

Haringey Council

Household Support Fund Scheme Policy

November 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out Haringey Council's ('the Council's') approach to supporting people through the additional funding from the Department for Work and Pension's 'Household Support Fund'.
- 1.2. This fund runs from 6 October 2021 until 31 March 2022 and is designed to support those on low incomes with access to essentials such as food and fuel as the economy recovers from the pandemic and the cost-of-living increases.
- 1.3. When administering the scheme, Local Authorities are encouraged to apply the following principles:
 - Use discretion on how to identify and support those in need
 - Use the funding from 6 October 2021 up to 31 March 2022 to meet essential needs and help those who are struggling to afford food and utility bills.
- 1.4. At least 50% of the total funding is ring-fenced to support families with children.
- 1.5. Authorities have the flexibility within the Household Support Fund to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and to apply their own discretion when identifying eligible households. Authorities can request applications for support or can proactively identify households who may benefit – or can take a mixture of the two approaches. There is no requirement for Authorities to undertake a means test.

2. Objectives of the policy

- 2.1. The objectives of this policy in Haringey are:
 - To support households by ensuring they can access essentials such as food, fuel, and water - without needing to accumulate debt
 - To help residents to access all the financial support to which they are entitled - so that they can find sustainable routes out of challenging household financial circumstances as far as possible
 - To support households with dignity and without stigma - enabling residents to be as independent as possible

3. Delivery

- 3.1. The council will take a combination of delivery approaches – reaching out to residents identified through our data or by our services and partners, whilst also ensuring that residents can also apply to the council for support. This mix of approaches will aim to reach as many residents as possible whilst limiting the burden of application on residents.
- 3.2. Where possible and appropriate, the council will take a cash-based approach to provide residents with dignity and choice. This will also ensure residents can respond to a range of cost-of-living pressures this winter.
- 3.3. Proactively providing support to residents will be a central part of our delivery. By drawing on our data and the knowledge of our service areas and partners, the council will reach out to residents and offer them direct support. Critically, this will mean that residents do not need to apply – reducing the burden of application and ensuring that support reaches those who need it quickly and efficiently.
- 3.4. In addition, we will ensure that there are routes for residents to come to us and ask for help. By bolstering our local welfare assistance scheme, the Haringey Support Fund, we will ensure that we can pick up support not captured elsewhere. This recognises that through our data and networks we will not be able to reach everyone who needs our help. This will also ensure that those who face unexpected challenges can still get the help they need.
- 3.5. In recognition of the notable pressures on energy prices, our standard payment will be £150. This is the upper end of the average price increase per year following the 12% increase in the Ofgem price cap in October 2021.
- 3.6. However, where support is delivered through our services or partners, there will be room for discretion to allow frontline professionals to use their judgment to provide residents with appropriate support.
- 3.7. Support will be available to households with No Recourse To Public Funds in line with relevant guidance.

4. Allocations

- 4.1. The maximum additional spend from the Household Support Fund is £2,406,671.72.
- 4.2. The table below sets out the proposed allocations. This includes an upper limit, which will allow officers a small amount of discretion, in consultation with the Leader and Lead Members, to move funding between different projects. This is designed to ensure the council can remain agile and respond to emerging needs as this fund is delivered over the next 5 months.

Project	Description	Proposed allocation (limit)
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Holiday free school meal vouchers	Free School Meal vouchers for school-aged children during holidays	£1m (up to £1m)
Direct cash payments to those in financial hardship	Direct cash payments of £150 targeted to those identified through our data as in financial need, including a specific payment for families with pre-school children	£0.8m (up to £1.1m)
Discretionary cash or in-kind support through council services and partners	Support (cash or in kind) from council services or partners working with vulnerable or harder to reach residents, including £100k to support food banks	£0.4m (up to £0.5m)
Application-based cash and in-kind support through the Haringey Support Fund	Additional money for the Haringey Support Fund through which residents can apply for support with essentials and white goods/furniture	£0.1m (up to £0.25m)
Administration	5% costs	£0.12m

5. Free School Meals (FSM) Holiday Provision

- 5.1. Provision of food support for households eligible for Free School Meals up to a maximum spend of £1,000,000.
- 5.2. This will include vouchers of £15 per week during the school holidays for those eligible for Free School Meals. This will reach over 9,000 residents.
- 5.3. The council will provide comparable targeted support to families with pre-school children through a range of other initiatives set out below.

