

Report Title:	Household Support Fund, Winter 2022/23 Allocation
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Johnson, Leader of the council
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet, 15 th December 2022
Responsible Officer(s):	Kevin McDaniel, Director of People Becky Hatch, Head of Strategy
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out RBWM's policy for allocating the third tranche of the Household Support Fund. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has provided £421m to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living. This funding covers the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 inclusive. RBWM's allocation of funding is £587,905, as in the previous two tranches.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) **Note that the Chief Executive has used his Delegated Authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance and Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, to approve the allocation and initial distribution of funding on the grounds of urgency.**

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Notes the Household Support Fund allocation policy. This is the recommended option	This enables the Household Support Fund to be allocated to residents in need, quickly and effectively.

2.1 Rationale for taking a delegated decision

- 2.2 RBWM's Household Support Fund allocation was confirmed at the start of October and therefore officers have needed to act quickly to develop the attached allocation policy. The increasing pressure of the cost of living crisis,

the onset of winter and the potential harm suffered by household that are not able to access this fund at the earliest possible opportunity mean that there is an urgent need to allocate funding. The Chief Executive has therefore taken a delegated decision on the allocation of the Fund, following discussion with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny in accordance with Section 5 of the constitution, paragraph 3.9.

- 2.3 The allocation of the Winter 2022-23 Household Support Fund is being distributed through two separate streams, summarised below. It should be noted that the Autumn Statement on November 17th, announced an extension of the Household Support Fund into next year. The policy for allocating future tranches of this Fund will be developed separately, and will be subject to a new decision.
- 2.4 **Stream 1: Free School Meals Support in the holidays**
- 2.5 This approach replicates that taken in previous tranches of the Household Support Fund, which targeted families with children. The approach uses receipt of Free School Meals to target vulnerable children and families directly, to support them with food costs during the school holidays.
- 2.6 **Scheme 2: Financial support to households identified as being in severe financial hardship and at risk of escalation of problems (a partnership approach)**
- 2.7 RBWM's policy is to work with a selection of third party organisation (TPOs) to allocate the remainder of the Household Support Grant (over £300,000) to households identified as experiencing severe financial hardship and at risk of escalation of problems. These TPOs include a range of local voluntary and community sector organisations, housing associations, and health partners. A full list of Distribution Partners (DPs) is included in the Household Support Fund Policy document at Appendix B.
- 2.8 DPs have discretion to identify residents in severe financial hardship and at risk over the winter period, using their own sources of data and information, using criteria agreed with the council, and in accordance with the DWP guidance above.
- 2.9 Residents identified by DPs, will be provided with a Unique Reference Number (URN) and encouraged to make an application to the council via a simple web-based application form. Subject to checks for identify and fraud, residents will receive a one-off cash payment of £145, which will be transferred into their bank account by BACS.
- 2.10 DPs will take primary responsibility for identifying and assessing who is in greatest need. The council will check for residency, duplicate applications and potential fraud. The Council will promote the policy and list of DPs to residents and the wider community through its website and through working through a diverse group of community organisations, parishes and stakeholders.

- 2.11 Our delivery partners have a strong track record of working to support residents who are most in need, and have the information and relationships that can help to target the fund effectively. Those working directly with our communities are best placed to identify these individuals and to assess who will benefit most from the support. In particular, they are better able to identify residents who have missed out on previous support, for example, because they do not fall into particular age ranges, or receive certain benefits.
- 2.12 Working in partnership provides opportunities to embed the one off cash payments to residents within a wider offer of support and advice. This approach enables applications to the fund to be made as part of a wider conversation about the resident's needs and will complement advice, for example on budgeting, management of health conditions and / or wider sources of support. The cash payment may also help partners to engage new 'harder to reach' groups of residents.
- 2.13 Working together in this way also aims to build stronger collaboration between the council and its partners, and to facilitate the type of community-based, resilience-building and preventative approach, that we wish to develop further going forwards.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The successful delivery of this policy will provide financial support, in the form of £20 food vouchers per child, for each week of the school holidays, for families in receipt of Free School Meals; and one off cash transfers of £145, for residents in severe financial need over the winter period 2022-23. We expect to support 3000 families in receipt of Free School Meals, plus over 2000 households in severe financial need, across a broad range of age groups and household types, and including disabled residents and those with long term health conditions.
- 3.2 In addition, the partnership approach will help to strengthen positive relationships with and between the range of agreed partners, and the HSF cash payment aims to help to engage residents in the wider, more sustained, advice and support offered by our partners.

