

Report of the Chief Executive

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT GRANT AND WELL FOR WORK1. Purpose of report

To provide the group with information about the Household Support Grant (HSG) and Well for Work.

2. Detail**Household Support Grant:**

£421 million has been made available to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need this winter. The funding covers the period from 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 inclusive. The scheme went live on 15 November 2021 in Nottinghamshire.

Nottinghamshire has been allocated £5.6 million to support households who would otherwise struggle to buy food, pay essential utility bills, or meet other essential living costs.

At least 50% of the funding is ring-fenced and must be applied to vulnerable households with children (under 19 years), whilst the remainder (maximum 50%) is available for vulnerable households without children (including individuals).

Well for Work:

The Council has partnered with Futures for You to deliver a comprehensive employment support initiative across the Borough. The Well for Work program is part-funded by the European Union through the European Social Fund (ESF).

Support is available for people with physical or mental health, financial struggles, special educational needs or disabilities, substance misuse or language barriers.

The information in the appendix provides further information about the HSG and Well for Work.

3. Financial implications

Broxtowe Borough Council will be able to claim financial support to cover reasonable administrative of administering the HSG fund and has received funding for the Well for Work program.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to NOTE the report.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX**Household Support Grant****Aim of the Nottinghamshire Scheme**

The Nottinghamshire funding will be used to provide support to those in immediate need. Although the government fund can be applied to wider categories of expenditure, the Nottinghamshire scheme will focus support primarily to food, energy and water bills and essentials linked to energy and water bills.

As with previous similar schemes, it is intended to provide vouchers for food for 27,500 children and young people eligible for free school meals during the 5 weeks of school holidays in the funding period. These vouchers have already been provided for the autumn half term and Christmas holidays and will be issued for February half term, utilising £2.3m (41%) of the funding.

In exceptional cases only, it can also be used to provide support with white goods, wider essentials and support housing costs.

Partnership Approach

The following principles were agreed by the Household Support Fund Steering Group:

- One scheme to cover all areas of Nottinghamshire.
- The scheme will only be promoted to local organisations and services, rather than residents.
- Professional front line officers working for the County, Borough and District Councils (plus other relevant organisations) will use their knowledge and understanding of needs of relevant residents, check eligibility, and make a request for financial support on the resident's behalf.
- The County Council will receive and process applications to the scheme to ensure consistency, improve anti-fraud measures, and provide monitoring information to the Government.
- Vouchers will be used as far as possible to provide the needed support to residents.
- The primary focus of the local eligibility criteria developed will be support for food, energy and water, and essentials linked to energy and water (with regards to white goods in exceptional circumstances).
- Local Criteria will not prioritise support for wider essentials or housing costs. A process has been designed to include the use of a panel of partnership professionals to consider any applications made in exceptional circumstances under these two headings for white goods only (under the essentials linked to energy and water category)
- The funding will be awarded on a first come first served basis.

Household eligible for the Nottinghamshire Scheme

Eligible households are those that are in immediate need and fit in one of the following categories:

- Parents/guardians with one or more children in the household in the following groups:
 - Eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals.
 - Not eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals, but where the parent/guardian is receiving one of the following:
 - Council Tax Reduction
 - Housing Benefit
 - Universal Credit that includes housing costs in the calculation
 - Income Support
 - Income based Job Seekers Allowance
 - Income based Employment Support Allowance
 - Working Tax Credits
 - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Single people and couples without children who are receiving one of the following:
 - Council Tax Reduction
 - Housing Benefit
 - Universal Credit that includes housing costs in the calculation
 - Income Support
 - Income based Job Seekers Allowance
 - Income based Employment Support Allowance
 - Working Tax Credits
 - Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Care leavers up to the age of 25.
- Young people with an Education Healthcare Plan aged 19-24 who are eligible for Free School Meals.
- 2-year olds accessing a funded childcare place.
- 3-and 4-year olds accessing Early Years Pupil Premium.
- Families, couples, or single adults in any of the following groups:
 - Known to domestic abuse services.
 - No recourse to public funds.
 - Experiencing considerable in-work poverty.
 - Assessed by a professional as in urgent need for food, energy and water support, or in **exceptional** cases support with housing and white goods. (Following a panel decision – see later).

