

Household support fund

Date: 12th July 2024

Report of: Project Manager

Report to: Director of Children & Families

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report sets out how Leeds City Council (Childrens Services) will allocate £350,000 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund between 1st April 2024 and 31st September 2024. A Key Decision (D55289) was taken in May 2022 to accept the DWPs Household Support Fund at that time, along with any further extensions of funding for the Household Support Fund. In terms of the funding local authorities are asked to prioritise supporting households with the cost of energy; however, the fund can also be used to provide support with food, essentials linked to energy and water, wider essentials, and housing costs in exceptional cases of genuine emergency. This report outlines the proposal for distributing the funding allocated to Childrens Services across the city to support vulnerable households. The proposals are based on the experience of running previous rounds of the fund and what is most helpful to vulnerable families. The full guidance can be found here: Household Support Fund: guidance for local councils - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils>

Recommendations

- a) Accept the proposed levels of expenditure as outlined in this report to ensure that the allocated funding for Children's Services meets the grant criteria to support vulnerable households.
- b) Agree the amounts per expenditure allows for support to our most vulnerable groups and to ensure that the funding is appropriately utilised and spent within the allowable grant criteria provided by Government.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report sets out how Leeds City Council (Childrens Services) will allocate £350,000 funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Household Support Fund between 1st April 2024 and 31st September 2024.
- 2 A Key Decision was taken in (D55289) was taken in May 2022 to accept the DWPs Household Support Fund at that time, along with any further extensions of funding for the Household Support Fund.
- 3 Childrens Services sit on the Household support grant meeting and have been involved in discussions regarding previous rounds of the funding for the last three years. This is the fourth round of funding for the Household Support Fund, and final guidance from the DWP on how this round of funding should be spent has been received.
- 4 In terms of type of support, the guidance states that supporting households with the cost of energy should be prioritised. However, the fund can also be used to provide support with food, essentials linked to energy and water, wider essentials and in limited and exceptional circumstances housing costs.
- 5 £140,000 will go into the section 17 budget administered by Children's social working teams, the council provides emergency housing and financial support to families when a child's welfare is at risk or whilst enquiries are being carried out. In Leeds this 'Section 17' funding is used widely to provide support including for food, fuel, essential items, cash and housing costs.
- 6 £210,000 will be used to purchase food (including shopping vouchers) for the following priority groups; Under 5's, GRT team, Front door Safeguarding hub, clusters with high levels of deprivation, Care leavers and Futures.
- 7 The allocated funding is for a 6-month period covering April 2024 to September 2024, therefore there will be 1 allocation of funding during this time to the allocated priority groups. There will be some flexibility recognising some families will be in much greater need. We know from experience that services/practitioners are best placed to ensure families get the right support.
- 8 Briefings will be given to ensure the wider workforce is aware of the full support available to families across the partnership.
- 9 Each service will keep monitoring data on spend and gather feedback and complete case studies for evidence of impact.

What impact will this proposal have?

The funding of £350,000 will provide support with the costs of food, fuel and essential items to vulnerable families and individuals in Leeds between 1st April 2024 and 31st September 2024.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

Tackling poverty and inequality is central to the city's Best City Ambition. The Household Support Fund is focussed on supporting households on the lowest incomes and those which are most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

What are the resource implications?

The vouchers will be distributed to existing service leads in the services identified by Project Manager Families First.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

Leeds City Council will ensure that the provision of support undertaken meets the objectives and criteria set out by the DWP. Childrens Services sit on the Household Grant meeting and will report on progress and spending is line with expectations.

What are the legal implications?

A Key Decision (D55289) was taken in May 2022 to accept Household Support Fund monies from 1st April to the end of September 2022 along with any further extensions of funding for the Household Support Fund.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

None

How will success be measured?

The HSF will be distributed in full to vulnerable households across the city in accordance with Government guidance.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

1st April 2024 to 31st September 2024. The Grant Agreements will commence from 1st April 2024 until 31 September 2024

Project Manager within Early help services will be responsible for ensuring the vouchers reach the priority groups as outlined in this report. The section 17 budget is managed through Heads of Service

Appendices

None

Background papers

None