

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**JOINT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES CABINET PANEL  
AND EDUCATION, LIBRARIES & LOCALISM CABINET PANEL**

**WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2021 AT 09:30AM**

**COVID WINTER GRANT SCHEME - JANUARY 2021 UPDATE**

*Report of the Director of Children's Services*

Author:- Simon Newland, Operations Director for Education,  
Children's Services (Tel: 01992 588 755).

Executive Members:- Cllr Terry Douris, Executive Member, Education,  
Libraries & Localism.  
Cllr Teresa Heritage, Deputy Leader of the Council,  
Executive Member, Children, Young People &  
Families.

**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To update the Joint Panel on Hertfordshire County Council's implementation of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme and the County Council's preparations for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme.

**2. Summary**

2.1 The report is before Members to consider Hertfordshire's progress in implementing the Covid Winter Grant scheme, following confirmation of [policy guidance](#) by the Department of Work and Pensions on the 24 November 2020.

2.2 The report is also before Members to consider Hertfordshire's preparations for the holiday activities and food programme which has been recently announced by the Department of Education.

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 Panel is asked to consider the content of this Report and:

- Note and comment upon the County Council's progress to date in implementing the Winter Covid Grant Scheme.
- Note and comment upon the County Council's preparations for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (see Appendix 1, pages 10—11).

## 4. Background

### Context

4.1 On Sunday 8 November 2020, the Government issued a [press release](#) setting out in headline terms additional support programmes for vulnerable children, families and adults. It was stated that this suite of measures represented a long-term plan to help tackle poor health, hunger and education. Further information was provided the following week. The main features of the programme are:

- A £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme to support children, families and the most vulnerable over winter.
- Significant expansion of the Department for Education's (DfE's) Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018. This investment of up to £220 million will be delivered through grants to local authorities. It will build on the existing programme, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 Local Authorities this summer and is intended to ensure provision for the Easter, Summer and Christmas in school holidays 2021. Further information regarding the Holiday Activities and Food Programme for local authorities will follow shortly from DfE.
- Increasing the value of the Department for Health and Social Care's Healthy Start vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 from April 2021. Healthy Start supports lower-income pregnant women and families with children under four to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula, providing an important nutritional safety net.
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) will provide further funding for local charities through well-established networks to provide immediate support to front-line food aid charities, including food banks, who are supporting those most vulnerable due to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

### **Winter Support Programme: Existing Guidance and what funding may be spent on**

4.2 During the week commencing 9 November 2020, a further letter was sent by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to Local Authorities with details of their financial allocation, as well as information on the constraints and purposes of the new scheme. The letter stated that the new £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme would be run by councils in England. The funding would be ring-fenced and would cover the period to the end of March 2021. Local Authorities received the funding at the beginning of December 2020. The

provisional allocation to the County Council under the scheme was £2.494m. The letter is shown in full in Appendix 2.

4.2.1 Local Authorities (County Councils and Unitary Authorities) were free to determine eligibility in their area and target their support within the scope of the two conditions set out below:

- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support families with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other types of households, including individuals.
- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills (including sewerage), with up to 20% on other items.

4.2.2 The Department of Work and Pensions has stipulated that these two sets of conditions must work in tandem. This means that Hertfordshire County Council's allocation of funds must both be at least 80% weighted towards supporting households with children and be at least 80% weighted towards supporting those households with their food, energy and water bills (including sewerage).

4.3 Local Authorities have flexibility in administering the funding within the confines of the scheme – which may include cash, the provision of food, vouchers, or funding through third party organisations. Local Authorities will be asked to report and manage spend in relation to both these areas.

4.4 This appears to mean in practice is that at least 80% of funds will have to be spent on direct transfers to families/households to support them with bills, leaving 20% for other forms of support — for example food provision and other support delivered by the voluntary sector, information and advice, and administration/management. Having said that, it is not clear that elements such as advice will be fundable in any circumstances.

4.5 On the face of it, the monitoring and reporting requirements proposed by the Department of Work and Pensions appear to be rigorous and potentially restrictive, and will include assurance in terms of ensuring fraud etc is minimised; but we await the next wave of guidance and any further dialogue with the Department of Work and Pensions to clarify this. Mechanisms will need to be out in place to track and report spending. Funding not spent by the end of March 2021 or not spent in accordance with eligibility criteria will be clawed-back. Strictly speaking this would not be received by Hertfordshire County Council as a final tranche of cash will not be provided until after the end of financial year 2020/21.

