



Notice of a public

Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance Meeting to be held in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods (for agenda item 4 Household Support Fund April 2022 – September 2022)

To: Councillor Ayre (Executive Member for Finance and Performance) and Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods)

Date: Monday, 9 May 2022

Time: 10.00 am

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 Wednesday 11 July 2022.**

*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 Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee.

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5:00pm on Thursday 5 May 2022.**

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, 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.

- 2. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 2)
To approve and sign the minutes of the Decision Session held on 11 April 2022.

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. The deadline for registering at this meeting is at **5:00pm on Thursday 5 May 2022.**

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 live and on demand at www.york.gov.uk/webcasts.

- 4. Household Support Fund April 2022 – September 2022** (Pages 3 - 52)

This paper presents the Household Support Fund (HSF) scheme April to September 2022 to the Executive Member for Finance & Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods for approval.

- 5. Regular update on routine procurements and approval of ICT procurement over £250k** (Pages 53 - 58)

This report will present a register of procurement exercises deemed routine for the period of April 2020 to April 2022. These have been defined as routine procurements as per the council's contract procedure rules and expenditure will fall within existing capital and revenue budget provisions. It is intended that these reports will be brought to this decision session every 6 months, with any non routine ICT or other procurements reported as they arise between £250k and £500k in value.

6. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Executive Member considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

Name: Angela Bielby

Telephone: (01904) 552599

Email: a.bielby@york.gov.uk

For more information about any of the following, please contact the Democracy 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**

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Finance and Performance
Date	11 April 2022
Present	Councillor Ayre

16. Declarations of Interest

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 he might have had in respect of business on the agenda. He confirmed he had none.

17. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session held on 16 March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

18. Council Tax Energy Rebate discretionary scheme

The Executive Member considered a report that detailed the discretionary council tax energy rebate scheme for approval. The Head of Customer and Exchequer Services outlined the energy rebate scheme noting that where residents did not pay by direct debit, a direct payment would be made to them in May.

The Executive Member asked about customer contact levels about the scheme and the Head of Customer and Exchequer Services advised that levels were fine at the moment and the council would make sure that all eligible for the scheme would receive their payment. He was also asked and confirmed that communications about the scheme would be issued after the meeting and the Executive Member suggested that this could be followed up with further communications about the scheme at the end of May. The Executive Member welcomed the scheme and;

Resolved: That the council's discretionary council tax energy rebate scheme as set out at paragraph 6 – 10 of the report and Annex A be approved.

Reason: To provide financial support in respect of the increasing utility costs to the city's financially vulnerable residents.

19. Application for Community Right to Bid under the Localism Act 2011 – Derwent Arms Public House

The Executive Member considered a report detailing the application to renew the listing of the Derwent Arms, Osbaldwick, York as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), for consideration by the Council. The application had been received from Osbaldwick Parish Council. The Asset Manager outlined the application noting that legal services had confirmed that the application met requirements. He added that Heineken was the owner of the premises and no representations on the application had been received. In response to a question from the Executive Member, the Asset Manager confirmed that the land attached to the Derwent Arms had been used for occasional caravan club events, but was not a registered caravan site.

Resolved: That approval be given to the renewal of the listing of Derwent Arms, Osbaldwick, York, as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) for the reasons outlined within this report.

Reason: To ensure the Council meets its legislative requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and promotes community access to community facilities.

Cllr N Ayre, Chair

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.07 am].



Executive Member for Finance & Performance

9 May 2022

Report of the Director Customer and Communities

Household Support Fund April – September 2022

Summary

1. This paper presents the Household Support Fund (HSF) scheme April to September 2022 to the Executive Member for Finance & Performance in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods for approval.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to approve:
 - a) the council's HSF scheme (Annex A).
 - b) allocation of £50k in funding to food vouchers (Paragraph 9 and Annex A)
 - c) the delegation of discretion to pay claims made within the broader scope of the scheme guidance as set out by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) (Annex B) to the Head of Customer & Exchequer Services.

Reason: To provide financial support to the city's most financially vulnerable residents through the April – September 2022 arising from the ongoing cost of living increases.

Background

3. On 23 March 2022, the government announced in the Spring Statement that the Household Support Fund (HSF) would be extended from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.
4. The purpose of the scheme is to help to support households in the most financial need arising from the current cost of living increases

particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggled with energy bills, food and water bills. At least one third of the total funding must be spent on families with children and at least one third must be spent on pensioners. In terms of type of support, the expectation is that the HSF extension (April – Sept 22) should be used in a similar way as the original HSF scheme, with a greater emphasis on supporting households with energy bills. Food and water bills also remain. The Government guidance is set out at Annex B.

5. The total funding including any administration costs for City of York Council is £1.037m. The funding is paid retrospectively in July 2022 and October 2022 following management returns and all funding must be spent or committed by 30th September 2022.

HFS Scheme

6. This is the fourth government scheme following the Winter Support Grants (WSG) from December 2020 to April 2021, the Local Covid Support Grant (LCSG) from April 2021 to September 2021 and the initial HSF scheme October 2021 to March 2022. The scheme allows as far as possible to mitigate the necessity for all potentially qualifying customers to have to make a claim. The previous HFS scheme made grant payments directly to families with children claiming Council Tax Support (CTS) and under the new scheme this can be extended to pensioners claiming CTS. The scheme still requires that proper security checks are undertaken before making any payment.
7. The HFS scheme is set out at Annex A of this report and will facilitate support payments to all qualifying families and pensioners experiencing financial difficulties. Whilst those families and pensioners already identified will receive payment automatically any resident in the city can apply for support through the online application process. This includes families with or without children and whether a couple or a single person. The level of support are set out at Table 1 below:

Table 1

Families with dependent children

Household	Children	Amount £ (x1)
Family (single)	1	150
Family (single)	2	175
Family (single)	3	200
Family (single)	4+	225
Family (couple)	1	175
Family (couple)	2	200
Family (couple)	3	225
Family (couple)	4+	250

Households over state pension age

Per household	Amount £100
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Households receiving enhanced PIP

Per household	Amount £100
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8. The scheme is there to support those with financial difficulties with food and support around heating and other utility bills. A resident does not have to be in receipt of DWP benefits to claim and each claim will be considered on its own merits. Any resident who does not qualify will be signposted to other support both internally and externally including the York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS).
9. The previous HSF scheme provide funding support for heating vouchers. The council budget 2022/23 provided further £50k of funding for the heating voucher scheme. The new HSF scheme recommends that £50k of the funding is allocated to food vouchers using the same voucher scheme as the fuel vouchers. The purpose is to ensure that there is more capacity across the city to manage food poverty by the council and its third sector partners through to September 2022.

