly rising living costs and have inadequate savings to meet eligible costs in line with the scheme.
16. A person in need of additional support may include, but not restricted to:

- Anyone suffering severe financial hardship
- Someone age 24 or under with an Education, Health and Care plan
- Someone age 19 or under classed as not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- A person who has a physical or sensory impairment, learning disability or mental health problem¹.
- Elderly, frail or confused older people
- People who are seriously ill or have a severe long term health condition.
- People who are recently bereaved
- Pregnant women or those who have recently given birth
- Recently unemployed people
- Care leaver
- Those fleeing domestic abuse
- Those who have difficulty in understanding, speaking or reading English

Who cannot apply?

17. The following categories of people do not qualify for help:
 - a. People who do not live within the City of York Council boundaries
18. Assistance will be considered based on propensity to pay essential bills in line with the scheme eligibility criteria. We will use monthly expenses, liabilities and capital for your household to determine this.

¹ The Royal College of Psychiatrists and Money Advice Trust's Debt collection and mental health: ten steps to improve recovery provides useful guidance and further definition of what constitutes a mental health problem

How to apply

19. Route 1 - Eligible households will be identified by CYC Revenues & Benefits based on the customers Council Tax Support claim. Customers will not need to apply for the credit.
20. Route 2 – Residents can apply at www.york.gov.uk/housholdsupportfund
People who are not able to apply online can apply via phone on 01904 551556
Advice and support are available from advice services across the city, see www.york.gov.uk/benefitsadvice or City of York Council Benefits Advice on 01904 552044 (10.00am - 4.00pm, Monday to Friday) or email: incomeservices@york.gov.uk

What information I will need to provide

21. We will need to information about your circumstances and what assistance you are applying for.
22. We will need to ask for information and evidence to show applicants meet the criteria, such as
 - your household includes a child/ren
 - you are a person in need of additional support
 - Your household income, savings, and expenditure, including
 - Earnings
 - DWP benefits
 - Any other income
 - Readily available funds - cash in hand, in the bank or building society accounts.
23. We may ask for further information about your personal circumstances in depth to make sure you are seeking all available support.
24. When applying for assistance with
 - Energy bills – electricity, gas, oil
 - Water bills (including sewerage)
 - Other exceptional emergency costs

25. We will need to see evidence you are liable for these costs and the amounts owed and how your utilities are paid for e.g., Pre-payment meter, monthly direct debit, and quarterly.

How many times can I apply

26. There will be one application award payment per household. The funding is ring-fenced and covers the period from 29 April 2024 until the 30 September 2024.
27. Route 1 – Council Tax Credits to be made in June for period 01/04/23- 30/09/24
28. Route 2 - Discretionary payments will be made on an application basis through to 30 September 24.

How will awards be made

29. Route 1 – eligible households of working age who are receiving Council Tax Support, will receive a credit to their council tax account.
30. Route 2 - Discretionary awards will be assessed on the criteria set out. Applicants who are assessed as outside the criteria will be directed to alternative advice and support as appropriate.
31. Direct grant awards will be made via e-vouchers or payments will be made to the applicant's bank account.

Advice and support

32. Where grants cannot be awarded residents will be signposted to other advice and support. Including
 - other financial support such as Universal Credit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments, York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS)
 - Advice agencies for further information and advice, if there may be other support available or you are not seeking the support you need. For example, this could be getting you some advice and help on how to prepare an income and expenditure budget or by helping you to access more specialist support such as, for example, StepChange debt charity.

Reviews

33. The whole scheme (Direct payments & Discretionary awards) is discretionary meaning that there is no right of appeal. However, you do have the right to a review if you are unhappy with our decision. In this case the decision will be looked at again by someone who did not make the original decision.
34. Where the Council cannot help it will provide you with information about other agencies that may be able to help and where appropriate, make a referral on your behalf. If you remain unhappy you can use the Council's complaints process.
35. We will not review a claim if the funding is exhausted, or the scheme has closed (30 September 2024).

**City of York Council
Equalities Impact Assessment**

Who is submitting the proposal?

