



Letter sent via email to

nadeemaziz@doover.gov.uk

Strategic & Corporate Services

Kent County Council
Sessions House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XU

Contact: Lucy Alesbrook
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Phone: 03000 417963
Date: 09 June 2022

Dear Nadeem

Kent County Council Household Support Fund Extension - Funding Confirmation

We are pleased to confirm your grant allocations from the Household Support Fund Extension is as follows:

Allocation A	To support pensioners with energy bills ¹	£319,980.00
Allocation B	To be used to support vulnerable households in accordance with the wider government guidance	£91,194.00
Total		£411,174.00

The specification for the Household Support Fund Extension is enclosed in Schedule 1 and sets out the conditions for spending the grant. You are asked to provide a breakdown and financial forecast of how you will use the funding in line with the grant conditions.

The monthly reporting template for the Household Support Fund Extension is also attached to Schedule 1 and will be used to monitor spend and volumes each month. The intention behind the grant is to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food, energy and water bills, and other related essentials. Funding can also be used to support households who are

¹ Or any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders as set out in the government guidance.

struggling to afford wider essentials. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need (subject to certain conditions set out in the housing support grant Final guidance notes (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils/household-support-fund-final-guidance-for-county-councils-and-unitary-authorities-in-england>)).

At least one third of the total funding must be spent on families with children and at least one third must be spent on pensioners. In terms of type of support, the expectation is that the HSF extension should be used in a similar way as the original HSF scheme, although, with a greater emphasis on supporting households with energy bills. Food and water bills also remain priorities. **You are asked to use Allocation A to support pension age residents with their energy bills. You are asked to use Allocation B to focus on a range of the most vulnerable households, particularly those unlikely to be known to the County Council. These allocations have been agreed to allow the county to meet the new requirements in this grant.**

The Household Support Fund Extension monies have been allocated in response to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant is to be used in the period 1 April 2022 up to the end of September 2022. This includes payments made, or committed, between the period 1 April 2022 and 30 September 2022. There is no carry forward of this grant into October 2022 beyond honouring any expenditure committed before 30 September 2022 and we will not be liable for any longer term costs outside of the agreed time period. Grant recipients are accountable for conducting relevant due diligence in relation to this funding such as health and safety, human resources, data impact assessments etc.

Payment of the Household Support Fund Extension to the County Council is in arrears, based on Management Information (MI) returns to be submitted by the County Council. The first of these returns is due on 22nd July 2022 and the final return on 21st October 2022. This approach aligns with the DWP's grant conditions and payment arrangements.

The County Council is required to collate the information required for the MI returns from each of the Districts and will therefore require the relevant information from you one week before each of the above deadlines. The information required is set out in sections 36 to 67 of the DWP's Household Support Grant final guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils/household-support-fund-final-guidance-for-county-councils-and-unitary-authorities-in-england>). Where it is decided to deliver support through TPOs, you are required to use whatever information the TPO holds, or other data, to split the level of spend and volume of awards across the eligibility criteria to the best of your ability. When submitting your information we require you to copy your s151 officer into the email, in order that we can provide DWP with the assurance that the s151 Officer has agreed the correctness of spend reported.

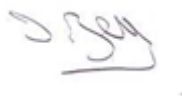
The County Council will be reimbursed the amount submitted against each MI return (which will include the amounts submitted by each of the Districts), once it has been verified. It is therefore important that each District submits the required information on time, so that it can be included within the appropriate return and you can be reimbursed for the amount, once the funds have been received from DWP.

KCC is responsible for complying with the Household Support Fund grant conditions, including the various annexes (a link has been provided to the grant determination in Schedule 1, Annex 3). You will be required to ensure that KCC is able to comply with these grant conditions, in particular, Annex B and that you do not breach the conditions.

Where we become aware of any inconsistencies in the grant conditions (e.g. as to eligibility, payments, record keeping and reporting requirements etc), we may need to adjust these arrangements accordingly. It should be noted that there will be monitoring meetings scheduled between KCC and Districts throughout the duration of this grant. This is to allow KCC to have an ongoing picture of the spend throughout the county across the different required areas of spend.

Please complete and return the enclosed Agreement form, together with a copy of this letter to indicate your acceptance of the KCC specification (schedule 1). As above, payment of this grant will be made on receipt of the funding by the County Council from DWP.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Betts', with a horizontal line underneath.

John Betts
Interim Corporate Director of Finance

Agreement

Signature to confirm: I accept the Schedule 1 to the Kent County Council Household Support Fund Extension Confirmation.