## Covid Winter Grant Scheme—progress post-implementation

4.6 Hertfordshire County Council has developed three workstreams to deliver the Covid Winter Grant Scheme. This is summarised in the table below:

<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Groups supported</b>	<b>Example support offers</b>
Children & Young People's Free School Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and Young People from Reception to FE College entitled to FSM due to their household's benefit status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ £30 food voucher per child for the Christmas holidays.</li> <li>✓ £15 food voucher per child for February half-term.</li> </ul>
Children & Young People's Social & Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and Young People from households with capped benefits.</li> <li>- Infants from deprived households.</li> <li>- Children Looked After/Care Leavers (aged under 19).</li> <li>- Children and Young People from households facing unexpected hardship.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Extending Herts Help's Crisis Intervention Service offer (including white goods)<sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>✓ £45 food vouchers for infants.</li> <li>✓ Enhanced food bank and local food support offer.</li> </ul>
Adults Social & Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children Looked After/Care Leavers (aged over 19).</li> <li>- Homeless adults with complex needs.</li> <li>- Vulnerable adults and adults in crisis.</li> <li>- Young homeless.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ New home start up packs.</li> <li>✓ Food vouchers (young homeless).</li> <li>✓ Enhanced food bank and local food support offer.</li> <li>✓ Enhanced Crisis Intervention Service offer.</li> </ul>

4.7 Each of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme workstreams has already delivered significant amounts of support to families with and without children since the start of December 2020. Each workstream's delivery to date is summarised below.

<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Support delivered</b>	<b>No. awards</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>
<b>Children &amp; Young People's Free School Meals</b>	£30 food vouchers for the School Christmas Holidays—all vouchers with schools by 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2020.	20,310 vouchers activated (81% of all CYP eligible for FSM) <sup>2</sup> .  [28,714 vouchers have been ordered in total].	£639,765  [£904,491]
<b>Children &amp; Young People's Social &amp; Community Support</b>	Enhanced food bank and local community food group support (£10,000 per district)—supporting families with and without children.	TBC—this offer has just been launched as of the time of writing (14/01/21).	£100,000

<sup>1</sup> The Crisis Intervention Service (CIS) is delivered via Herts Help, a service commissioned for Hertfordshire County Council by Adult Care Services. The CIS delivers a range of support offers to individuals in crisis—such as funds to help individuals with heating bills, purchases of food and of white goods.

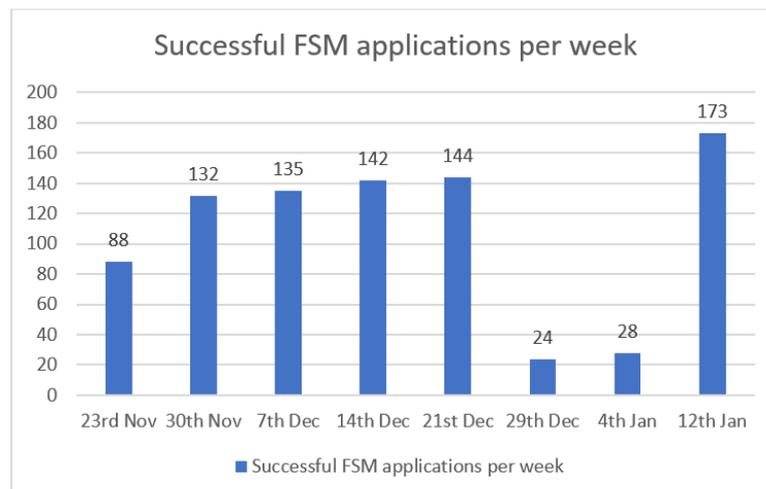
<sup>2</sup> As of 13/01/2020.

	£45 infants food vouchers to be distributed via Family Centres & Maintained Nursery Schools	Over 1,200 planned for January 2021.	£100,000
<b>Adults Social &amp; Community Support</b>	New home start up kits for homeless adults.	500 planned for scheme duration.	£18,000
	Food support for homeless adults with complex needs.	TBC—this offer has just been launched as of the time of writing (14/01/21).	£72,000
	Enhanced Crisis Intervention Service pathway for individuals in crisis.	TBC—this offer has just been launched as of the time of writing (14/01/21).	£75,000
	Universal food support via Herts Community Foundation—supporting households with and without children.	TBC—this offer has just been launched as of the time of writing (14/01/21).	£100,000
	Vulnerable adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary sector grants.</li> <li>• Crisis Intervention Service Pathway.</li> </ul>	TBC—this offer has just been launched as of the time of writing (14/01/21).	£122,000
	Young homeless	130 food vouchers to be issued in January 2021 with support/advice.	£8,500
<b>Total</b>		21,640 by late Jan. 2021.	£1,499,991

4.8 The analysis of deprivation in Hertfordshire in light of the coronavirus pandemic has informed the design and delivery of Winter Grant Scheme funded interventions. These key statistics and trends are outlined below per workstream.