Households not eligible for support

Those ineligible for consideration for the Nottinghamshire scheme are:

- Those who live outside of the Nottinghamshire County Council borders who will need to approach their own Local Authority; and
- Members of the public who have referred themselves directly.

How will the need for support be identified and assessed?

Local professionals working for the County, Borough and District Councils will play two essential roles in ensuring that all the funding is delivered within pressing timescales in a fair way to those in most need across the County.

- Identifying Need - Firstly, they will be the ‘eyes and ears’ of the partnership, using their local frontline knowledge and understanding of local communities to identify those households in immediate need of support.
- Assessors – Secondly, those nominated professionals will be responsible for undertaking an assessment to ensure:
 - A. The household is eligible for support from the fund
 - B. To assess the level of need and support that should be provided.

Those nominated professional assessors then make a request for the financial support to the appropriate support provider and certify the legitimacy of the request.

Value of the Vouchers – up to 23 January 2022

Initially, eligible households could receive a maximum of four vouchers per household over the different categories of support up until the 31st of March 2022, one voucher for food, two for energy, and one for water.

The value of the individual vouchers available are set out below.

Food	A household with one person	£30
	A household with two people	£60
	A household with three or more people	£90
Energy	A max of 2 vouchers for energy for £49 each per household	£49
Water	The value of the voucher for water will be £80 per household	£80

Value of Vouchers from 24 January 2022

From 24 January 2022 the number of vouchers available to eligible households will be raised from four to six per household, one voucher for food, four for energy, and one for water.

The value of the individual vouchers from 24 January 2022 are set out below.

Food	A household with one person	1 x £60
	A household with two people	1 x £120
	A household with three or more people	1 x £180

Energy	A max of 4 vouchers for energy for £49 each per household	4 x £49
Water	The value of the voucher for water will be £80 per household	1 x £80

Exceptional Circumstances

The partnership has decided to focus the local scheme primarily on providing support with food, energy & water, and essentials linked to energy and water (not including white goods).

It is however recognised that households may face other hardships and require support that helps with:

- **White goods** – ‘Essentials linked to energy and water’ guidance does allow funding to be used to provide support with essentials including purchase of equipment such as fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.
- **Wider essential needs** - This may include support with a range of other bills deemed to be essential. The Nottinghamshire scheme will only be used to support with wider essential needs (those not linked to energy and water) to support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle, or paying for fuel.
- **Housing Costs** - 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.

To build in flexibility to the Nottinghamshire scheme, professionals who are assessors will be able to request support that fit in these categories as they deem necessary based on the case, and on an exceptional basis.

Exceptional Case Panel - Due to the more complex nature of these types of support request, a panel comprised of three professionals from the partner organisations will consider all exceptional applications and make the final decision as to a) whether to support the application, and if so, b) the level of that support.

Employees of Assessor Organisations - Further, if applications are made to the scheme on behalf of any employees of the partners involved, the panel would also be used to ensure fair and impartial consideration is given to those applications.

Spending update:

As of 24 January 2022 households have been supported to a value of £465,504. The current breakdown geographically is:

	Number of Submissions	Value Vouchers
Ashfield	1541	£115,699
Bassetlaw	530	£35,660
Broxtowe	887	£68,368
Gedling	846	£72,303
Mansfield	886	£62,484
Newark & Sherwood	1149	£99,103
Rushcliffe	158	£11,887
TOTAL	5997	£465,504

Well for WorkAim of the Scheme:

Well for Work is open to all Broxtowe Borough residents who are unemployed and face barriers to work due to a health condition, whether this is physical health or mental health related.

The scheme aims to focus on the individual and help them feel confident and supported when it comes to work, for life. Well for Work aims to support someone to be and feel the best version of themselves.

Well for Work advisers can assist individuals with:

- Finding the perfect job
- Qualifications, including English and Maths
- Sector based training
- Work programme assistance
- Wellbeing and therapy services
- Housing support, financial advice and travel assistance

Support can also continue after employment has been secured to help ensure the employment is sustained.

Referrals:

As of 25 January 2022 six residents of the Borough have consented to a referral being made for support through the scheme.

The scheme will run until 31 December 2023 and Broxtowe Borough Council hope to refer over 180 residents during the life of the project.