Date:

Authorised

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Position: _____

Name of
Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail

Address: _____

Schedule 1 – Specification between KENT COUNTY COUNCIL and DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL for the Household Support Fund Extension

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The government has allocated grant funding to Kent County Council (KCC) from the Household Support Fund Extension (HSFE) to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials. KCC has allocated £4.74m of this to District and Borough Councils to target support at vulnerable households in their area. Details of how this has been distributed is described later in section 3.3.
- 1.2 This document sets out the anticipated requirements and funding arrangements between Kent County Council (KCC) and Kent district and borough councils for the Household Support Fund Extension (HSFE).

2. Background

- 2.1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the government has allocated funding to county councils and unitary councils to support those most in need. Government recognises that local authorities have local ties and knowledge that make them best placed to identify and help those children, families and individuals most in need. Targeting this money effectively will ease the burden faced by a wide range of vulnerable households across the country worrying about paying the next utility bill or the next food shop. Government has urged councils to use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households in their area.
- 2.2 A working group, the Covid finance working group, which includes representatives from district and borough councils, was established to jointly consider the allocation and purpose of a whole range of Covid-related grants which the County Council has distributed in part to District and Borough Councils including the HSF, but also covering the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, the Test and Trace Grant and the money to support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable. The working group continues to take an overview of Covid related funding, and any flexing of resources.

3. Household Support Fund Extension delivery requirements

- 3.1 The HSFE as a whole needs to be spent according to the following grant conditions:

- use the funding from April 2022 up to the end of September 2022 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food and utility bills (heating, cooking, lighting) and water for household purposes (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, sewerage and sanitary purposes), or other related essentials.
- at least one third of the funding **across all Kent** will be ring-fenced to support households with children
- at least one third of the funding **across all Kent** must be spent on pensioners
- the highest priority for spend must be on supporting residents struggling with utility bills (heating, cooking, lighting). Priority should also be given to food and water bills.
- In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Fund can be used to support housing costs. The scheme is **not** intended to be used for the provision of general advice on managing debt and/or financial hardship.

3.2 Because of the requirement to ensure a minimum one third is spent on pension age, and the requirement to prioritise support for energy bills, KCC is requesting that Allocation A is spent on energy bill support for pension age. Allocation B can be used for local targeting of support in alignment with the HSFE conditions.

3.3 Allocation A has been calculated using the Band D Equivalent – Reduction in Council Tax Base due to Council Tax Support – Pensioners data set. This is in order to distribute the funding required to be spent on fuel and pension age fairly to reflect the needs of the pension age population. Allocation B has been calculated using population and deprivation measures used in previous rounds of funding.

3.4 For the purpose of this grant (and without prejudice to other schemes): The definition of a household with a child is a household containing any person: who will be under the age of 19 as at 30 September 2022 or a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided.

3.5 Where an eligible child lives on his or her own, they are a household that includes a child covered in the one third allocation for households with children.

3.6 The definition of a household with a pensioner is any household containing any person who has reached state pension age by 30th September 2022 (and no eligible children as defined above are resident). Any household that includes a pensioner and an eligible child should be counted as a household with children.

- 3.7 Districts are encouraged to identify vulnerable households which the County Council may not be in contact with – including single adults, and those at risk of homelessness - to ensure that those most in need are supported through the HSFE.
- 3.8 District and borough councils will be accountable for conducting relevant due diligence in relation to this funding such as health and safety, human resources, data impact assessments etc.

4. Finance and Monitoring

- 4.1 Payment of the Household Support Fund Extension to the County Council is in arrears, based on Management Information (MI) returns to be submitted by the County Council. The first of these returns is due on 22 July 2022 and the final return on 21 October 2022.

Return	Reporting period		Deadline for submission to KCC
Interim	01/04/2022	30/06/2022	15/07/2022
Final	01/04/2022	30/09/2022	12/10/2022

- 4.2 The County Council is required to collate the information required for the MI returns from each of the Districts and will therefore require the relevant information from you one week before each of the above deadlines. The information required is set out in sections 36 to 67 of the Household Support Grant final guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils/household-support-fund-final-guidance-for-county-councils-and-unitary-authorities-in-england>

Where it is decided to deliver support through TPOs, you are required to use whatever information the TPO holds, or other data, to split the level of spend and volume of awards across the eligibility criteria to the best of your ability.

- 4.3 When submitting your information we require you to copy your s151 officer into the email, in order that we can provide DWP with the assurance that the s151 Officer has agreed the correctness of spend reported.
- 4.4 The County Council will be reimbursed the amount submitted on each MI return (which will include the amounts submitted by each of the Districts), once it has been verified. It is therefore important that each District submits the required information on time, so that it can be included within the

appropriate return and you can be reimbursed for the amount, once the funds have been received from DWP.