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Household Support Fund (£587,905) fully allocated to residents	< £587,000 of the funding utilised.	All funding utilised appropriately .	All funding allocated. Evidence of high impact on resident outcomes. Partnerships strengthened.		31 March 2023.

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
in most need.					

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 This proposal utilises the full grant provided to RBWM through the DWP Household Support Fund, with a small proportion of the Fund used to cover the council and voluntary and community sector partners' management costs. There are therefore no additional financial burdens from the council for the delivery of this scheme. Support provided to residents will be limited to the amount provided to the council by DWP.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The attached proposal complies with the guidance issued by DWP, and as such there are no significant legal implications.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 3: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
Funding is allocated to residents who do not have high or genuine levels of need.	Medium	Partners have been selected on the basis of their experience and track record of working with communities in need; their access to different forms of evidence and information to support their decisions; and their reach across diverse communities.	Medium-low
TPOs are unable to identify enough residents to allocate the full amount of the grant.	Medium	RBWM will track applications and spend on an ongoing basis, to enable potential underspend to be identified early. RBWM will meet with partners on a monthly basis to review and respond to	Low

		any issues arising. Mitigating actions to include broadening communications and outreach; expanding the number of partners; redistributing Unique Reference Numbers between different partners; and in extreme circumstances lowering threshold of need; and / or making a second payment to applicants.	
Residents who consider themselves to be eligible for support do not receive it, and are dissatisfied.	Medium	Residents are able to approach any of the partner organisations listed, and are encouraged to approach Citizens Advice as our overarching partner, if they would like to put themselves forward for support. It should be recognised that the levels of funding are set by DWP, and are unlikely to fully meet demand for support. Any complaints will be handled in a timely and sensitive manner.	Medium
Residents with poor IT skills or lack of digital access struggle to complete the online form.	Medium	Partners will be available to assist residents in completing their application forms, and can provide organisational email addresses, for those who do not have access to IT. Digital support is also available within libraries.	Low
The Fund is targeted by fraud	Medium	Every applicant will be required to complete a statutory declaration of truth, eligibility checks will be made for	Low

		residency, to screen out duplicate applications, and to check that the bank account details provided match the name of the applicant. Regular meetings with partners will also probe for any suspicious activities.	
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7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

- 7.1 Equalities. Partners have been selected on the basis of their collective reach across communities, and ability to target groups with different protected characteristics. The allocation of the fund will be monitored to assess distribution by ethnicity, gender, disability, pensioners and children in the household. Where proportions do not match those of the population and evidence of need in the borough, action will be taken to proactively target under-represented groups to ensure that they are able to benefit from the scheme, including through engaging with a range of organisations working with diverse communities to encourage residents in need to come forward. An Equality Impact Assessment is available as Appendix A.
- 7.2 Climate change/sustainability: there are minimal sustainability implications of this proposal.
- 7.3 Data Protection/GDPR: Personal data collected as part of the Household Support Fund application and allocation process will only be used for the purposes of allocating the Household Support Fund and will adhere to the terms of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Guidance on the use of personal data is included within the resident application form, for their information. Anonymised data will be analysed for monitoring the allocation of the Fund, by protected characteristics, household type and geographical location, as appropriate.

CONSULTATION

- 7.4 The second stream of the Household Support Fund (Partnerships) has been developed in close consultation with a range of partners and wider stakeholders. These include voluntary and community sector organisations, Frimley ICB, housing partners and parishes, in addition to engagement with services across the council. Stakeholders provided valuable input to shape the policy, through a series of individual meetings and workshops.

8. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Implementation date: Immediately. The full implementation stages are set out in table 4.

