

APPENDIX A - Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies

What is the Grant?

The government has announced a Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies of £63 million to be distributed to local authorities in England to use to support people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19.

In July 2020 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) confirmed Bristol City Council's allocation from this fund would be £607,935. The funding is not ring-fenced and was based on a Local Authority's population and weighted by its Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

A short [guidance](#) document has been issued and the key points are:

- local discretion can be exercised on how to identify and support those most in need
- cash or vouchers can be used where practical
- advice and information should also be provided to help people access longer term support they might need, such as benefits
- it is anticipated that most of the funding will be spent within 12 weeks
- the fund can be used to provide basic safety net support to an individual, regardless of their immigration status
- it is necessary to consider any potential overlaps of other funding
- some of the fund can be used for administration but costs should be kept to a minimum
- expect to provide information on how the grant has been spent and may be randomly selected by DEFRA to provide audit trails of spend

Options for spend?

3 options were presented to the Deputy Mayor, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Performance on 13th July 2020 (as below) with option 3 being agreed.

1. Distribute grant based on low income household data already held by BCC (e.g. Council Tax Reduction)
2. Add to existing Local Crisis and Prevention Fund with applications and eligibility set up in normal manner for 'Emergency Payments'
3. Commission third party/VCS to distribute funding on behalf of BCC by setting up grant funding to help communities respond to exceptional challenges over the coming months and providing guidance on awards, eligibility, spend and monitoring processes

What commissioned third party /VCS groups were identified?

A range of Community organisations that are delivering essential services to vulnerable residents in Bristol impacted by COVID-19 including community hubs, food banks and food clubs are being considered as the initial organisations to work with and make optimum use of funding. These are still to be formally agreed and as such not specifically named in this document.

How should the funds be distributed?

The indicative funding distribution is as outlined below,; noting that these figures and breakdown could be subject to change as the final position is agreed;

- 3 x priority organisations, sectors or projects - £50k each
- 11 x Community Hubs and community organisations - £30k each
- 2 x Foodbanks / Food Clubs - £30k each
- Administration costs – £68k

Total - £608k

What should awards to successful citizens look like?

At present there are 4 options (as below)

1. Option 1 – a one off payment of £100 to individual or family
2. Option 2 - a three month grant of £100 a month individual payment or over three months
3. Option 3 - an additional amount for a family (additional £50 a month/one off)
4. Some but limited help towards the cost of some additional expenditure for the identified organisations to adapting their service to provide this essential Covid support and / or advice

How will funds be distributed to citizens?

It is anticipated that those groups asked to distribute assistance already have the infrastructure in place to provide either assistance by voucher or direct to bank accounts, with cash payments not being an option.

Next steps

- Set up agreed grant funding agreement of DEFRA 'Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies' to agreed groups - (21/08/2020)
- Draft guidance on eligibility and award mechanisms to agreed groups – (21/08/2020)
- Draft monitoring and MI process to agreed groups – (21/08/2020)
- Ensure suitable measures to prevent fraud have been put in place - tbc
- Go live - tbc
- Market and promotion of fund - tbc