Directorate:	Customer & Communities		
Service Area:	Customer and Exchequer Services		
Name of the proposal :	Household Support Fund (HSF) Scheme 5 1 April 2024 to 30 September 24		
Lead officer:	Paul Sanderson		
Date assessment completed:	4 April 24		
Names of those who contributed to the assessment :			
Name	Job title	Organisation	Area of expertise
Susan Wood	Welfare Benefits & Strategic Partnership Manager	CYC	Welfare Benefits
Debbie Plummer	Housing Benefits Manager	CYC	Welfare Benefits
Advice York	N/A	Advice York	Welfare Benefits

Step 1 – Aims and intended outcomes

1.1	What is the purpose of the proposal? Please explain your proposal in Plain English avoiding acronyms and jargon.
	To provide a support to financially vulnerable residents with their increased cost of living especially in relation to utility bills and food.
1.2	Are there any external considerations? (Legislation/government directive/codes of practice etc.)
	This is a Government scheme
1.3	Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?
	All residents in the city who may qualify for support The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need, including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers, disabled people, larger families, single-person households, and those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events.

1.4	What results/outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom? This section should explain what outcomes you want to achieve for service users, staff and/or the wider community. Demonstrate how the proposal links to the Council Plan (2019- 2023) and other corporate strategies and plans.
	The objective of The Fund is to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in most need with the cost of essentials, within the budget provided by Central Government.

Step 2 – Gathering the information and feedback

2.1	What sources of data, evidence and consultation feedback do we have to help us understand the impact of the proposal on equality rights and human rights? Please consider a range of sources, including: consultation exercises, surveys, feedback from staff, stakeholders, participants, research reports, the views of equality groups, as well your own experience of working in this area etc.	
	Source of data/supporting evidence	Reason for using
	Income based benefit data	Indicates financial vulnerability
	Council Tax Support Records	Indicates financial vulnerability
	Advice York Partners	Stakeholder feedback
	York and North Yorkshire Covid Recovery Insight Project Food Insecurity Research report March 2023,	Understand what kind of food security models/provision is available in York and North Yorkshire. Understand the efficacy of different

	<p>food models/provision and explore the outcomes/benefits they can deliver.</p> <p>Use data, insight and evidence to understand the scale of the food insecurity issue now and in future e.g., considering the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>Improve approaches to short-term action planning, longer-term strategy development, commissioning and grant deployment that could contribute to a reduction in food insecurity in York and North Yorkshire.</p>
<p>Looking at evidence from other Local Authorities, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North Yorkshire CC and borough councils - Warm Homes on Prescriptions https://es.catapult.org.uk/project/warm-home-prescription/ - Trussell Trust/ Leeds CC cash first pilot 	<p>Learn from good practice.</p>
<p>Discussions with existing and potential delivery partners, including York Energy Advice, Citizens Advice, York Foodbank, Age UK and interna teams – Income Services, Housing, Local Area Coordination</p>	<p>Discussion about what has work well and not so well to date, understand continuing needs and potential developments.</p>

Step 3 – Gaps in data and knowledge

3.1	What are the main gaps in information and understanding of the impact of your proposal? Please indicate how any gaps will be dealt with.	
Gaps in data or knowledge		Action to deal with this
<p>The gap in information is having specific data on individual residents/households and particular target groups, to ensure people know about the scheme and supported to apply if needed.</p>		<p>Advice and community support services will enable us to extend our reach to specific target communities to try to address this.</p> <p>Working with trusted providers to deliver food and fuel vouchers to their clients directly.</p> <p>The scheme is open to any household in the city to apply and will be well communicated through CYC and its partners. It is the fifth such scheme so many households whom we are aware off that are experiencing financial difficulty will receive direct funding and all others across the city can apply</p>

Step 4 – Analysing the impacts or effects.