Children & Young People’s Free School Meals workstream—statistics & trends

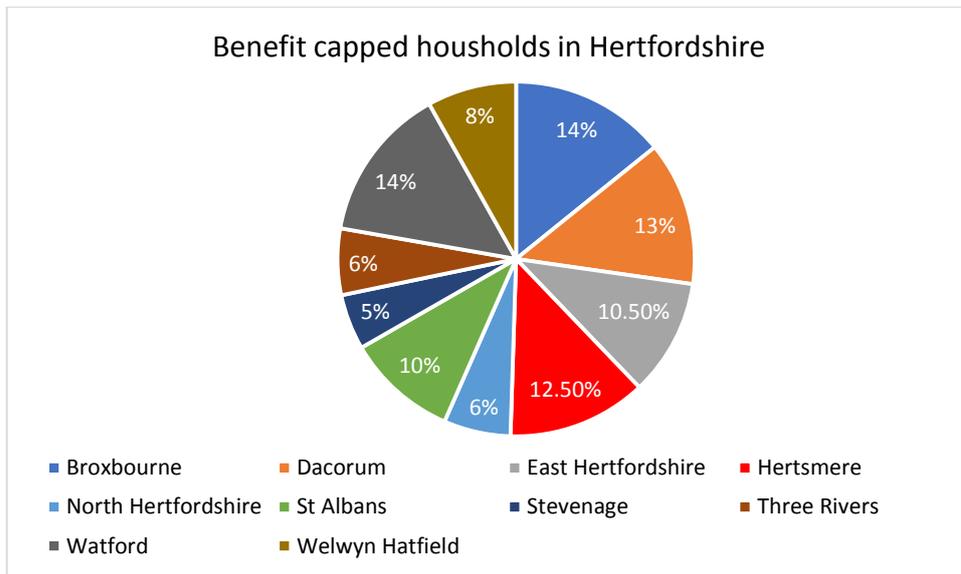
- 25,298 children and young people from Reception to Further Education Colleges are entitled to free school meals due to their benefit status (as of 12/01/2021).
- Sharp weekly increases in successful free school meal applications from late November—late December 2020:



Children & Young People’s Social & Community Support workstream—  
statistics and trends

- Approximately 15,000 infants (aged 0—5) are from deprived backgrounds. These are children who would largely be eligible for Free School Meals were they of school age.
- As of August 2020, there were 3,114 households with children with capped benefits (either universal credit and/or housing benefit). These households contained at least 9,308 children.
- This has risen from figures in early May 2020 which showed that there were 2,919 benefit capped households with around 8,800 children affected. Therefore, the period of early May 2020—August 2020 saw around a 5.7% increase in the number of children in benefit capped households in Hertfordshire. This rate of increase does not reflect underlying growth in the numbers who of households will become benefit capped once the initial “grace” period in the which the cap is not applied has passed.
- The spread of these benefit capped households (including those with and without children) is uneven across Hertfordshire as set out in the table overleaf. The spread of benefit capped households does not precisely match overall deprivation in Hertfordshire, since in areas where there is relatively more social housing households are less likely to be in accommodation with high rents which triggers benefit capping:

<b>District/Borough</b>	<b>Percentage of Hertfordshire’s benefit capped households</b>
Broxbourne	14%
Dacorum	13%
East Hertfordshire	10.50%
Hertsmere	12.50%
North Hertfordshire	6%
St Albans	10%
Stevenage	5%
Three Rivers	6%
Watford	14%
Welwyn Hatfield	8%



Adults Social & Community Support workstream—statistics & trends

- As of August 2020, there were 807 households in Hertfordshire with capped benefits (universal credit and/or housing benefit).

