

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People
Date:	2 February 2021
Title:	COVID Winter Grants – Holiday Activities and Community Grants
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. The decision:

- 1.1 That the Executive Lead Member approves the award of grants to the organisations identified in Appendix 1 to this report to a total value of £121,275.
- 1.2 That the Executive Lead Member delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services to approve any future grants awards for February half term activity and food schemes in consultation with the Executive Lead Member up to the total value of £198,725.
- 1.3 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 8 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;
- 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 In the 9 December 2020 decision report, approval was sought to invite grant applications from organisations able to provide holiday activity and food schemes in the February half term school holiday. £320,000 was set aside to fund such schemes, with the intention to provide a comprehensive Hampshire wide offer that would be subject to a separate Executive Lead Member decision. The latest Covid-19 lockdown, the partial closure of schools and uncertainty as to whether any changes in guidance would affect the childcare offer means that the County Council has had to scale back its intentions for the February half term. Detailed assessment of what can be offered within the current Covid guidelines, working with providers and Public Health, has resulted in the need for an urgent decision such that, where possible, free of charge provision can be offered to vulnerable children.

2.6 Grant awards and appropriate delegated decision making authority are now recommended for approval to ensure provision can be put in place, and services delivered during the February half term where possible.

3. Other options considered and rejected

3.1 Hampshire County Council could have chosen not to deliver half term activity and food schemes in February. However, it was felt that such services would be beneficial to vulnerable children and critical workers across Hampshire.

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:

Approved by:

Date:

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

2 February 2021