

Equality and Public Health Full Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment Id: #486

1.0 Screening Information

Project Name

Household Support Fund

Name of Project Sponsor

Hannah Perrott

Name of Project Manager

Louise West

Name of Project Lead

Lisa Bedford

Please give a brief description of the project

The Household Support Fund has been made available to local councils through the Department of Work and Pensioners to support households in the most need; particularly families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers, and people with disabilities who would otherwise struggle with energy bills, food and water bills.

The Household Support Fund (HSF) will provide support to those most in need by providing vouchers or payments to eligible households or making direct provisions to help with food and goods through a variety of mechanisms.

Data Protection screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

Equality and Public Health screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

Environmental Sustainability screening result

Will require a full impact assessment

1.1 Background and Purpose

Background and Purpose of Project?

To support your answer to this question, you can upload a copy of the project's Business Case or similar document.

The Household Support Fund is a government initiative to help vulnerable residents with the rising costs of living, primarily for food, fuel and other essentials. Since October 2021, Worcestershire has been awarded £3.95m of funding every six months from Household Support Fund schemes to provide support for residents in need of help with food, fuel and other essential household costs. In the Autumn Statement 2022, the Chancellor confirmed that the Household Support Fund would be extended for a further 12 months starting in April 2023, and this equates to just under £7.9 million for Worcestershire to use to support residents until 31st March 2024.

Confirmation and guidance from the Department of Work and Pensions was received in February 2023.

Government specified parameters for use of these funds over the previous three schemes has included;

- a) HSF 1 – ringfence a minimum of 50% of the grant on households with children with a focus on food
- b) HSF 2 – ringfence a minimum of a third of the grant on households with children and a further third for pensioners with a general support around food and energy and wider linked essentials
- c) HSF 3 – no funding ringfenced to specific cohorts but a larger focus on energy costs

The new fund from April 2023 is intended to provide assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food. Whilst the general purpose of the fund is the same as that provided previously in HSF 3, there is a stronger focus on energy and supporting those vulnerable groups that may be facing additional costs such as; families on low incomes with children of all ages, pensioners, disabled people, carers and care leavers.

Upload Business Case or Support documents

No files uploaded

Project Outputs

Briefly summarise the activities needed to achieve the project outcomes.

To provide assistance to vulnerable households across the county in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food.

Project Outcomes

Briefly summarise what the project will achieve.

Proposals are in line with government grant conditions and are modelled around local understanding of need across different categories, informed by local intelligence and previous delivery of the funds. The majority of the activity is a continuation of the schemes currently in operation in HSF 3. Funding will only be used for schemes that are free to eligible residents.

- Food - Food voucher for all school holidays until the end of March 2024 for children in receipt of free school meals. Dedicated Food bank funding delegated to District Councils

Energy - Extend Act on Energy scheme to support with debt, vouchers and new heating measures for eligible residents. Home visits and minor measure installations through Age UK's in the county. Energy voucher scheme (Warmth on prescription) through primary care for residents with heat affected medical conditions in each district collaborative area.

- Food/Energy - Extend pensioner, carer, person with disability scheme delivered through Worcestershire Advice Network organisations, voucher payment depending on number of criteria met. Care leavers one off winter payment. Shared lives carers one off winter payment. Small appliances fund linked to the growth and skills programme in the council.

- District Councils - District councils to distribution in line with grant conditions. Includes in house support and through external voluntary sector partners.

- Advice Services - Extension of debt workers supporting energy debt applications alongside Act on Energy

Is the project a new function/service or does it relate to an existing Council function/service?

Existing

Was consultation carried out on this project?

No

1.2 Responsibility

Directorate/Organisation

People

Service Area

Communities

1.3 Specifics

Project Reference (if known)

Not Recorded

Intended Project Close Date *

April 2024

1.4 Project Part of a Strategic Programme

Is this project part of a strategic programme?

No

2 Organisations Involved

Please identify the organisation(s) involved:

Worcestershire County Council

Details of contributors to this assessment:

Name	Carla Kesterton
Job title	Commissioning Officer
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Name	Lisa Bedford
Job title	Service Development Manager
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3.0 Who will be affected by the development and implementation

Please identify group(s) involved:

Carers

Other - Eligible residents of the various Household Support Fund schemes including low income households with; children, pensioners, carers, care leavers, people with a disability.

3.1 Information and evidence reviewed

What information and evidence have you reviewed to help inform this assessment? *

Pension credit data, housing benefit only data, review of council tax rebate scheme options, IMD data, discussions with district council partners

3.2 Summary of engagement or consultation undertaken

Who and how have you engaged, or why do you believe engagement is not required? *

As this is a form of welfare support, we believe that consultation with the public is not required. Internal and external partners have been engaged in developing the proposals in order to provide a solution to the DWPs requirements for distributing Household Support Fund.

3.3 Summary of relevant findings

Please summarise your relevant findings. *

A range of schemes are utilised to distribute Household Support Fund to vulnerable residents in order to help with their food and energy needs relating to increasing living costs. These were designed in collaboration with district councils and key VCSE partners so that local knowledge of need was considered.

4 Protected characteristics - Equality

Please consider the potential impact of this activity (during development & implementation) on each of the equality groups outlined below. **Please select one or more impact box(es) below for each equality group and explain your rationale.** Please note it is possible for the potential impact to be both positive and negative for the same equality group and this should be recorded. Remember to consider the impact on e.g. staff, public, patients, carers etc. who are part of these equality groups.