Analysis

10. The difference between this scheme and the former HSF scheme is that it importantly brings financially vulnerable pensioners into focus. The impact of this is that the funding previously provided to families will be considerably reduced and this means that all qualifying customers who we pay directly under the scheme will be paid once before summer school holidays as opposed to two payments as in the former scheme. The direct application for all other residents will open after the approval of the scheme.
11. Whilst it may seem to be a considerable gap between approval and payment this is arising due to additional pressures in administering the Energy Rebate to over 70,000 customers of which approximately 20,000 do not pay by direct debit so will need to apply for their rebate. However most of the qualifying households for the new HSF scheme will qualify for the energy rebate so will receive £150 during April and May in advance of HSF payments during June and July.
12. In addition to this there is continuing support through the York Financial Support Scheme (YFAS) and access to fuel vouchers following the council's budget commitment of a further £50k of funding.

Consultation

13. This is a Government scheme and there was no consultation with City of York Council on its design. There is, however, some latitude within the scheme on how it is delivered and the council has consulted with its Advice York partners as part of the Equalities Impact Assessment (Annex C) on how it will be delivered. The scheme has been discussed with the council's charity, voluntary and community sector partners (Advice York) and reflects their thoughts in terms of getting money to families and pensioners as quickly and simply as possible

Implications

- 14.

Financial

There are no financial implications as this is Government grant not council budget. The council does not receive new burdens in respect of this scheme but can take reasonable administration costs that are reported through the management return. The council

costs are estimated at £50k. Any risk around not spending the grant is outlined in Paragraph 15 below.

Human Resources (HR)

There are no HR implications.

Equalities

This report will impact on all communities equally. Equalities Impact Assessment attached at Annex C

Legal

No implications

Crime and Disorder, Information Technology and Property

No implications

Risk Management

- 15. The key risk associated with this paper relates to ensuring that the scheme is delivered within and up to the financial value of the Government grant received. This is managed by basing the scheme on existing data around vulnerable family numbers in the city and taking a prudent approach to the grant payments.

Author responsible for the report:

David Walker
Head of Customer & Exchequer Services

Chief Officer responsible for the report:

Pauline Stuchfield
Director Customer and Communities

Report Approved



Date
27/04/22

Specialist Implications Officer(s):

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27 - _ Budget papers presented to Executive 7/2/2022 and Full Council 17/2/2022 available at:

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=12800&Ver=4>

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=331&MId=12807&Ver=4>

Annexes

Annex A – HSF Scheme

Annex B – DWP Guidance

Annex C - EIA

Household Support Fund (HSF) Scheme 2 – City of York Council

1 April 2022 to 31 September 2022

Background

1. The Government announced on 31st March 2022 that a new Household Support Fund (HSF) would be available for families in financial need. £421 million has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with significantly rising living costs. This funding covers the period 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 inclusive. Local Authorities have discretion on how this funding is used within the scope set out in the Government guidance.
2. At least one third of the total funding must be used to support households with children, at least one third of the total funding must be used to support pensioners, with up to one third of the total funding to other households genuinely in need of support.
3. The expectation is that the Household Support Fund should primarily be used to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills. It can also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and with wider essential costs where appropriate. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.
4. The previous HSF scheme ended on 31th March 2022. The new scheme is similar and is to support the same demographic of the city as the previous similar financial support schemes.

Finance & Rules

5. City of York Council has been given £1,037,906 to cover the period 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.
6. Funding will be paid to the council by the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) in arrears. Two management information returns with a

breakdown of spend across the core categories will be required by DWP to facilitate this. An interim MI return is required by 22 July 2022 for spend for the period 01 April 2022 to 30 June 2022. The interim MI return will be used to determine eligible spend to 30 June 2022 and an interim grant payment will be made to CYC for this period when the information in our return has been verified.

7. A final MI return is required showing total spend from 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 by 21 October 2022. The final MI return will be used to determine total eligible spend to 30 September 2022 and a final grant payment will be made to the council for this period when the information in our return has been verified.
8. A portion of the funding may be allocated to administration costs by the local authority. This must be detailed on the returns and be deemed reasonable by DWP.
9. Local Authorities have the flexibility and discretion to distribute the funds to best fits the scheme's objectives. There are two conditions that must be adhered to:
 - Ensure a minimum of 33% is allocated to households with children.
 - Ensure a minimum of 33% is allocated to pensioners.
 - Payments must be to help in one of the eligible categories (Food, Energy & Water, Essentials linked to Energy & Water, Wider Essentials, and Exceptional emergency housing costs).

City Of York HSF Details

Overview

10. Funding will be distributed as efficiently as possible to families with children, pensioners and other vulnerable households in most need with food, energy and water bills. This will be done in two ways:
 - Providing support to financially vulnerable households already identified through Council Tax Support.
 - A complementary discretionary means tested application route available for those households not known to us.

Target Audience

11. Primarily we will target low income households with families who are known to us and are most likely to need assistance with food energy and water bills.
12. Anyone not in the above category in need of help with food, energy and water bills will also be able to apply through a means tested route.
13. Wider essential costs in line with the guidance will also be considered on a discretionary basis.

Distribution of Funds/Application Routes

14. Funds will be distributed through cash payments directly into customer bank accounts. This will provide the flexibility to pay for various household bills as appropriate.
15. Successful recipients will receive one payment in the July to help with budgeting.
16. There will be two mechanisms for distributing funds:-

Route 1a – Direct payment

All identified Council Tax Support (CTS) customers

- With dependent children
- In receipt of High Rate Personal Independence Payment
- Pensioners in receipt of Council Tax Support

This will involve a simple information gathering process in order for the customer to claim their award. These customers have already been means tested through the CTS/PIP/ESA/UC process, so this is purely to gather bank details in order to make payment.

Payment amounts will be paid directly into their bank accounts.

The amounts will depend on family size (See Annex A).

Route 2 - Discretionary. This Route will be discretionary means-tested awards for any other eligible essentials as set out in the Government's guidance. We would expect these to generally come through as a supported application. Any exceptional awards will be up to a maximum of £500.

Route 3 – CYC Food Voucher Scheme. A budget of £50k will be allocated to CYC Food Voucher Scheme.

Registered local advice and support workers, both CYC and voluntary sector partners, will be able to provide CYC food vouchers to customers who contact them directly for assistance with food.

Applicants who are assessed as outside any of the above criteria will be directed to alternative advice and support as appropriate.