Table 4: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
October 2022 – 31 March 2023.	Initial allocation of food vouchers to families in receipt of Free School Meals was made in October half term. Subsequent allocations to cover three further weeks of school holidays in the December-March period.
1 December 2022 – 31 March 2023.	Partners begin to identify residents for scheme 2, and residents invited to apply for support through the web-based application form. Applications will close on 31 March 2023, or when the limit of the Fund is reached, if sooner.
25 January 2023	Interim monitoring report returned to DWP
28 April 2023	Final monitoring report returned to DWP, with post-assurance checks undertaken if required.

9. APPENDICES

9.1 This report is supported by three appendices:

- **Appendix A – Household Support Fund Allocation Policy**
- **Appendix B – List of Distribution Partners**
- **Appendix C - Equality Impact Assessment**

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 This report is supported by one background document:

- DWP Household Support Fund guidance, [Household Support Fund \(1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023\): final guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/household-support-fund-1-october-2022-to-31-march-2023).

11. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>			
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	22.11.22	24.11.22
Emma Duncan	Director of Law, Strategy & Public Health/ Monitoring Officer	22.11.22	24.11.22

<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)		
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)		
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)		
Mandatory:	<i>Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>		
Emma Young	Data Protection Officer		
Mandatory:	<i>Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>		
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	20.11.22	24.11.22
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Tony Reeves	Interim Chief Executive		
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place		
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of People Services	20.11.22	24.11.22
<i>External (where relevant)</i>			
N/A			

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Cabinet Member for Finance, Leader of the Council	Yes
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	Yes - Decision by Chief Executive was taken under urgency powers. The recommendation in this report is for noting only.	No

Report Author: Becky Hatch, Head of Strategy
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Appendix A: Allocation of Household Support Fund Policy

www.rbwm.gov.uk



Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

Allocation of Household Support Fund Policy

(Tranche 3, October 2022 – March 2023)

November 2022

Document Control

Managed by:

Becky Hatch

Head of Strategy

Version: V1.0

Introduction and DWP guidance

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has provided £421m to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living. This funding covers the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 inclusive. Local Authorities (LAs) have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out of the accompanying grant determination and guidance. [Household Support Fund \(1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023\): final guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

This is the third tranche of the Household Support Fund. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's allocation of funding for this period is £587,905, as in the previous two tranches.

For this tranche of funding, DWP have stated that there is no ringfence of funding for any particular cohort of people. The expectation is that The Fund should be used to support households in the most need; particularly those who:

- may not be eligible for the other support government has recently made available but who are nevertheless in need. This may include, but is not limited to, people who are entitled to but not claiming qualifying benefits, people who are claiming Housing Benefit (HB) only, people who begin a claim or return to payment of a benefit after the relevant qualifying date as well as people who have fuel costs but who cannot access the £400 of energy support from the Energy Bill Support Scheme or the equivalence package confirmed on 29 July 2022.

- groups who are vulnerable to rising prices even though they are supported through these schemes, for example large families or single-income families.

DWP stress that The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low income households in need including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people.

DWP state that when administering The Fund, Authorities are encouraged to adopt the following principles:

- use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need, taking into account a wide range of information
- use the funding from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and other related essentials. Authorities can also use the funding to support households who are struggling to afford wider essentials

Local authorities are requested to include a resident application process for at least some of the funding.

This document provides guidance regarding the operation and delivery of the policy in the Royal Borough.

2. RBWM Approach

RBWM have developed a are allocating the Household Support Fund through two schemes, which will run in parallel.

Scheme 1: Free School Meal support during the holidays

RBWM will provide families in receipt of Free School Meals with vouchers to assist with food costs during the school holidays. This replicates the successful allocation of funding in this way in the previous two tranches of the Fund.

Scheme 2: Financial support to households identified as being in severe financial hardship and at risk of escalation of problems

RBWM will work with a range of Third Party Organisations within the voluntary and community sector, housing and health, to engage with and identify residents in most need. Residents identified by partners will be invited to apply for a one off cash payment of £145 through a short, web-based application form.

Scheme 1: Support to families in receipt of Free School Meals

Summary of approach

This approach mirrors the methodology undertaken in previous tranches of the Household Support Fund, which targeted families with children. The approach uses receipt of Free School Meals to target vulnerable children and families directly, to support them with food costs during the school holidays. Receipt of Free School Meals provides a robust and clear criteria for allocation.