Age

Potential positive impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

One of the schemes for distributing Household Support Fund is to households in receipt of Pension Credit as this proactively targets older people. Pensioners on a low income are also eligible for support through the Worcestershire Advice Network voucher project led by Age UK Worcester and Malvern. Local Authorities have discretion on how their funding is utilised. However the expectation is that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need, which includes pensioners as stated in the scheme guidance.

Disability

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Local Authorities have discretion on how their funding is utilised. However the expectation is that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need, which includes disabled residents. The new fund from April 2023 is intended to provide assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food. Whilst the general purpose of the fund is the same as that provided previously, there is a stronger focus on energy and supporting those vulnerable groups that may be facing additional costs such as disabled people. Individuals eligible for other schemes, such as households on Pension Credit may also have a disability and therefore be eligible for additional support.

Gender reassignment

Potential neutral impact selected

Explanation of your reasoning:

This would not impact on the status of support requests through the household support fund

Marriage and civil partnerships

Potential neutral impact selected. Potential negative impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The scheme for payments to households on pension credit has a criteria that payments are one per household. So where two people, both on pension credit are living together, they will only get one payment, whereas if they were living separately they would both get the payment.
This is only the case for the payments to households on pension credit. Other schemes such as payments through Age UK for older

people and carers are per person, not per household.

Pregnancy and maternity

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

This would not impact on the status of support requests through the household support fund

Race including travelling communities

Potential neutral impact selected. Potential negative impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

**Race would not impact on the status of support requests through the household support fund.
A fixed address is needed for Post Office vouchers to be posted to.**

Religion and belief

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

This would not impact on the status of support requests through the household support fund

Sex

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

This would not impact on the status of support requests through the household support fund

Sexual orientation

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

This would not impact on the status of support requests through the household support fund

5 Characteristics - Public health

Other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The new fund from April 2023 is intended to provide assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food. Whilst the general purpose of the fund is the same as that provided previously, there is a stronger focus on energy and supporting those vulnerable groups that may be facing additional costs such as; families on low incomes with children of all ages, pensioners, disabled people, carers and care leavers.

Health inequalities

Potential positive impact selected. Potential negative impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The new fund from April 2023 is intended to provide assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food. Whilst the general purpose of the fund is the same as that provided previously, there is a stronger focus on energy and supporting those vulnerable groups that may be facing additional costs such as; families on low incomes with children of all ages, pensioners, disabled people, carers and care leavers.

The household support fund provides short term/one off support so does not address the underlying health inequalities.

Social and economic

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

The new fund from April 2023 is intended to provide assistance to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with the increase in living costs linked to energy and food. Whilst the general purpose of the fund is the same as that provided previously, there is a stronger focus on energy and supporting those vulnerable groups that may be facing additional costs such as; families on low incomes with children of all ages, pensioners, disabled people, carers and care leavers.

Physical health

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

Schemes such as Warmth on Prescription and the money available to contribute to energy bills could potentially improve physical health.

Mental health and wellbeing

Potential positive impact selected. Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

This would not impact on the delivery of this Household Support Fund scheme, although the scheme may have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing through relieve some of the pressure of the impact of the rise in living costs.

Access to services

Potential neutral impact selected.

Explanation of your reasoning:

This would not impact on the delivery of this Household Support Fund scheme

6 Actions to mitigate potential negative impacts

Risk identified	The scheme does not reach all vulnerable residents, although there are a range of scheme to try to reach as many vulnerable residents as possible.
Actions required to reduce/eliminate negative impact	There are a range of schemes each targeting different groups of vulnerable residents. There will be press releases and communication about the support available and this will also be on the council's website. A dedicated officer is being recruited to support with the management and delivery of the scheme and therefore there will be more capacity to undertaken targeted engagement and communications.
Who will lead this action	Wcc As Commissioner And Lead Body For Household Support Fund
Timeframe	Some of the schemes have already started in the previous scheme under HSF 3. Funding is confirmed until 31st March 2024.

How will you monitor these actions?

Monthly MI data from the post office and monthly contract monitoring data and meetings with the Worcestershire Advice Network.

7 When will you review this equality and public health estimate(EPHIA)?

As any additional funding or new criteria is announced

8 Declaration

The following statement has been read and agreed:

- All public bodies have a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to set out arrangements to assess and consult on how their policies and functions impact on the 9 protected characteristics: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage & Civil Partnership; Pregnancy & Maternity; Race; Religion & Belief; Sex; Sexual Orientation
- Our Organisation will challenge discrimination, promote equality, respect human rights, and aims to design and implement services, policies and measures that meet the diverse needs of our service, and population, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others
- All staff are expected to deliver and provide services and care in a manner which respects the individuality of service users, patients, carers etc, and as such treat them and members of the workforce respectfully, paying due regard to the 9 protected characteristics

I confirm to the best of my knowledge that the information I have provided is true, complete and accurate

I confirm that I will make sure that Equality and Public Health have been and continue to be considered throughout the project life cycle and that, if circumstances change in the project, a further Equality and Public Health Impact Assessment Screening will be carried out.

8 Application Details

Last Updated Date Time

20/03/2023 11:31:13

Screening Submitted Date Time

16/03/2023 17:00:35

Last Reopened Date Time

20/03/2023 10:03:49

Full Impact Submitted Date Time

20/03/2023 10:09:59

Approved/Rejected Date Time

20/03/2023 11:31:13

Current User Dashboard Request Status

Complete

9.0 People with access to the original screening

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9.1 People with access to this equality and public health assessment

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[Lisa Bedford \(LBedford@worcestershire.gov.uk\)](mailto:LBedford@worcestershire.gov.uk)

10 Direct Questions

No Questions Asked