Payment Frequency

17. There will be one application window for the standard payments via Route 1. Payments to be made in July for 01/04/22-31/09/22
18. Discretionary payments will be made on an ad-hoc basis in conjunction with the payment periods as above.

Annexe A

City of York Household Support Fund 2

- I. York Household Support Fund 2 (HSF) is provided by City of York Council to support people who are most in need.
- II. York HSF will provide assistance to families with children, pensioners and other vulnerable households.
- III. York HSF can provide assistance with
 - Food
 - Energy bills – electricity, gas, oil
 - Water bills (including sewerage)
 - Other essential costs linked to energy or water
 - Other wider essentials on a discretionary basis
 - Some exceptional housing costs.
- IV. Grant award payments will be made to the applicant's bank account.
- V. The scheme is 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.

Who can apply?

- VI. The scheme is open to City of York residents who are over 16 years of age, who require urgent financial assistance over the period.

VII. To be considered you must require financial assistance **and** have inadequate savings to meet eligible costs in line with the scheme.

And you are

- A family with a child / children

Or

- A household with a member who is over state pension age

Or

- A person in need of additional support

VIII. The definition of a household with a child is a household containing any person:

- Who will be under the age of 19 as at 30 September 2022 or
- A person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided.
- Where an eligible child lives on his or her own, they are a household that includes a child covered in the one third allocation for households with children.

IX. A household with a pensioner is any household containing any person:

- Who has reached state pension age by 30th September 2022 (and no eligible children as defined above are resident)

X. Households which include a person aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and/or care leavers may still be eligible for grant support however that support falls within the one third allocation to other households (without children or pensioners).

XI. A person in need of additional support may include, but is 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?

- XII. The following categories of people do not qualify for help:
- People who do not live within the City of York Council boundaries

What assistance can I apply for?

- XIII. York HSF can provide assistance with
- Food
 - Energy bills – electricity, gas, oil
 - Water bills (including sewerage)
 - Other essential costs linked to energy or water
 - Other wider essentials on a discretionary basis
 - Internet connection/data bills
 - Some exceptional housing costs.

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

- XIV. 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.

How to apply

- XV. Grants will be provided through two routes

Route 1 - Invited to apply

- XVI. People who meet the following eligibility criteria will be invited by letter to apply for the grant scheme.
- Families with dependent children under 18 who are currently receiving Council Tax Support.
 - People in receipt of Housing benefit/Council Tax Support and Enhanced Personal Independence Payments (PIP).
 - People over state pension age - who are currently receiving Council Tax Support.
- XVII. The invitation will letter give details of how to apply. This will be through an online application. The web link is provided in the letter.
- XVIII. Anyone who needs assistance to apply can contact our Benefits Team or talk to one of the advice and support services across the city.

Or contact our customer service team.

- XIV. This support will be provided as one payment in July 2022. These payments are intended to help families with household bills. The payment will be a standard amount based on the number of children in the family.

Route 2 - Direct applications

- XV. Residents who have not been invited to apply and are struggling to meet their utility bills can also apply directly for a grant at www.york.gov.uk/householdsupportfund
- XVI. Grants will be through a discretionary means tested application which will require applicants to prepare some financial information. Applications can also be made for exceptional financial circumstances relating to other essentials which will be assessed on a discretionary basis.

- XVII. Any exceptional discretionary awards will be made on an individual basis as appropriate.

What information I will need to provide

- XIV. We will need to ask for information and evidence to show Applicants meet the criteria 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;
- XV. We will need to establish why you applying for financial support. We may ask about your personal circumstances in depth to make sure you are seeking all available support.
- XVI. When applying for assistance with
- Energy bills – electricity, gas, oil
 - Water bills (including sewerage)
 - Other exceptional emergency costs
- XIV. 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.
- XV. If you are not seeking the support you need we will suggest agencies that may be able to help you. 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 agencies such as, for example, the StepChange debt charity.

How many times can I apply?

- XVI. There will be one application award payment. The funding is ring-fenced and covers the period from 1 April 2022 until the 31

September 2022.

Route 1 -. Payments to be made in July for period 01/4/22-31/09/22

Route 2 - Discretionary payments will be made on an ad-hoc basis responding to individual applications.

How will awards be made?

- XVII. Awards will be paid directly to people's bank account (x1).
 XVIII. Standard award Levels will be as below (excludes discretionary Max £500)

Families with dependent children

Household	Children	Amount £ (x1)
Family (single)	1	150
Family (single)	2	175
Family (single)	3	200
Family (single)	4+	225
Family (couple)	1	175
Family (couple)	2	200
Family (couple)	3	225
Family (couple)	4+	250

Households over state pension age

Per household	Amount £100
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Households receiving enhanced PIP

Per household	Amount £100
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Reviews

- XIV. The scheme 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.

- XV. 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.

Annexe B

Definitions

The definition of a household with a child is a household containing any person:

- who will be under the age of 19 as at 30 September 2022 or
- a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided.
- or where an eligible child is living on his or her own, they are treated as a 'household'

The definition of a household with a pensioner is any household containing any person:

- who has reached state pension age by 30th September 2022 (and no eligible children as defined above are resident)

Households which include a person aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and/or care leavers may still be eligible for grant support however that support falls within the one third allocation to other households (without children or pensioners).

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Household Support Fund (1 April 2022 – 30 September 2022): – Draft Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England

Introduction

1. £421 million has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with significantly rising living costs. This funding covers the period 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 inclusive. Local Authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out in the accompanying grant determination and this guidance. The expectation is that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need particularly those including children and pensioners who would otherwise struggled with energy bills, food and water bills. Energy bills may be of particular concern to low income households during the period of the scheme and Local Authorities should especially consider how they can support households with the cost of energy. It can also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and with wider essential costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.
2. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is providing funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs), under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to households most in need. It is important to stress this covers a wide range of low income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, and other low income households, particularly those who cannot increase their income through work, to prevent escalation of problems.
Note: County Councils and Unitary Authorities will be referred to as ‘Authorities’ throughout the remainder of this guidance.
3. Authorities have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including providing vouchers to households, making direct provision of food or goods, or issuing grants to third parties (with the exception of grants for advice provision). Authorities have the local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those most in need. Authorities must work together with District Councils to ensure the funding meets its objectives by identifying those most in need.
4. This guidance sets out the required collaboration between DWP, Authorities, including their delivery partners, including District Councils as well as any charitable organisations etc, to successfully meet the policy intent within the agreed framework. It also provides the constraints that Authorities need to work within and the distribution of funding and reporting arrangements.
5. Rather than focus on one specific vulnerable group, Authorities should use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households to prevent escalation of

problems. Authorities should particularly consider how they can support low income households that cannot increase their income through work, such as pensioners, people with disabilities, unpaid carers and parents of very young children in their area. Authorities have access to DWP's Searchlight portal which provides information on individual citizens' entitlement to (and confirms receipt of) DWP welfare benefits. Since June 2021 we have provided Authorities with information relating to Universal Credit (UC) claims with limited capability for work or earnings below the free school meals and free prescription thresholds in their area. Authorities may find this information useful in identifying those most in need. DWP will be establishing a further data share covering people receiving the Guarantee Credit and/or Savings Credit elements of Pension Credit.