4.1	<p>Please consider what the evidence tells you about the likely impact (positive or negative) on people sharing a protected characteristic, i.e. how significant could the impacts be if we did not make any adjustments? Remember the duty is also positive – so please identify where the proposal offers opportunities to promote equality and/or foster good relations.</p>	
-----	--	--

Equality Groups and Human Rights.	Key Findings/Impacts	Positive (+) Negative (-) Neutral (0)	High (H) Medium (M) Low (L)
Age	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as pension credit, CTS	+	H
Disability	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, pension credit, CTS	+	H
Gender	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, pension credit, CTS	+	H
Gender Reassignment	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, pension credit, CTS	+	H
Marriage and civil partnership	n/a		
Pregnancy and maternity	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, Healthy Start, CTS	+	H
Race	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, pension credit, CTS	+	H

Religion and belief	n/a		
Sexual orientation	n/a		
Other Socio-economic groups including :	Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?		
Carer	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, pension credit, CTS	+	H
Low income groups	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, pension credit, CTS	+	H
Veterans, Armed Forces Community	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food. Will link residents to and raise awareness of other advice and support available, such as universal credit, pension credit, CTS	+	H
Other			
Impact on human rights:			
List any human rights impacted.	There are no known impacts of this scheme affecting any human rights detrimentally.		

Use the following guidance to inform your responses:

Indicate:

- Where you think that the proposal could have a POSITIVE impact on any of the equality groups like promoting equality and equal opportunities or improving relations within equality groups
- Where you think that the proposal could have a NEGATIVE impact on any of the equality groups, i.e. it could disadvantage them
- Where you think that this proposal has a NEUTRAL effect on any of the equality groups listed below i.e. it has no effect currently on equality groups.

It is important to remember that a proposal may be highly relevant to one aspect of equality and not relevant to another.

<p>High impact (The proposal or process is very equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is significant potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or public facing The proposal has consequences for or affects significant numbers of people The proposal has the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights.</p>
<p>Medium impact (The proposal or process is somewhat equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is some evidence to suggest potential for or evidence of adverse impact The proposal is institution wide or cross-Unit, but mainly internal The proposal has consequences for or affects some people The proposal has the potential to make a contribution to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>
<p>Low impact (The proposal or process might be equality relevant)</p>	<p>There is little evidence to suggest that the proposal could result in adverse impact The proposal operates in a limited way The proposal has consequences for or affects few people The proposal may have the potential to contribute to promoting equality and the exercise of human rights</p>

Step 5 - Mitigating adverse impacts and maximising positive impacts

5.1	Based on your findings, explain ways you plan to mitigate any unlawful prohibited conduct or unwanted adverse impact. Where positive impacts have been identified, what is been done to optimise opportunities to advance equality or foster good relations?
<p>There are no adverse impacts arising from the support the benefit to all groups is a financial one where they qualify. The key group are those on low income in any of the categories within the EIA.</p>	

Step 6 – Recommendations and conclusions of the assessment

6.1	Having considered the potential or actual impacts you should be in a position to make an informed judgement on what should be done. In all cases, document your reasoning that justifies your decision. There are four main options you can take:
<p>- No major change to the proposal – the EIA demonstrates the proposal is robust. There is no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact and you have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitor and review.</p>	

- **Adjust the proposal** – the EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance quality or to foster good relations.
- **Continue with the proposal** (despite the potential for adverse impact) – you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and how you believe the decision is compatible with our obligations under the duty
- **Stop and remove the proposal** – if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should consider stopping the proposal altogether. If a proposal leads to unlawful discrimination it should be removed or changed.

Important: If there are any adverse impacts you cannot mitigate, please provide a compelling reason in the justification column.

Option selected	Conclusions/justification
Continue with the proposal	This is a time limited central government scheme that provides financial support to low income households and those households experiencing financial difficulties across the city. It is open to all residents.

Step 7 – Summary of agreed actions resulting from the assessment

7.1 What action, by whom, will be undertaken as a result of the impact assessment.			
Impact/issue	Action to be taken	Person responsible	Timescale
N/A			

Step 8 - Monitor, review and improve

8. 1	How will the impact of your proposal be monitored and improved upon going forward? Consider how will you identify the impact of activities on protected characteristics and other marginalised groups going forward? How will any learning and enhancements be capitalised on and embedded?
	All payments need to be recorded for Government records and internal control. This data provides information to the council on the Households receiving support. This is a cash first approach empowering households to manage their financial pressures arising from the cost of living crises. The scheme will be also be reported on as part of 6 monthly reports to the Executive Member portfolio holders as part of a welfare benefits update report.