Schools request vouchers through a secure platform on behalf of pupils eligible for free school meals who attend their school. The request is authorised by an AFC Officer and then the voucher code is emailed to the parent/ carer.

Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility Criteria requires pupils to be registered for free school meals and attending a RBWM school regardless of their home address. Pupils outside of this criteria would be excluded. The funding level is £20 per pupil per funded week. The delivery method being used is through issuing of electronic vouchers.

Funding levels

The most recent number of pupils receiving free school meals was nearly 3,000. The planned allocation for October 2022 to March 2023 is £240.000 which represents £80 over 4 weeks of the school holidays per pupil.

Scheme 2: Financial support to households identified as being in severe financial hardship and at risk of escalation of problems (a partnership approach)

Summary of approach

RBWM's policy is to work with a selection of third party organisation (TPOs) to allocate the remainder of the Household Support Grant. These TPOs include a range of local voluntary and community sector organisations, housing associations, and health partners. A full list of Distribution Partners (DPs) is included at Appendix B.

DPs have discretion to identify residents in severe financial hardship and at risk over the winter period, using their own sources of data and information, using criteria agreed with the council, and in accordance with the DWP guidance above.

Residents identified by DPs, will be provided with a Unique Reference Number (URN) and encouraged to make an application to the council via a simple web-based application form. Subject to checks for identify and fraud, residents will receive a one-off cash payment of £145, which will be transferred into their bank account by BACS.

DPs will take primary responsibility for identifying and assessing who is in greatest need. The council will check for residency, duplicate applications and potential fraud.

The Council will promote the policy and list of DPs to residents and the wider community. Residents will be able to put themselves forward to DPs for support.

Summary of process

- Residents identified by our DPs will be encouraged to apply for **a one off cash payment of £145**, through a simple, web-based form, managed by the council.
- **DPs will provide each individual resident with a Unique Reference Number (URN)**, which will be entered on their application form. DPs will provide RBWM with a list of the residents who have received a URN and a brief summary of their circumstances.
- **Applications will be approved by the council**, subject to checks on residency, identity and duplicate applications. Applications can not be submitted without a Unique Reference Number from a partner organisation.
- **Payments will be administered by the council and paid into the applicant's bank account.**
- **RBWM will provide a small 'management costs' payment to DPs from the voluntary and community sector**, to contribute to the costs of running the scheme and associated winter support to residents.

Rationale for a partnership approach

This approach has been developed in consultation with a range of voluntary, community, health and housing partners. The rationale for this approach is as follows:

- Our partners have a strong track record of working to support residents who are most in need, and have the information and relationships that can help to target the fund effectively. Those working directly with our communities are best placed to identify these individuals and to assess who will benefit most from the support. In particular, they are better able to identify residents who have missed out on previous support,

for example, because they do not fall into particular age ranges, or receive certain benefits.

- Working in this way, provides opportunities to embed the one off cash payments to residents within a wider offer of support and advice. This approach enables applications to the fund to be made as part of a wider conversation about the resident's needs and will complement advice, for example on budgeting, management of health conditions and / or wider sources of support. The cash payment may also help partners to engage new 'harder to reach' groups of residents.
- Working together in this way also aims to build stronger collaboration between the council and its partners, and to facilitate the type of community-based, resilience-building and preventative approach, that we wish to develop further going forwards.

Selection of Distribution Partners

The initial collection of DPs have been selected based on:

- their ability to reach target groups of residents;
- their capacity to identify and assess residents in need; and
- the wider support that they are offering to communities to prevent escalation of problems over winter.

The council has assessed the initial partner organisations to ensure that, collectively, the selected group of partners are able to engage with households across the range of target groups, and that their reach is spread across the borough, with a particular focus on those areas with greatest levels of disadvantage and to ensure that those with protected characteristics under the Equalities Act are not disadvantaged.

Partners have been selected based on their capacity to identify and assess who is in most need of support. All partners have a proven track record of supporting residents in need and have access to a range of information needed to make an informed decision about the allocation of support.

Partners have also been selected based on their ability to offer wider assistance to residents, whether this is through providing food or other goods, warm spaces and wider community initiatives, skills-building and / or wider support and advice, including on managing health conditions. The diverse range of partners enables the Fund to target a wide range of households through the Fund.