6. However, support is not restricted to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits. Therefore, Authorities should also use other sources of information to identify vulnerable households, including advice from professionals who come into contact with vulnerable households such as social workers and Supporting Families advisors.
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.

Communication

8. The Authority must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the grant is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions or the UK Government in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases.

Objective and key principles

9. The objective of the Household Support Fund is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs.
10. Although this is an extension to the original Household Support Fund, it is a new grant subject to its own grant conditions as set out in the Grant Determination letter. Any underspends from the previous scheme cannot be carried forward.
11. Funds should be spent or committed before 30 September 2022 and cannot be held over for future usage.
12. When administering this scheme, you are encouraged to adopt the following principles:
 - use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need, taking into account a wide range of information;
 - use the funding from 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy, food and water bills, and other related essentials. You can also use the funding to support households who are struggling to afford wider essentials;
 - In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, the funding can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, subject to the provisions at paragraph 17 below.
 - This includes payments made, or committed to, by the Authority or any person acting on behalf of the Authority, from 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. For example, this would allow any vouchers issued before the end of the funding period to be redeemed in October 2022. All authorities are encouraged to ensure

that any vouchers issued are redeemed before the end of the scheme, or shortly thereafter, or consider recycling unused vouchers;

- work together with District Councils including, where necessary and appropriate, other local services, such as social and care workers to help identify and support households within the scope of the scheme.

13. When deciding how to help people, you should consider:

- how you plan to provide support to vulnerable households, i.e. paying into bank accounts, use of cash and vouchers;
- any risks associated with these payment methods – see section Managing the risk of fraud.

Working with other organisations

14. Authorities should develop a 'local eligibility framework and approach' to enable them to distribute grant funding that best supports households most in need. At least one third of the funding is for vulnerable households with children (see the definition of a child under paragraph 22 below and paragraph 5(a) of the Grant Conditions). At least one third of the funding is for pensioners. The remainder of the funding (up to one third) is available for other vulnerable households (without children or pensioners including individuals).

15. Authorities have flexibility to develop a local delivery approach that best fits the scheme's objectives. Where Authorities choose to work with multiple organisations to provide a local delivery network or where Authorities engage with District Councils to deliver this grant on their behalf, detailed arrangements and funding should be made available to those organisations as soon as possible so that support for vulnerable households can be provided as soon as is practically possible.

16. Authorities must work collaboratively with District Councils and other organisations in their area who may come into contact with those households who are eligible and would benefit from this grant. 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. If Authorities decide to engage with District Councils in this way they are encouraged to do so as quickly as possible to ensure roles, responsibilities and effective arrangements are put in place to deliver the scheme promptly and efficiently. Where Authorities are working with Third Party Organisations (TPOs), this should be done on an objectively fair, transparent and non-discriminatory basis, having regard to the time available to deliver the scheme.

Establishing eligibility

17. Authorities have the flexibility within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility. In doing so they should particularly consider households who cannot increase their income through work. Authorities can request applications for support or can proactively identify households who may benefit or can take a mixture of the two approaches. Where Authorities are proactively identifying households they should consider how they can ensure that they are focusing on those in the most need to prevent 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 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). 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 scheme. 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.

18. Awards must be based on the following framework:

- at least one third of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, at least one third of the total funding will be ring fenced to support pensioners with up to one third of the total funding to other households genuinely in need of support. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits;
- Eligible spend includes:
 - Energy and water. The Fund should primarily be used to 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 with water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, and sanitary purposes and sewerage.
 - Food. The Fund should also primarily be used to provide support with food whether in kind or through vouchers or cash.
 - Essentials linked to energy and water. The Fund can be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy and water (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.), in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access energy , food and water.
 - Wider essentials. The Fund can be used to support with wider essential needs not linked to energy and water 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, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive.
 - Housing Costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Fund can be used to support housing costs. Where eligible, ongoing housing support for rent must be provided through the housing cost element of Universal Credit (UC) and Housing Benefit (HB) rather than the Household Support Fund. In addition, eligibility for DHPs must first be considered before emergency housing support is offered through the Household Support 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).

- In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, households in receipt of HB, UC, or DHPs can still receive housing cost support through the Household Support 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 Household Support 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.
- 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 Universal Credit and Housing Benefit. 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.
- Reasonable administrative costs. This includes reasonable costs incurred administering the scheme. These include for example:
 - staff costs
 - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme
 - web page design
 - printing application forms
 - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production
- Eligible spend does not include:
 - Advice services including debt advice;
 - Mortgage costs.
- It is expected that the focus of support should be on bills and food and that support for housing costs should only be given in exceptional cases of genuine emergency. Beyond this, Authorities have discretion to determine the most appropriate scheme for their area, based on their understanding of local need and with due regard to equality considerations.
- 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 and the risk of fraud and error. Awards to any

given household can either cover only one of the spend eligibility categories listed above, or can cover several.

- Authorities should not make Household Support Fund 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 claimant, the Authority or employer.

Funding overlap

19. Authorities should consider household circumstances when making a decision to spend this grant. Households may be receiving other forms of support, and this should be taken into account to avoid duplicating provision where possible. However, families receiving other forms of assistance are not excluded from receiving support through this grant.

Individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds

20. 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

21. 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.

Definitions

22. For the purpose of this grant (and without prejudice to other schemes):

- The definition of a household with a child is a household containing any person:
 - who will be under the age of 19 as at 30 September 2022 or
 - a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided.
- Where an eligible child lives on his or her own, they are a household that includes a child covered in the one third allocation for households with children.
- The definition of a household with a pensioner is any household containing any person:
 - who has reached state pension age by 30th September 2022 (and no eligible children as defined above are resident)

23. Households which include a person aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and/or care leavers may still be eligible for grant support

however that support falls within the one third allocation to other households (without children or pensioners).