4.9 The Covid Winter Grant Scheme’s initial findings provide strategic insights into Hertfordshire’s poverty and deprivation, particularly in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. These are outlined below and could help form the basis of an anti-poverty strategy:

- **Poverty indicators increased in Hertfordshire during 2020:** there were significant increases in successful free school meal applications and in the number of benefit capped households during 2020. This would indicate an increase in poverty in the county.
- **Benefit capping:** that benefit capped households should be considered a priority group in terms of deprivation, with average weekly lost income being £62. This can have a higher impact on larger households (i.e. those with children). Benefit capped households have increased in Hertfordshire during 2020 and appear to be concentrated in districts with higher housing costs. For example, Stevenage has only 5% of the county’s benefit capped households, potentially due to the availability of social housing.
- **Cost of housing:** the cost of housing has appeared as a potential underlying factor behind deprivation in the county. As of 2019, Hertfordshire was ranked 49/152 local authorities for barriers to housing and services (1 being the most deprived). This is at odds with the county’s average score of 135/152 local authorities for the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- **Age groups:** the expansion of universal food support, food vouchers and Herts Help has shown that deprivation in Hertfordshire affects all age groups. This is reinforced by the mix of households with and

without children which are both affected by benefit capping. Hence an all-age approach has been required to help effectively deliver support.

- **Service interdependency:** the growth of poverty in Herts, coupled with its all-age dimension, has necessitated greater partnership working within Hertfordshire County Council and with external partners. One prime example of this is the further strengthening of ties between HertsHelp and Children’s Services (e.g. Early Years and Families First). Another example would be the joint funding approach between Adult Care Services and Children’s Services to enhance universal food support via District Council and Voluntary & Community Sector partners.

## 5. Financial Implications

5.1 Hertfordshire has been allocated £2.49 million for the Winter Covid Grant Scheme by the Department of Work and Pensions. This funding has been organised into 3 tranches:

1. 50% of the funding—received.
2. 25% of the funding— to be received at the end of February 2021 following completion of the Management Information request.
3. 25% of the funding—to be received in April/May 2021 following completion of the Management Information request.

5.2 Confirmed allocations to date of Hertfordshire’s grant are summarised in paragraph 4.7 above. The programme’s workstreams are finalising other support offers and their provisional allocations of the remaining Winter Covid Grant Scheme is as follows:

Workstream	Support delivered	Grant categories	Cost (£)
<b>Children &amp; Young People’s Free School Meals</b>	£15 food voucher for February half-term (based on number ordered for Christmas holidays)	Households with children. Food & utility bills.	£473,781
<b>Children &amp; Young People’s Social &amp; Community Support</b>	Additional Early Years support	Households with children. Food & utility bills. Other essentials.	£100,000
	Extended Crisis Intervention Service offer for families with benefit caps.	Households with children. Other essentials.	£200,000
	White goods voucher offer.	Households with children. Other essentials.	£50,000
	Care Leavers (aged under 19): £45 food vouchers	Households with children. Food & utility bills.	£8,100
	Children and young people in supported accommodation: £10 surcharge discount.	Households with children. Households without children. Food & utility bills.	£2,440
	Further universal food support.	Households with children. Food & utility bills.	£45,000

	Children and young people in supported accommodation: £45 food voucher.	Households without children. Food & utility bills.	£10,980
Adults social & community support	Extended Crisis Intervention Service offer: low income individuals.	Households without children. Food & utility bills. Other essentials.	£104,000
<b>Total</b>			£994,301

## 6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The legal implications regarding the Covid Winter Grant Scheme were covered in the [initial report to Joint Panel](#) on 26 November 2020.

## 7. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 7.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and this is annexed at Appendix 3. There are no implications for any persons with protected characteristics other than as set out in the Appendix.

### Background Information

Joint Children, Young People & Families Cabinet Panel and Education, Libraries & Localism Cabinet Panel – 26 November 2020

<https://democracy.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=377&MIId=3237&Ver=4>

## **Appendix 1: The Holiday Activities and Food Programme**

### **1. Overview**

- 1.1 On 8 November 2020, the Government announced that the holiday activities and food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018 in some local authorities, will be expanded across the whole of England in 2021.
- 1.2 The programme will cover the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays in 2021, and the Government will make up to £220m available to local authorities for the programme, Hertfordshire's allocation is £2,786,570.
- 1.3 The focus of the programme is the provision of free holiday provision - including healthy food and enriching activities – for all children who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals (FSM). It is not expected that all eligible children will participate. It is encouraged that holiday clubs are made available to all children, including those that are not eligible for FSM and are able to pay.
- 1.4 The aim of the programme is to make free places available to children eligible for free school meals for the equivalent of at least four hours a day, four days a week, six weeks a year. This would cover four weeks in the summer and a week's worth of provision in each of the Easter and Christmas holidays - there is flexibility in how this could be arranged.
- 1.5 Grant funding received will cover the delivery of the free holiday places and the coordination of the programme locally. All local authorities are encouraged to work with a wide range of partners in the delivery of this programme.

