

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Executive Decision Record

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People
<b>Date:</b>	9 December 2020
<b>Title:</b>	COVID Winter Grants
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Children's Services

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#### 1. The decision:

- 1.1 That the Executive Lead Member approves the purchase of a £20 food or fuel voucher for each care leaver not forming part of the extended FSM cohort identified in paragraph 20 of the report, to the total value of £30,000.
- 1.2 That a grant of up to £6,000 to be made to the Hampshire Young Carers Alliance such that vouchers and/or gifts and/or food can be provided to young carers not in receipt of vouchers through the free school meal voucher offer. Such grant will be provided on terms to be agreed by the Director of Children's Services and in accordance with the grant criteria set out in paragraph 13 of the report.
- 1.3 That a grant of £100,000 is made available to Citizens Advice for them to use to financially support households with fuel bills over the winter period. Such grant will be provided on terms to be agreed by the Director of Children's Services and in accordance with the grant criteria set out in paragraph 13 of the report.
- 1.4 That the Executive Lead Member approves the purchase and/or granting of funds for the purchase of food and fuel vouchers to a value of £75,000. These vouchers will be made available to partner organisations including the Family Support Service, Domestic Abuse Services, and other agencies working directly with vulnerable households. It is further recommended that authority is delegated to the Director of Children's Services to determine the recipients and individual value of funds and/or vouchers distributed to organisations, in accordance with the grant criteria set out in paragraph 13 of the report.

- 1.5 That the Executive Lead Member approves £320,000 of the funding to be allocated for the delivery of Holiday Activity and Food Schemes and for grant applications to be invited to identify organisations able to provide such schemes. Approval of individual grants awards to organisations from this £320,000 allocation will be brought to a future Executive Lead Member decision day.
- 1.6 That funding is provided to establish and support community pantries across Hampshire and approval is sought from the Executive Lead Member to delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services to approve grant awards to organisations for the delivery of such schemes, in accordance with the criteria set out in paragraphs 28 and 29 of the report, and in consultation with the Executive Lead Member up to the total value of £312,000.
- 1.7 That the Executive Lead Member delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services to approve community grant awards to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant (as set out in paragraph 13 of the report) for targeted financial support for those in need over winter in consultation with the Executive Lead Member up to the total value of £100,000.
- 1.8 That the Executive Lead Member delegates approval to the Director of Children's Services to approve the reallocation of any COVID Winter Grants remaining or underspent funds to organisations delivering services that meet the criteria of the grant set out in paragraph 13 of the report, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member.

## **2. Reasons for the decision:**

- 2.1 On Sunday 8 November 2020, the government announced a significant package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period.
- 2.2 The £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme is being distributed through County and Unitary Councils and aims to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs.
- 2.3 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the government department that is providing the funding, expects top tier local authorities to administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic. This is expected to include families whose children are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) as well as those who qualify by age for the universal free school meal offer.

2.4 The conditions of the COVID Winter Grant are that:

- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support families with children, with up to 20% of the total funding allocated for other types of households, including individuals; and that
- 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% made available for other essential items.

2.5 To ensure as many vulnerable households as possible benefit from this funding, a range of initiatives are to be funded as set out in the report.

2.6 On 30 November 2020, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People approved the distribution of £1.56M of funding from Hampshire County Council's COVID Winter Grant funding to schools, colleges and early year providers. The aim of this funding was to allow education settings to provide one £15 voucher per child per week for the two-week Christmas holiday and the February half term week. Vouchers will be available for all children eligible for free school meals and additionally all children with a social worker, all children open to early help, 16-18 year olds previously eligible for FSM, all 2-4 year olds accessing childcare and eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium, as described in paragraph 18 of the report. An estimated 34,620 children will be able to access vouchers as a result of this initiative.

2.7 Furthermore, on 30 November, the Executive Lead Member approved grants of up to £290,000 to be made to schools and colleges by way of a discretionary grant that they can use to support vulnerable families, including those not currently eligible for free school meals and other benefits/financial support.

### **3. Other options considered and rejected:**

3.1 Hampshire County Council could have delegated all funding to schools and/or district councils to administer locally. This option was rejected as these organisations are already administering other schemes and by working across the County with a range of partners, it was felt that an offer complementary to other schemes could be delivered, with the aim of reaching more vulnerable households.

### **4. Conflicts of interest:**

4.1 Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker: None

4.2 Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted: None

### **5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: None**

**6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable**

**7. Statement from the decision maker:**

In reaching this decision, I note the support from Councillor Jackie Porter for all the recommendations.

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

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Councillor Patricia Stallard  
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and  
Young People

9 December 2020