24. There is no prescriptive definition of essentials. Authorities have discretion to assess what is reasonable to assist those in genuine need this winter with regard to the examples above.
25. Third party organisations may include but are not limited to:
- Registered charities and voluntary organisations
 - Schools
 - Food banks
 - General Practitioners
 - Care organisations

Access to data

26. The Household Support Fund is being classified as Local Welfare Provision (LWP). The provision of DWP data to LAs is under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 'Department for Work and Pensions and local authorities (Access, handling, exchange and protection of Department for Work and Pensions' and HM Revenue and Customs' data)'.
27. Local 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 data via a monthly data share for the purpose of this grant.
28. LAs 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 below data sources for Local Welfare Provision.
29. Staff accessing Searchlight will need to be registered with the Employee Authentication System (EAS). 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

30. 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 those families and individuals to whom to target this support. Authorities may also wish to establish if other forms of support are available to the household. In relation to housing costs they must do so including by checking whether the household could receive Discretionary Housing Payments The Authority must also first consider if the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
31. Authorities do not have permission for the purposes of this scheme to access the 'Income' data provided on Searchlight for the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.
32. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential customers who may be eligible for the scheme 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).

UC data share

33. We are providing Authorities with details of UC claimants in their Authority whose income is below the Free School Meal and Free Prescription thresholds for both individuals and summary level by Ward. We are also providing Authorities with details of UC claimants with a limited capability for work both at individual level and summary level by Ward. The data is provided monthly via Transfer Your File.

34. We are also providing 2 UC claim data shares on a monthly basis.

File one – contains the National Insurance number of Universal Credit (UC) claimants within the LA area and:

- income below the thresholds of £7,400 per year for Free School Meals 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; and
- the number of children in the household.

File two – contains aggregate data showing those people at or below the:

- Free School Meal income threshold;
- Free Prescription income threshold; and
- are in the Limited Capability for Work group.

For a full breakdown of the file contents see **Annex B**

35. Authorities also have access to their own non-DWP data to help identify vulnerable households who may be eligible for support under this scheme.

Reporting requirements

36. Authorities are required to make two Statements of Grant Usage and management information (MI) returns – **see the Grant Determination**. The deadline for completing these returns is shown in the table below. Completed MI returns should be sent to LAWELFARE.PDT@DWP.GOV.UK

37. An interim MI return is required by 22 July 2022 for spend for the period 01 April 2022 to 30 June 2022. The interim MI return will be used to determine eligible spend to 30 June 2022 and an interim grant payment will be made to your LA for this period when the information in your return has been verified.

38. A final MI return is required showing total spend from 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022 by 21 October 2022. The final MI return will be used to determine total eligible spend to 30 September 2022 and a final grant payment will be made to your Authority for this period when the information in your return has been verified.

39. Authorities should use the standard MI reporting template provided, which incorporates the Statement of Grant Usage. For the purpose of this section:

- **Grant allocation** – refers to the amount of grant allocated to a TPO to distribute to vulnerable households.
- **Grant award or spend refers** to the amount provided or paid to vulnerable households under the remit of this grant.

MI return	Reporting period		Deadline
Interim MI return	From: 01 April 2022	To: 30 June 2022	Deadline: 22 July 2022
Final MI return	From: 01 April 2022	To: 30 September 2022	Deadline: 21 October 2022

40. It is the responsibility of Authorities to provide the MI returns to DWP. Failure to return the MI by the deadline may result in a delayed payment or a payment being refused.
41. Where Authorities (including District Councils) issue awards directly to vulnerable households they should either obtain information at source or via information or data they have access to, to complete the split of spend and number of awards across the eligibility criteria. i.e. households with and without children and pensioners and food, energy bills, essentials linked to food and energy bills, wider essentials and (in exceptional circumstances) housing support. Where Authorities decide to deliver support to vulnerable households through TPOs they should use whatever information the TPO holds, or other available data, to split the level of spend and volume of awards across the eligibility criteria to the best of their ability.

The different elements of the MI template are shown below together with guidance on how to complete them.

Table 1

Table 1: Governance	Response
Local Authority (full name)	
Section 151 officer (name)	
Section 151 officer (email address)	
Is the Section 151 officer / CFO copied into the return to DWP? (Y/N)	
Reporting Period	01/04/22-30/09/22
Approved signed off by	
LA Single Point of Contact	
Date Returned to DWP	

42. Each MI return must include your Section 151 Officer's name and email address to provide assurance on validation of funding spend. If they are the same contact, please input details in both response fields.
43. We also require you to copy your Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer into the email, providing this assurance when you return the MI template to DWP. This will be

checked against DWP records. By doing this you confirm that the S151 Officer has agreed the correctness of spend reported.

44. Please indicate that you have done this in row 4 of the table “Is the section 151 officer / CFO copied into the return to DWP?” If the MI is incomplete/incorrect it will be returned to the authority by the DWP for correction and re-submission which must also be copied to your Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer.

Table 2

Table 2: Total Awards	
Item	Spend (£s)
a) Total amount provided to vulnerable households	£ -
b) Administration Costs	
c) Total LA spend (a+b)	£ -

- **Total Amount provided to vulnerable households** – this is the total amount of the grant fund that has been paid/awarded to vulnerable households. It includes amounts paid by Authorities and by TPOs on behalf of Authorities. It should not include amounts allocated to TPOs that have not been spent during the reporting period. This cell will automatically populate from the total in table 3. Note, all cells which automatically populate are shaded grey and are protected.
- **Administration costs** – this includes reasonable costs incurred administering the scheme. These include for example:
 - staff costs
 - advertising and publicity to raise awareness of the scheme
 - web page design
 - printing application forms
 - small IT changes, for example, to facilitate MI production
- **Total Spend** – this is the total of the above. It is the amount that will be used to determine the grant funding payment, from DWP to cover the full cost of administering the grant in your area. A single grant payment will be made in arrears on the receipt of a fully completed and verified MI return. This cell will automatically populate from the figures in rows a and b.

