

# Appendix A Bristol City Council - Household Support Fund (December 2021)

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## 1. Background

On 30 September 2021 the government [announced](#) a package of targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The £500 million (£421m for England) Hardship Fund sees new funding issued to Councils to support those most in need with the cost of food, energy and water bills, phone, broadband and clothing, and in exceptional cases, housing costs.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is providing funding to Councils, under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, who will administer the scheme and provide direct assistance to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the increase in the cost of living.

## 2. Period Covered

The Hardship Support Fund will enable Bristol City Council to provide support to vulnerable households and individuals from early October 2021 and covers the period up until the end of March 2022.

## 3. Hardship Support Fund

### 3.1 Funding available

Bristol City Council will receive a grant of £4,039,965 in arrears and based on two management information (MI) returns in January and April 2022 and the amounts committed at the point of their return.

### 3.2 Eligibility Criteria

- A minimum of 50% of the total funding must be ringfenced to support households with children, the other 50% can be used to fund other households genuinely in need of support this winter. (This may include households that are not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits)
- Can be used to assist households with the costs of; food, gas/electricity, water, phone/broadband, essential household items (e.g. white goods, beds/bedding, clothing, baby/sanitary products) and housing costs (in exceptional circumstance)
- No application is needed if households requiring assistance can be determined in advance
- Individuals, regardless of their immigration status are eligible to ensure a basic safety net of support.
- Cannot be used for advice or mortgage related costs.

### 3.3 Implementation of fund

- Can be used for existing schemes and other support which deliver the same outcomes and where the need is greatest, but need to be mindful of possible funding overlaps
- Can be provided in cash or vouchers.
- Distribution of grants can be made using the voluntary/third sector.

- A proportion of the funds can be used for administration; however these costs should be kept to a minimum, in order to maximise the overarching funds available to support our most vulnerable citizens. Due to the approach being adopted in the deployment of these funds, the administration cost is expected to be in the region of £200,000.

### 3.4 Reporting structure

All public authorities must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and MI is required to be kept and maintained by the relevant organisations and provided to the Council to report on delivery of agreed objectives and actual spend.

### 3.5 Receipt of funds

The grant will be paid in arrears and based on MI returns in January and April 2022. Actual payments will be credited in February/March 2022 and May/June 2022 respectively.

## 4. Approved /Proposed Spend

Award	Spend Value	Comments
Targeted support for 2 – 16+ who receive Free School Meals and/or Pupil Premium over October 2021 and February 2022 half term.	£660,000	This is for a total of 2 weeks at a value of £15 x 22,000 children.  This is an extension of the previous FSM reach. Vouchers will be supplied which allows the recipient to choose which supermarket they wish to use.
Targeted support for low-income households (including 50% with children) also covering December school holidays.	£2,850,000	This will cover c28,500 working age households identified from Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction data.  This would equate to a one-off Winter food/fuel payment of £100 per household regardless of size.  Payment mechanism could be a universal voucher.
Targeted support to assist those with No Resource to Public Funds (including c500 Syrian/ Afghanistan Refugees and Asylum Seekers households known directly to BCC).	£100,000	This would be administered by direct award using the existing provisions via Housing Options to the Red Cross.

Contingency support for households that may need additional support and not identified in the above targeted support and to provide future resilience, and to be approved by Cllr Cheney under delegated authority.	£229,965	These amounts and application and payment mechanisms are yet to be determined, but experience of future grant schemes suggests it would be prudent to keep an amount back to cover such groups and especially as the scheme continues until March 2022.
Administration, procurement communications, and marketing.	£200,000	As referenced above this is 5% of the total award and to assist with the cost of administration and also procuring and purchasing of universal vouchers and Free School Meals vouchers.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,039,965</b>	