4.5 District and Borough Councils are required to submit their proposed plans for the HSFE to KCC, to provide a basis against which activity and spend can be monitored.

4.6 In addition, there will be discussions with Districts and Boroughs during the grant to allow KCC to have an ongoing picture of the spend throughout the county to ensure spending as a whole is on track. KCC will ask for any unallocated monies in respect of the funding to be returned to support other HSFE priorities, to avoid losing the money.

4.7 Changes to the planned areas of spend and additional requirements will be agreed in writing between the two parties. Significant variance will be monitored by the Covid finance working group referred to in paragraph 2.2, and agreed by the Corporate Director of Finance, as set out in the policy and funding framework, published as part of democratic processes and attached in Annex 2.

4.8 KCC will not be liable for any longer-term costs outside of the agreed time period (i.e. after 30 September 2022) District and Borough councils will need to ensure that they have accrued for any commitments entered into prior to 30 September 2022 (e.g. vouchers that were allocated to families prior to 30 September but not used by the families until after 30 September). Please note that vouchers issued to families/individuals prior to 30th September but not redeemed until after 30th September may only be redeemed within a short period immediately following 30th September '22.

5 Exit

5.1 KCC will work with the district and borough councils to ensure a smooth exit from the agreement.

5.2 District and borough councils must retain a record of spend and spending decisions for a period of up to six years, to ensure all spend is auditable.

6 Annexes

Annex 1

Decision details, and the decision report, can be found here:

[Decision - 21/00107 - Household Support Grant \(kent.gov.uk\)](https://kent.gov.uk/decision/21/00107-household-support-grant)

Annex 2

Policy and Funding Framework for the COVID Winter Grant Scheme

Annex 3

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils/household-support-fund-grant-determination-2021-no-315787>

Annex 4

Monitoring template



Household-support-fund-management-inf

POLICY AND FUNDING FRAMEWORK FOR THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

1. Introduction

This funding framework has been developed in relation to decision 21/00107, which is to accept the Household Support Fund and any further grant monies with very similar terms of reference. KCC has subsequently accepted the Household Support Fund Extension of £11.065m for use in line with the guidance published by the Department of Work and Pensions and to implement the relevant funding arrangements.

The following governance arrangements will facilitate management and implementation of the grant funding via officer delegated decision-making. The key decision includes providing delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Finance, after consultation with the Leader and Corporate Directors for CYPE and Adult Social Care, to update, review and amend the proposed distribution of the funding in response to changing need and the emergency assistance landscape, as evidenced by the monitoring of grant expenditure.

Because the scheme was announced by Government on 23 March, and Government guidance only being finalised at the end of April, it has been necessary to move very quickly on some elements of expenditure, before all the details around how the scheme will work in Kent have been worked through. This Framework sets out how decisions to flex or redirect funding will be made during the four months (June 2022 to September 2022) that the Scheme will run.

2. Decision-making Process

An officer group chaired by the Corporate Director of Finance, the Covid Finance Monitoring Group (CFMG), has been established to oversee the spending of the COVID related funding. This includes representatives covering education, adult social care, strategic commissioning, District partnership working, finance and project support.

The guidance stipulates that we identify and provide support to a broad cross-section of vulnerable households. Support is not restricted to households in receipt of benefits, and we have discretion as to how to identify and support those most in need. This Framework provides the rationale for eligibility and how households access the scheme.

A key principle is that KCC staff will, with our statutory and voluntary sector partners, and other organisations including utility companies, collectively identify families, households and individuals in financial hardship and target funds at them, rather than encouraging people to apply, other than via existing routes. This is because application processes are expensive to run, require effort on the part of those applying at a time when they are struggling, and a

proportion of people will apply and be turned down because they don't meet the eligibility criteria. Also, because this fund is time-limited and will only last for four months, it does not make sense to put in place significant new infrastructure to distribute the resources. As far as possible we want to build on existing networks and support, which has the added virtue of providing some sustainability moving forwards. The Kent Support & Assistance Service (KSAS) is already in place and forms a key plank of our proposed response. One of the challenges we face is how to avoid supporting the same household via different funding streams. We have concluded that it may be entirely appropriate for some families to be in receipt of, for example, fuel hardship payments, food bank support and supermarket vouchers. Indeed, the most vulnerable households may well be in this position. Those who are using the Household Support Fund to provide support will ask people whether they are in receipt of other forms of support and make a judgement as to whether their circumstances are such that it is reasonable for them to receive the support. Similarly, while we will emphasise to households that the support they are receiving is a one-off, if households in financial hardship return for further help and their circumstances warrant it, further support will be considered.