### **2. Hertfordshire's position**

- 2.1 Hertfordshire Sports Partnership (HSP) and Herts Community Foundation (HCF) were selected as Hertfordshire County Council partners to coordinate this programme having previously delivered Fit, Fed and Read in Hertfordshire. Their experience offers local contacts and knowledge when linking in with the voluntary and private sector.
- 2.2 An initial meeting was held with HSP and HCF where the scope of the programme was outlined, it was agreed a proposal of delivery would be drawn up and shared by them in early January (14<sup>th</sup>).
- 2.3 Hertfordshire County Council has undertaken the mapping of holiday provision across the county, collection and sorting of FSM data as well as begun drafting a contract for HSP in order to mitigate against possible delays in the commissioning process. 15% has been allowed historically for coordination roles of total funding (£2,786,570), this would be a maximum of £417,985.50.

- 2.4 A review of HSP's proposal will take place on the 15 January with CS service leads and commissioning managers covering Early Years, schools, SEND and YC Herts in attendance.
- 2.5 Internal discussions have highlighted needs of the service such as a programme that looks at longer term sustainability. Discussions with HSP are yet to be held, however, a grant model would benefit the County Council in receiving bids from providers that have the infrastructure to deliver provision. This would also allow for specific criteria to be written into qualifying bids such as how the offer could continue beyond the government funding period.
- 2.6 With the pressures in schools which COVID has created, it is unlikely they will be as involved from Easter, with this in mind it will be a smaller offer which is then scaled up for the summer period onwards.

### **3. Immediate next steps**

- 3.1 Depending on the outcome of the proposal and agreed format of delivery, some of these may be subject to change:
- Review and agreement of the proposal from HSP Contract to be drawn up to formally place HSP in a coordination.
  - Establishment of a multiagency steering group for the project, chaired by HSP.
  - Develop programme plan including key milestones to ensure the programme can be delivered successfully and progress monitored.

## Appendix 2—Covid Winter Grant Scheme launch letter (from the Department of Work and Pensions to Hertfordshire County Council)

RESTRICTED



My address: Clare Elliott, Head of Local Authority, Partnership, Engagement and Delivery (LA-PED) division

Website: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Date: 10 November 2020

Chief Executive Officers  
Chief Finance Officers

Dear colleagues

### COVID Winter Grant Scheme

On Sunday 8 November 2020, the government [announced](#) a significant package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period.

The £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, which will be made available in the next month, will see new funding issued to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs), to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will provide funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, who will administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This will include some families who normally have access to Free School Meals during term time. County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England will have the ability to deliver the scheme through vouchers or grants for example. Councils are encouraged to work together with other local authorities to provide support and ensure the funding meets its objectives.

Funding will be dispersed according to the population of each authority, weighted by a function of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation. Please refer to **Annex F** which shows the indicative grant allocation for each LA subject to final approval by HM Treasury.

The Winter Grant Scheme will enable LAs to provide support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals from early December 2020 and covers the period until the end of March 2021.

The value of payments for help with non-food expenses will be restricted and further details on the eligibility criteria for support is attached in **Annex A**.

This scheme is part of a wider winter support package for families and children, including:

- significant expansion of the Department for Education's (DfE's) Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018, across England next year. This investment of up to £220 million will be delivered through grants to local authorities. It will build on our existing programme, which supported around 50,000 children across 17 LAs this summer and will ensure provision for Easter, summer and Christmas in 2021. Further information for local authorities will follow shortly from DfE.
- increasing the value of the Department for Health and Social Care's Healthy Start vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 from April 2021. Healthy Start supports lower-income pregnant women and families with children under four to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula, providing an important nutritional safety net.
- DEFRA will provide further funding for local charities through well-established networks to provide immediate support to front-line food aid charities, including food banks, who are supporting those most vulnerable due to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

### **Urgent next steps for LAs**

County Councils and Unitary Authorities need to be ready to deliver this scheme by early December 2020 and are asked to start making immediate preparations to administer the Grant:

- to help us work with you over the next couple of weeks we ask all County Councils and Unitary Authorities to complete the attached **Annex B** by **Friday 13 November 2020 at the latest**. This Annex asks for a nominated single point of contact (SPOC).
- for you or your nominated SPOC to dial into a County Councils and Unitary Authorities all-LA call on **Thursday 12 November 2020**. The purpose of this call is to discuss views on delivery and assurance arrangements. Dial-in details are attached in **Annex C**.
- that County Councils complete the information requested in **Annex D** by **Friday 13 November 2020 at the latest**. We need this information timeously so that we can make payments to you.
- prior to the call on Thursday, all County Councils and Unitary Authorities LAs are asked to consider:
  - if you have sufficient access to the data you need to identify families or individuals who will be able to benefit from the scheme.
  - the payment methods you will be using to distribute any grants to claimants and whether your current arrangements are sufficient to enable payment of grants.