Table 3

Table 3: Total Value of Awards split by Household Composition					
		a) Households with Children	b) Households with Pensioners	d) Other households	d) Total amount provided to vulnerable households (a+b+c)
Row 1	Spend (£s)				£ -
Row 2	Volumes				-

45. Table 3 relates to grant spend and the volume of awards made in relation to families with children, pensioners and all other households. Rows 1 and 2 relate to grant awards made by Authorities (including District Councils) directly to vulnerable households, and grant awards to vulnerable households made by TPOs.
46. **Spend (£s)** - this is the amount paid/awarded to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. Authorities should make every effort to gather information to establish the household type. For example for Households with children whether a child resides in the household (including being the only member of the household) in order to complete the template as fully as possible. This information is important for DWP to evaluate how successful the scheme has been in providing support to households with and without children.
47. Authorities should either gather information or check existing records they hold or have access to, to establish whether the household includes a child or a pensioner (as defined above) and complete columns a b and c accordingly. Responsibility for MI reporting rests with Authorities. Where Shire Counties pass grant allocations to District Councils, District Councils should pass the information relating to columns a and b to the County Council/Unitary Authority to collate the information and send one collated template to DWP.
48. Where a household includes both a child and a pensioner, for the purpose of the MI you should count it as a household containing a child.
49. **Volumes** - this is the number of individual/separate payments made to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. If multiple awards are made to the same household throughout the period of the scheme each award should be counted separately. Where an award is made to a household with multiple children, it should be classed as a single award.
50. **Reporting TPO Spend and TPO Volumes** - we acknowledge that some TPOs, for example, charitable and voluntary organisations such as food banks, have limited or no access to household information and may not be in a position to provide this information to the same level of accuracy as Authorities. We are therefore asking Authorities and TPOs to report the actual level of spend and the volume of awards across the different eligibility criteria in rows 1 and 2 to the best of their ability.

Table 4

Table 4: Total Value of Awards Split by Category						
	a) Energy and Water	b) Food	c) Essentials linked to Energy and Water	d) Wider Essentials	e) Housing Costs	e) Total amount provided to vulnerable households (a+b+c+d+e)
Spend (£s)						£ -
Volumes						-

51. Table 4 relates to grant spend and the volume of awards made in relation to food, energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs.
52. Spend (£s) - this is the amount paid/awarded to vulnerable households in respect of each category.
53. Volumes - this is the number of individual/separate payments made to vulnerable households within the eligibility criteria. If multiple awards are made to the same

household throughout the period of the scheme each award should be counted separately.

54. Rows 1 and 2 relate to awards/payments made directly to vulnerable households by Authorities including District Councils and grant funding spent by TPOs e.g. charitable and voluntary organisations.
55. TPO Spend and TPO Volumes - we acknowledge that some TPOs, for example, charitable and voluntary organisations have limited MI and may not be in a position to provide this information to the same level of accuracy as Authorities. We are therefore asking Authorities and TPOs to provide, the level of spend and the volume of awards across the different eligibility criteria in rows 1 and 2 to the best of their ability.
56. Total - Table 3 Row 1 column c and Table 4 row 1 column e are protected and will automatically add up spend across the different headings. This figure will automatically populate Table 2 row a.
57. When allocating spend and the volume of awards across the eligibility criteria please follow the guidance below.
58. Table 3 and Table 4 ask for spend and award volumes to be recorded against two sets of criteria. Therefore, the details of each award need to be recorded twice once against one set of criteria and then a second time against the other criteria. Shown below is a worked example of how the MI template should be completed.
59. The eligibility criterion is set against the category of spend, at least one third for households with children and at least one third for pensioners. We are collecting information on food, energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs to provide ministers and interested bodies (e.g. the National Audit Office) assurance over how the Household Support Fund is being spent.
60. Authorities are asked to report and manage spend in relation to both these areas. For example, if a £100 award is made to a household with children for food, you would allocate £100 to the 'Households with children' section in Table 3 and £100 to the 'food' section in Table 4. You would also allocate one award in both these sections of Table 3 and Table 4.
61. Each award needs to be allocated twice – one allocation to each of the eligibility category tables so that when you report on the total spent on family composition and the total spent on the type of support, both eligibility criteria categories will total the amount you have paid. The total volume of awards in Table 3 and Table 4 should also be the same.

Additional guidance and examples when working with TPOs

62. Please include, where possible, the amount of spend across the following categories:
 - households with children, households with pensioners, other households, and
 - energy and water bills, essentials linked to energy and water bills, wider essentials, and (in exceptional circumstances) housing costs.

63. For example, if you have allocated:

- grant funding to a food bank to provide food to vulnerable people, establish the amount of that allocation the food bank has spent and enter the full amount spent under food as you know that the grant allocation has been spent in respect of food, and provide the split across households with and without children to the best of your ability in accordance with the example below.
- grant funding to a charity that specialises in providing vulnerable children with clothing, establish the amount of that allocation the charity has spent and enter the full amount spent in 'households with children' and the full amount of the grant spent in 'wider essentials'. This is because you know that the purpose of the grant is for children and the nature of support is clothing which comes under wider essentials.

64. The amount of MI available will vary considerably across each TPO. Please use whatever information is already available or reasonable to collect to be as accurate as possible.

65. Shown below are some examples of how to complete the template.

Example 1

66. A food bank operates on an open basis where anyone can turn up and pick up food and supplies. This is not an award made directly to vulnerable households by an Authority. The cost is picked up by a TPO, for example, the food bank. The MI template should be completed as per guidance below.

67. The total value of grant spent and the volume of awards made by the charity or voluntary organisations providing the food bank should be entered in Table 3 and Table 4. The Authority or food bank provider will need to provide the split between households with and without children to the best of their ability.

Example 2

68. The Authority directly provides vouchers to vulnerable households. These could be redeemable at a number of food outlets including supermarkets or food banks. Food voucher amounts can vary depending on how many children reside in the household. Authorities are expected to collect or verify information to establish whether the award is made to a household with or without children. The MI template should be completed as follows:

- the value of awards should be entered in Table 3 in 'spend' row 1 column a and row 1 column b based on the information the Authority has been capturing to split spend across these categories;
- the volume of awards should be included in Table 3 row 2 (Volumes) column a and row 2 column b based on the information the Authority has been capturing to split the volume of awards spend across these categories;
- the value of awards should be entered in Table 4 row 1 column a because it relates to food;
- the volume of awards should be included in Table 4 row 2 (Volumes) column a because it relates to food;

DWP engagement

69. LA relationship managers from DWP's LA Partnership, Engagement and Delivery division will contact Authorities to provide support and gather information throughout the scheme. Examples where LA relationship managers will contact Authorities for initial compliance include:

- the MI templates have not been completed and returned;
- the MI templates have not been copied to the Authority's S151 officer or CFO.
- An incorrect template has been used – MI should only be returned on the MI template provided no local versions or PDF copies are acceptable.

70. 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, or
- 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.

71. They will look to identify good practice and identify case studies where appropriate.

72. They will also engage with Authorities around completion of the questionnaire issued with this guidance regarding delivery plans for the grant. Please complete and return this questionnaire to DWP by 29 April 2022. At the end of the scheme we will also ask for a summary of spend against the original delivery plan.

73. DWP will also continue to engage with Authorities to respond to questions we receive via the designated inbox as quickly as possible.