The table below shows how we intend to target vulnerable households.

Provision of support, and rationale	How it is targeted and accessed	Comments
<p>Supermarket vouchers during the May, and Summer school holidays, to support low income families whose children would be receiving a daily meal when at school, but need to be fed at home during the school holidays.</p>	<p>All families in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM) will automatically receive vouchers, without having to apply.</p> <p>A £50 flat rate voucher will be available for the Summer holidays.</p> <p>Children who currently do not have a school place but are known to meet the criteria will automatically receive vouchers.</p> <p>Processes are being put in place to identify vulnerable children who meet the benefits-related FSM criteria but who are not in school (either elective home education or children missing education)</p>	<p>There may be families with children in Yr 2 or below who have not registered for benefits-related FSM because all young children automatically receive FSM. These families will be encouraged to apply so that they can receive the vouchers (and also schools will then receive Pupil Premium for those children).</p> <p>The current requirements set out by government do not allow KCC to fully fund voucher support through the summer holidays. To ensure that families receive some support through this period, a £50 flat rate voucher will be provided.</p>

	Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium and Free for Two services will also receive vouchers – parents will be contacted directly.	
<p>Funding to District and Borough Councils to support pension age residents with energy bills.</p> <p>Additional funding to District and Borough Councils to support vulnerable households.</p> <p>distributed on the same population/deprivation formula used by DWP to allocate the Fund.</p>	<p>This will be locally targeted at households known to District Council staff or the voluntary organisations they are working with.</p> <p>To include families in temporary accommodation</p> <p>To include vulnerable adults without children</p> <p>To be targeted at those local communities facing particularly severe deprivation.</p>	<p>Some of this funding can be used to enhance Food Bank provision, alongside the Government's additional support to Food Banks.</p> <p>Districts will work with particular groups, for example those with very high levels of deprivation or other characteristics that make them more vulnerable during Covid.</p>
Funding for vulnerable households via KCC services	<p>Kent Support and Assistance Service will be the key vehicle for distributing support from KCC. The following groups should also be targeted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early years – from pregnancy to age 2, as they will not be getting Free School Meal vouchers. • Care Leavers • Disabled young adults (18-24) • Young Carers • People with No Recourse to Public Funds 	<p>Adult Social Care will identify vulnerable adults they are supporting in the community</p> <p>Health Visitors and Maternity services will identify vulnerable families with young children and expectant parents who may not otherwise be known to CYPE.</p> <p>Early Help will continue to use their existing signposting - they already identify vulnerable families</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families with multiple challenges Adults with Disabilities 	and help them get the support they need.
Funding to utility companies to reduce fuel and water bills for those in financial hardship.	Criteria will be developed with the utilities companies to focus support on those facing greatest financial hardship.	We will develop a trusted partner status arrangement whereby we agree criteria and the company can then confirm how many households meet that criteria for us to pass the funding to them to deduct from their bills.
Funding for fuel poverty voucher and support scheme	This will be targeted at households who are low income or in financial distress. Access will be through trusted partners such as district and borough councils.	

3. Monitoring and Reporting Spend and Financial Variance

One of the conditions of this grant is that it has to be spent by 30 September, and the final instalment will be paid upon receipt of monitoring information evidencing spend. It is therefore important that expenditure is closely monitored so that we do not face a situation where there is underspend in some areas whilst other areas have run out of money. This could also mean that resources are moved from one area to another.

The allocations will therefore be reviewed regularly by the CFMG, and the Corporate Director of Finance will agree any variance. If these are in excess of 30% of the total allocation they will be highlighted to the Leader of the Council.

Reporting to Government

The Department for Work and Pensions requires the Council to make two Statement of Grant Usage and management information (MI) returns. There is an interim statement and return that covers the months of 1 April 2022 and 20 June 2022 and a final statement and return that covers the full period of the scheme from 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022. These will be signed off by the Corporate Director of Finance.

Members and Senior Officers

The Corporate Director of Finance will provide regular updates to the Leader, Cabinet Members for Integrated Children's Services and Public Health and Adult Social Care, and Corporate Management Team.

Internal reporting and monitoring

Monitoring of grant allocations will take place monthly against the criteria included in the DWP returns² and will be shared with the CFMG. This monitoring will begin at the end of June 2022.

² i.e. spend, divided between total amount provided to vulnerable households, and administration costs; total value of awards split by households with and without children; total value of awards split by food and utility bills or other essentials; grant allocated to Third Party Organisations and what it covers