I have attached some questions and answers that can be found at **Annex E**. If you have any additional questions these can be directed to [hdd.businessplanningteam@dpw.gov.uk](mailto:hdd.businessplanningteam@dpw.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully

Head of LA-PED

## COVID Winter Grant Scheme outline eligibility framework

County Councils and Unitary Authorities will determine eligibility in their area and target their support within the scope of the conditions set out below:

- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support families with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other types of households, including individuals.
- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills (including sewerage), with up to 20% on other items.

Discussions will take place with County Councils and Unitary Authorities on how to deliver this support. It is clear that this support will need to cover children at risk of going hungry. Furthermore, the conditions will allow councils to support other vulnerable groups. County Councils and Unitary Authorities have flexibility in administering the funding within the confines of the scheme – which may include cash, the provision of food, vouchers, or funding through third party organisations.

### Categories of spend

The eligibility criteria above sets out separate categories of spend. One relates to household composition and one relates to the type of support being provided, in other words, food, energy, water and other.

LAs will be asked to report and manage spend in relation to both these areas. For example, if a £100 award is made to a family with children for food, you would allocate £100 to the ‘family and children’ pot and £100 to the ‘food’ pot.

Each award needs to be allocated twice – one allocation to each of the eligibility categories so that when you report on the total spent on family composition and the total spend on the type of support both eligibility criteria categories will total the amount you have paid.

More guidance will be issued with example scenarios shortly.

## Single Point of Contact information

### COVID Winter Grant Scheme

To be completed by the County Councils and Unitary Authorities and returned by email to [hdd.pdtconsultants@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:hdd.pdtconsultants@dwp.gov.uk) (by **Friday 13 November 2020** at the latest)

**Note: Do not include GSI in the e-mail as this has now been removed.**

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<b>County Councils and Unitary Authorities LA:</b>	
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### Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

Details of person to contact with queries relating to monitoring and evaluation

Name of contact:		Job title:	
Email address:		Telephone number:	

## County Councils and Unitary Authorities all LA call

Title	County Councils and Unitary Authorities - COVID Winter Grant Scheme
Key Speaker	Adrian Shooter
Event Call Time	12 November 2020 at 10:30 for 90 minutes (Dublin, Edinburgh, Lisbon, London) Please join the call 5 minutes before the scheduled start time as it will start promptly
Dial in number(s)	Standard Access: 020 3481 3254
Conference PIN	8826404#

To join, dial the standard access number and enter the Conference PIN when prompted.

## Payment details required

**Note: This section is only to be completed by Shire County Councils**

For those Unitary Authorities that administer Housing Benefit, COVID Winter Grant Scheme payments will be made into the same bank account as HB Subsidy payments.

Shire County Councils are required to provide this information to facilitate payment of the Grant funding.

Please complete the following payment details for transfer of the grant funds by BACS or WIRE Transfer. These details will be entered onto DWP Finance system to enable payments to be made.

To be completed by the local authority and returned by email to [lawelfare.lapaymentsandsubsidy@dwp.gov.uk](mailto:lawelfare.lapaymentsandsubsidy@dwp.gov.uk)

**Note: Do not include GSI in the e-mail as this has now been removed.**

County Councils	
Address line 1	
Address line 2	
Town/City	
Post code	
Account name	
Account number	
Sort code	
Roll number (if Building Society)	
Bank name	
Payment type/BACS or WIRE TRANSFER	

## **COVID Winter Grant Scheme: Questions and answers**

### **What is the purpose of the COVID Winter Grant Scheme?**

- the government has created a £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme to support families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals. We are asking County Councils and Unitary Authorities to ensure that people who are struggling have the support they need for food provision and essential utilities.
- this funding will be ring-fenced and cover the period until the end of March 2021. It will be distributed by County Councils or Unitary Authorities in England, who will have the ability to deliver the scheme through vouchers or grants for example.
- this is the latest part of a stream of consistent support from this government to support those most in need, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.