74. 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

75. The Household Support Fund is ring-fenced to be spent as detailed in this guidance and the accompanying grant determination, including the specific condition that at least one third be spent on families with children and one third to be spent on pensioners. 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.

76. Payment of the grant from DWP to Authorities will be made in arrears after the interim MI return in July 2022 and the final MI return at the end of grant period in

October 2022 after we have 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. Both an interim and a final MI return will be required and grant payments will be made in respect of the periods 01 April 2022 to 30 June 2022 and 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

77. MI returns **must be endorsed by the S151** officer in accordance with their statutory assurance responsibility in order for the grant payment to be made by copying your Chief Financial Officer and Section 151 Officer into the email.

78. The guidance for completion is provided on a separate tab within the MI template.

79. The definition of spend includes grant funding that has been provided to vulnerable households, within the scope of the eligibility criteria, and within the period of the scheme 01 April 2022 to 30 September 2022.

80. Spend also includes 'committed spend'. For the purpose of this scheme 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 2022 to a vulnerable household. It would be unreasonable to expect the family 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 scheme.

81. However, committed spend does not include large volumes of food vouchers, procured quite late in the scheme, which cannot be distributed to vulnerable households within the period of the scheme.

82. 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 scheme. Alternatively, Authorities may want to consider:

- purchasing vouchers on a sale or return basis, so that they can return any unused vouchers, or
- if the Authority wants to use the vouchers after the end of the Household Support Fund scheme they should be funded through other means.

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

84. The timetable for provision of funding and MI returns is as follows:

Funding:

Payment	Amount (%)	Date	Notes
Interim	Actual grant spend up to 100% of	August/September 2022	Payment made in arrears

	grant allocation*		
Final	Actual grant spend up to 100% of grant allocation*	December 2022 /January 2023	Payment made in arrears

*subject to eligible spend criteria

Managing the risk of fraud

85. Fraudsters can target funds of this type.

86. 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.

87. To help mitigate this risk, Authorities should involve District Councils and other organisations chosen to administer this scheme to help identify vulnerable families, households and individuals.

88. Authorities wishing to work with TPOs to deliver the scheme 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.

89. Authorities are also encouraged to ensure checks are in place to verify the identity of those eligible.

90. Authorities are encouraged to ask neighbouring authorities to work together to help prevent double provision and/or no provision – especially where allocation of provision is by school in one area and by residential address in another.

91. 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.

92. Authorities should ensure that they consider and put in place suitable controls when making use of vouchers as part of this scheme. 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 this Scheme.

93. 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 to ensure they take into consideration household income and rent liability which may be requested and reviewed as set out in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the grant determination. 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.

94. 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.
95. If the Authority has any grounds for suspecting financial irregularity in the use of any grant paid under this Determination, it must notify the department immediately, explain what steps are being taken to investigate the suspicion and keep the Department 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.
96. If you suspect fraud, you should notify DWP of the:
- number of instances
 - total amount lost
97. 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 schemes.

Complying with Subsidy (previously State Aid) rules

98. The funding is intended to benefit households most in need of support with food, energy bills, related essentials, wider essentials and (exceptionally) housing costs as the economy recovers this winter. The funds should not be used for any economic undertaking.
99. 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.

Administration costs

100. The Household Support Fund funding allocation includes reasonable administration costs to enable Authorities to deliver the scheme. Authorities should deduct their administration costs from the total allocation to determine the amount remaining.
101. In all cases, Authorities should keep administrative costs to a reasonable level.
102. Administration costs for each Authority will be published on www.gov.uk alongside detail of all spend related to this scheme.

Public Sector Equality Duty

103. In accordance with the public sector equality duty, DWP has had due regard for the potential equalities impacts of this grant.
104. 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.

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

Questions and answers

106. Questions and answers can be found at Annex A

Contact

107. If you have any queries about the content of this guidance or use of the funding, you can contact DWP: LA-PED.LAGRANTSPROJECTTEAM@DWP.GOV.UK

DRAFT

Questions and answers

Q1. Why is DWP asking County Councils and Unitary Authorities to administer this instead of District Councils?

A1. County Councils and Unitary Authorities have a statutory duty regarding children and are generally responsible for Local Welfare Assistance. This is not to suggest that District Councils are not capable of delivering support. It reflects the focus of this grant and that support could take many, broad, forms and, therefore, the funding sits better with County Council and Unitary Authorities.

We require County Council and Unitary Authorities to work with their district partners, particularly in relation to any support exceptionally provided with housing costs, as well as other organisations, as appropriate, to ensure the most effective support is delivered to as many vulnerable households as possible.

Q2. Is it acceptable to use the grant funding for Free School Meals?

A2. The Household Support Fund is not intended to replicate or replace Free School Meals and Authorities should avoid duplicating provision where possible.

However, Authorities have discretion over how they use the funding within the grant framework and within the stipulated time period.

Therefore, Authorities may choose to offer awards to families in receipt of Free School Meals if they consider this to be appropriate in their area. In doing so, Authorities should take account of provision available through the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme.

Q3. Can the Scheme be used flexibly for more strategic activity such as advice provision around financial hardship?

A3. Advice provision is not included in the scope of this scheme.

Should Authorities choose to fund advice as part of their support they must do so through means other than the Household Support Fund.

Q4. Can we make multiple awards to the same people or families?

A4. A family or individual can be supported on multiple occasions throughout the lifetime of the scheme, should an Authority deem it to be necessary. However, each award should be reported separately. Although multiple awards to the same households are possible, funding should not be used to support unsustainable tenancies. Where eligible, ongoing housing support should be provided through the housing cost element of Universal Credit and through Housing Benefit – and if needed, through Discretionary Housing Payments.

Q5. Can Searchlight information be used by Authorities to help identify suitable recipients?

A5. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Universal Credit award information is available on Searchlight. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential claimants who may be eligible for the scheme from their own records, they can access Searchlight to verify those claimants' DWP benefit details.

DWP is sharing UC data with LAs each month which LAs can use to identify vulnerable households eligible for payments under the Household Support Fund.

Q6. Does there need to be a complaints and appeals process?

A6. The appeals process falls within each Authority's normal complaints and appeals process. Authorities will be responsible for making determinations on eligibility and as such will need to decide how they administer any complaints or appeals.

Q7. Are there any other sources of guidance?

A7. DWP will continue to update a comprehensive Q&A log based on questions raised by Authorities. This will be reissued in due course.

Q8. Why can't we carry over funding from the previous Household Support Fund?