6. Direct cash payments to those in financial need

- 6.1. Direct cash payments of £150 for those identified as in financial need through council databases up to a maximum spend of £1,100,000 (current proposed spend £800,000).
- 6.2. Most of this spend will support residents identified through benefits data held by the council. In particular, through our 'Low Income Family Tracker' (LIFT), we can identify groups of residents who are struggling financially. Where a resident has been identified as in need, we will proactively send them a £150

redeemable cash voucher. By proactively reaching out to residents, this will reduce the burden of application and ensure that residents can get the support they need quickly and efficiently. We will also use this opportunity wherever possible to help residents access other supports or benefits which they might be eligible for, including other benefits (such as a Warm Homes Discount) or support services. This will help to deliver our objective of helping residents to access wider support through which they can find sustainable solutions to ongoing challenges.

6.3. Our payments will target those identified through our LIFT database as being in 'cash shortfall' – which means they have a take-home-income that is less than their expected expenditure, and do not have enough savings to meet 3 months' worth of outgoings. Using these indicators will help us to target our support to those who are most in need this winter.

6.4. An additional payment will also be made to those on this database who are eligible for Healthy Start Vouchers. This payment will mirror the provision for free school meals vouchers during school holidays (i.e. a total of £90 per child) and ensure that those with pre-school children also receive the support that they need.

6.5. Where possible as the programme progresses, we will also identify additional residents in need through our databases to support residents who are in the most need.

6.6. Where residents are not supported directly through this project, they will still be able to apply for support through the Haringey Support Fund (see paragraph 8) or may be supported through the other interventions explained in this policy document.

7. Proactive cash and in-kind support through council services and partners

7.1. Proactive support (cash or in kind) support made through council services or partners working with vulnerable residents up to a maximum spend of £500,000 (current proposed spend £400,000).

7.2. Alongside our data-targeted support, we will also use our networks – within council services and through our partners – to reach a wide range of residents who may be harder to reach or have particular circumstances which make them vulnerable to the increase in cost of living, such as health conditions.

7.3. Supporting residents in this way will ensure that we get the money to those that need it, and that it is accompanied by a wider set of support to help them build pathways towards sustainable solutions.

7.4. This support will include £100k to support food banks, and £300k allocated to partners and council services to support residents who may not receive help through other areas of this policy. This will include funding for council services and partners to directly help the following residents who have been identified as in particular need:

- Those at risk of homelessness
- Those with NRPF
- Those at risk of domestic violence
- Vulnerable adults (such as those who are elderly or who have health conditions)
- Vulnerable families and children
- Families with children of pre-school age

8. Application-based cash and in-kind support through the Haringey Support Fund

8.1. Additional funding for the Haringey Support Fund up to a maximum spend of £250,000 (current proposed spend £100,000).

8.2. The council will not be able to reach every resident in need through the other areas set out in this policy. There will always be circumstances which cannot easily be accounted for (such as a broken boiler) and our data and knowledge may not capture every resident who requires support. Therefore, we will top up the 'Haringey Support Fund' through which residents can apply to us, and which will act as a way to provide additional emergency support to residents.

8.3. Eligibility is set out on the council website.

9. Policy implementation and review

9.1. In applying the Policy, the Council will have regard to relevant implementation guidance as issued.

9.2. We will review our spend against our objectives at regular periods throughout the fund, to ensure that we remain flexible and can respond to emerging challenges as they develop.