### **What MI do I need to collect and return to DWP?**

- there will be a requirement to provide DWP with MI to help us understand which groups have benefited from grants, the administrative costs and payment assurance.
- the MI requirements will be finalised in consultation with County Councils and Unitary Authorities and will be discussed as part of the County Councils and Unitary Authorities SPOC call.

### **Why are County Councils and Unitary Authorities administering this instead of District Councils?**

- Revenue and Benefits Teams are already under intense pressure to deliver on an increased workload of Local Council Tax Support caused by the spike in UC claims and increased data share and the more recent Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme. They are also heavily burdened by the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in general, the re-launch of the Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative and the other impacts on Housing Benefit delivery such as the Furlough scheme.
- County Councils are well placed to deliver this service as they have more direct links to the education systems locally and across other local types of government provision such as policing, medical professionals and care workers. This scheme may require a broader approach to ensure that all those in need are offered support, however it is sufficiently flexible for those County Councils who believe their District Councils can deliver this on their behalf, to commission them to do so.
- County Councils have existing management intelligence around adult social care at a suitable scale that will also assist in delivery.

- we encourage County Councils to work with District Councils and engage early in the process. If County Councils decide to use District Councils to administer the grant funding on their behalf arrangements and funding should be in place no later than the end of November.

### **How much will this all cost?**

- the COVID Winter Grant Scheme is worth £170 million. County Councils and Unitary Authorities may use some of their total allocation towards administration costs – this will be discussed further on the County Councils and Unitary Authorities all LA call.
- we are proposing to pay the grant in split payments to LAs commencing in early December 2020. This should give LAs enough time to put appropriate arrangements in place. Details of the payment schedule will be provided in the detailed launch letter.

### **How will LAs spend the money?**

- County Councils and Unitary Authorities are best placed to decide how best to support local people in need. We are allowing them to spend the money in a variety of different ways, including direct cash payments, vouchers, giving meals to those in need or boosting funding for organisations already doing so.
- many LAs already offer local welfare assistance and will have experience in putting in place local support arrangements and in assessing individual needs.
- Annex A provides County Councils and Unitary Authorities with an outline eligibility framework.

### **What can LAs do to mitigate the risk of Fraud and Error?**

- 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. One of the biggest risks for this scheme is impersonation fraud, where fraudsters work through a residential area and falsely claim under the names of eligible recipients.
- LAs are encouraged to mitigate this risk, by ensuring checks are in place to verify the applicant's identity. LAs have access to a range of data sources and checks can be carried out against this data to verify the identity of the recipient.
- it is for LAs to decide how payments are made to recipients. However, when making this decision LAs should consider the risks involved. Although vouchers 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 the policy intent

therefore undermining the purpose of the scheme. Where possible, cash payments should be made into a bank account in the same name of the person that is eligible. LAs are also encouraged to use existing tools at their disposal to verify personal bank accounts.

## Indicative funding levels per County Councils/Unitary Authorities

Note: These are indicative allocations subject to final approval by HM Treasury.

<b>County Councils and Unitary Authorities</b>	<b>DWP allocation of £170 million</b>
Barking and Dagenham London Borough	£870,076.68
Barnet London Borough	£986,960.35
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	£946,111.32
Bath and North East Somerset Council	£386,700.64
Bedford UA	£482,305.73
Bexley London Borough	£619,722.83
Birmingham City Council	£5,188,935.15
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	£645,965.10
Blackpool Borough Council	£704,710.72
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,110,882.11
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council	£1,068,327.58
Bracknell Forest Borough Council	£221,214.27
Brent London Borough	£1,142,416.48
Brighton and Hove Council	£865,416.71
Bristol Council	£1,640,461.40
Bromley London Borough	£753,861.37
Buckinghamshire County Council	£967,503.82
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	£619,418.58
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	£734,010.82
Cambridgeshire County Council	£1,459,490.26
Camden London Borough	£783,243.59
Central Bedfordshire UA	£587,054.00
Cheshire East UA	£880,471.92
Cheshire West and Chester UA	£925,446.97
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council	£2,280,372.57
City of London	£20,166.03
City of York Council	£416,729.66
Cornwall County UA	£1,831,567.30
County of Herefordshire District Council	£537,980.55
Coventry City Council	£1,292,612.14
Croydon London Borough	£1,206,805.20
Cumbria County Council	£1,496,417.79
Darlington Borough Council	£364,817.20
Derby City Council	£899,489.62
Derbyshire County Council	£2,181,024.15
Devon County Council	£2,042,754.05