A8. DWP's funding for the original Household Support Fund was a separate grant and the grant period for that grant ended on 31 March 2022. Funding cannot be carried forward into the new grant period.

Q9. How should Authorities reporting funding which goes to a household that includes a child and a pensioner?

A9. This funding should be reported under 'Households with Children'.

Q10. Can more than one third of funding be spent on households that include a child or on households that include a pensioner?

A10. Yes, at least one third should be spent on each of these groups, but more than this proportion can go to these groups if necessary.



UC Data Share Field
Definitions.docx

* Please note that the Data Share Field Definitions document will be updated and circulated when the new data items are confirmed.

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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 April – September 2022		
Lead officer:	David Walker		
Date assessment completed:	6 th April 2022		
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

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.

	To provide within the budget provided by Central Government support with utility and food costs to those financially vulnerable families who need it.
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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

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
Identifying any resident in a property above council band D who may not be in receipt of any in or out of work benefits, pension benefits but could be financially vulnerable.		The scheme will be publicised and shared with third sector partners. An application form will be available which allows any resident who believes they may qualify to make an application

Step 4 – Analysing the impacts or effects.

4.1	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.		
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	+	H
Disability	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food	+	H
Gender	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food	+	H

Gender Reassignment	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food	+	H
Marriage and civil partnership	n/a		
Pregnancy and maternity	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food	+	H
Race	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food	+	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	+	H
Low income groups	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and Food	+	H
Veterans, Armed Forces Community	Will provide additional financial support for utility bills and food	+	H
Other			
Impact on human rights:			
List any human rights impacted.	n/a		

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?
There are no adverse impacts of 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.	

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:
- 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.	

- **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 families, including pensioners and other residents in the city who meet the qualifying criteria.

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?



Executive Member for Finance & Performance

9 May 2022

Report of Chief Finance Officer

Regular update on routine procurements and approval of ICT procurement over £250k

Summary

- 1) The report will present a register of procurement exercises deemed routine for the period of April 2020 to April 2022. These have been defined as routine procurements as per the council's contract procedure rules and expenditure will fall within existing capital and revenue budget provisions.
- 2) It is intended that these reports will be brought to this decision session every 6 months, with any non routine ICT or other procurements reported as they arise between £250k and £500k in value.

Recommendations

- 3) The Executive Member is asked to:
 - Note the routine procurements that were approved during the period April 2020 to April 2022 (Annex A).

Reason: To ensure that councillors receive reports on routine procurement decisions in line with the council's contract procedure rules and the public have the opportunity to see transparent decision-making in operation relating to major ICT procurements.

Background

- 4) The council's current contract procedure rules state:
 - 7.7 Where the aggregate contract value (including any extension) is between £250,000 and less than £500,000 then the decision to enter the contract requires the approval of an Executive Member or the Executive unless the procurement is treated as Routine as defined in clause 7.9.
 - 7.8 Where the aggregate contract value (including any extension) is £500,000 or more the decision will be regarded as a Key Decision unless the Chief Finance Officer acting in consultation with the Monitoring Officer has approved the procurement as Routine.
 - 7.9 A Routine procurement is any arrangement that represents a low commercial and legal risk to the Council and relates to procurement of goods, services or works with a clearly defined specification and that clearly relate to the routine day to day operation of the Council. Routine procurements will be limited to items such as utilities, insurance or stationery. Where Officers consider a procurement process may be Routine, they are required to liaise with Commercial Procurement who will advise on the relevant paperwork to be submitted to the Chief Finance Officer. Authorisation to treat a procurement as Routine must be sought before the procurement process commences. A Director may enter a Contract where the procurement has been treated as Routine. An updated register of routine procurement must be presented regularly to the Executive Member for Finance and Performance.
- 5) Annex A contains all routine procurements approved by the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer. All the procurement exercises listed were agreed as routine due to their low risk nature and that they relate to the day to day operation of the council.
- 6) This report in future will also cover known ICT routine procurements (£250k-£500k) coming up over the next 6 months or ICT procurements over £250k to £500k of a non routine nature for Executive member approval. There are none to report on this occasion.
- 7) Whilst in some cases the procurement route will be indicated in the annex, as a general rule the most appropriate procurement route will be used in line with professional procurement advice, as determined at the time the council is ready to issue the related specification.
- 8) It is important to note that deeming a project routine does not mean that the work is not advertised or tendered in the normal way. The only impact of deeming a contract as routine is that it is not considered a key decision and therefore is not required to be agreed by Executive.

- 9) In many instances, contracts are reported to the relevant Executive Member. By including all routine procurement in this report, it promotes transparency and allows public scrutiny of the determinations made by the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer.

Consultations

- 10) The council's officer ICT Board, Directorate Management Team and statutory officers have been consulted in the formation of the recommended decisions in this report.

Options/Analysis

- 11) Any options and analysis will be contained within the annexes where Executive Member approval is required for an ICT procurement.

Council Plan

- 12) Outcomes achieved by the activities covered in this report help to deliver all services across the council, but particularly support the Council Plan 2019 - 23 priority of An Open and Effective Council in supporting the delivery of digital services.

Implications

- 13)
- a. **Financial:** There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. All the procurements designated as routine have followed the Council's contract procedure rules and have been evaluated using both price and quality to ensure value for money.
 - b. **Human Resources (HR):** None
 - c. **Equalities:** None
 - d. **Legal:** None
 - e. **Crime and Disorder:** None
 - f. **Information Technology (ICT):** As covered in the Annexes
 - g. **Property:** None
 - h. **Other:** No known implications

Risk Management

- 14) The controls and evidence in this report mitigate/minimise risks associated with high value procurement practice.

Contact Details Author:

Debbie Mitchell
Chief Finance Officer

Chief Officers Responsible for the report:

Debbie Mitchell
Chief Finance Officer

Pauline Stuchfield
Director - Customer &
Corporate Services

Report Approved



Date 27 April 2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Legal: Janie Berry, Monitoring officer

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All



Annex:

Annex A – List of routine procurements April 2020 to April 2022

Background Papers:

None

List of abbreviations used in this report:

CYC

City of York Council

ICT

Information & Communications Technology

Annex A

List of routine

Service	Date approved as routine	Annual Contract Value	Procurement Route
Supply & fit of tyres	July 2020	£62,306	Framework further competition
To add: Education Case Management System	December 2020	£493,502	Framework
Microsoft Licences	August 2021	£631,228	Framework further competition
Microsoft Licences/Software	August 2021	£1,893,683	Framework further competition
Payroll Software Services	Oct 2021	£343,323	Direct Award - HealthTrust Europe Framework

procurements April 2020 to April 2022

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