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,203,509.07
Dorset Council	£922,153.80
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,058,104.52
Durham County UA	£1,872,512.86
Ealing London Borough	£1,068,982.09
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	£825,096.34
East Sussex County Council	£1,594,930.86
Enfield London Borough	£1,149,542.86
Essex County Council	£3,838,050.28
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	£740,348.86
Gloucestershire County Council	£1,507,674.65
Greenwich London Borough	£967,678.82
Hackney London Borough	£1,152,002.41
Halton Borough Council	£519,963.33
Hammersmith and Fulham London Borough	£585,126.11
Hampshire County Council	£2,898,701.72
Haringey London Borough	£986,329.83
Harrow London Borough	£588,955.86
Hartlepool Council	£396,948.59
Havering London Borough	£664,716.69
Hertfordshire County Council	£2,493,530.80
Hillingdon London Borough	£831,315.79
Hounslow London Borough	£823,377.35
Isle of Wight Council	£456,845.34
Isles of Scilly Council	£4,147.67
Islington London Borough	£877,270.22
Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough	£471,864.58
Kent County Council	£4,504,098.51
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	£1,229,116.79
Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough	£343,579.32
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,487,770.76
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	£740,731.55
Lambeth London Borough	£1,118,444.74
Lancashire County Council	£3,920,808.87
Leeds City Council	£2,837,556.77
Leicester City Council	£1,401,735.27
Leicestershire County Council	£1,462,162.43
Lewisham London Borough	£1,082,507.93
Lincolnshire County Council	£2,223,450.43
Liverpool City Council	£2,438,778.60
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames	£336,857.43
Luton Borough Council	£732,712.95
Manchester City Council	£2,581,417.35
Medway Borough Council	£908,596.17
Merton London Borough	£476,193.25
Middlesbrough Borough	£659,634.41
Milton Keynes Council	£722,191.40

Newcastle upon Tyne Metropolitan District Council	£1,147,567.52
Newham London Borough	£1,354,166.89
Norfolk County Council	£2,740,592.35
North East Lincolnshire Council	£628,462.94
North Lincolnshire Council	£532,566.93
North Somerset Council	£528,410.63
North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	£644,988.11
North Yorkshire County Council	£1,435,400.85
Northamptonshire County Council	£2,080,715.35
Northumberland County UA	£992,515.33
Nottingham City Council	£1,414,274.85
Nottinghamshire County Council	£2,316,008.18
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	£974,688.98
Oxfordshire	£1,367,906.39
Peterborough City Council	£743,661.56
Plymouth City Council	£926,040.55
Portsmouth City Council	£765,635.46
Reading Borough Council	£464,497.68
Redbridge London Borough	£788,900.75
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	£522,778.70
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	£936,916.05
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,007,395.16
Rutland County Council District Council	£63,022.00
Salford Metropolitan District Council	£1,089,353.76
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,404,606.44
Sefton	£980,471.32
Sheffield City Council	£2,090,323.22
Shropshire County UA	£841,634.07
Slough Borough Council	£475,125.36
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council	£565,838.18
Somerset County Council	£1,545,187.24
South Gloucestershire Council	£569,161.01
South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council	£596,981.79
Southampton City Council	£900,866.24
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council	£573,689.90
Southwark London Borough	£1,111,657.80
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	£716,322.51
Staffordshire County Council	£2,221,422.84
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	£867,758.09
Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council	£679,491.40
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	£1,083,577.42
Suffolk County Council	£2,077,927.29
Sunderland City Council	£1,071,863.77
Surrey County Council	£2,126,391.50
Sutton London Borough	£461,996.24
Swindon Borough Council	£614,935.46
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	£894,614.60

Telford and Wrekin Council	£609,359.45
Thurrock Council	£523,003.90
Torbay Borough Council	£500,463.83
Tower Hamlets London Borough	£1,203,030.43
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	£588,244.62
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	£1,259,170.55
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,134,745.58
Waltham Forest London Borough	£945,547.02
Wandsworth London Borough	£836,207.30
Warrington Borough Council	£581,642.70
Warwickshire County Council	£1,404,610.50
West Berkshire District Council	£278,888.42
West Sussex County Council	£1,989,591.80
Westminster City Council	£766,382.48
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,124,537.72
Wiltshire County UA	£1,107,932.98
Windsor and Maidenhead Royal Borough Council	£236,355.75
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,224,616.93
Wokingham District Council	£208,703.00
Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,061,922.62
Worcestershire County Council	£1,607,260.87
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£170,000,000.00</b>