The council is also working with a range of stakeholders, including parishes and smaller community organisations, to communicate the scheme and reach out to individuals who may have high levels of need, but not be accessing support. Citizens Advice will play an overarching role in assessing residents engaging with these stakeholders, who wish to put themselves forward for support. Note that care leavers resident in the borough will be approached directly by and invited to apply.

Information about the initial partners selected, including their contact details, is published on the RBWM website, under the Here to Help pages.

Further partners will be considered by RBWM during the course of the winter 2022/23 period. Interested organisations should approach equality@rbwm.gov.uk setting out their interest and capacity to identify residents in need.

Contribution to management costs: The council recognises that identifying and assessing residents will require resource on the part of our DPs. Therefore, DPs from the voluntary and community sector will be offered a financial contribution to their organisation to support the costs of managing this process as part of their winter support offer. The level of this one-off contribution has been set at £2500 per voluntary sector organisation. Statutory partners will manage the costs of identifying residents within their existing budgets.

Eligibility Criteria

The primary responsibility for identifying and assessing need lies with the DP organisations, in line with the rationale set out when joining the scheme. When the DP is satisfied that a resident is eligible, they will issue a URN to the resident.

The URN will be entered as part of the resident application to the council, and the council will undertake basic checks to prevent misuse of the funding.

In order to be progress, applicants **must meet all** of the following criteria:

- Applicants must be resident in the borough (and provide proof of address)
- Be over 18 years of age
- Have a bank account in their name.
- Include a URN supplied by one of the agreed DPs which has not been previously used.

Additionally, **only one** application will be awarded per household, during the period. The council will screen for duplicate applications.

Unique reference numbers will only be issued to DPs up to the estimated limit of the funding allocation, to minimise the risk of applicants applying after funds have been exhausted, however

Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served until funding has been exhausted or by the end of the period (31.03.23), even if a Unique Reference Number and application has been submitted.

Funding Levels

The Royal Borough will make one off cash payments of £145 into individual resident bank accounts over the period December 2022 to March 2023. No duplicate applications will be accepted.

Application Process

Due to the limited funds available, and the likelihood of applications outweighing the available funds, the applications will be administered on a first come first served approach. This means that, once funding has been exhausted, no further applications will be considered even where applicants may fit the overall criteria.

A link to the application form will be shared with residents identified by DPs along with their URN. DPs can provide support to residents to complete the online form, where they may struggle to complete it independently.

Residents will need to enter a Unique Reference Number (URN) supplied by a partner organisation, in order for their application to be processed.

Residents wishing to put themselves forward for support can do so by approaching one of the DP organisations listed on the RBWM website (Here to Help pages). If a resident is unsure which DP to approach, the Citizens Advice East Berkshire can be approached in the first instance. Residents approaching the council's customer service teams seeking assistance from the HSF will be directed to the Citizens Advice.

Any queries in respect of applications or becoming a DP should be addressed to: equality@rbwm.gov.uk.

The closing date for applications will be 31 March 2023, when the online form will cease taking new applications. The closing date will be subject to review and could be affected by factors such as the exhaustion of funds or Government announcements.

Any residents applying should ensure that they have fully completed the application form and provided the required supporting evidence. Any incomplete form or missing evidence will mean that the form will not be processed nor will the resident be contacted to provide missing information.

To confirm - any incomplete applications or those with less than the required evidence will be deemed ineligible.

No grants will be awarded without an application being submitted and that application must be complete with all supporting evidence/information and a Unique Reference Number supplied.

The Award

Applications will be assessed for entitlement as they are received. We will aim to advise successful applicants of the outcome of their award within 5 working days of the submission of their application, with payment being made within a further 7 working days.

We will aim to advise unsuccessful applicants, by e-mail, within 5 working days of the closing of the application window.

Payments will only be made via BACS.

Managing the risk of Fraud

In order to ensure that the Household Support Fund is not subject to potential abuse, all submitted applications will require a statutory declaration of truth in connection with the application.

The council may carry out any pre or post payment checks deemed appropriate, through its internal audit team, in order to provide assurance that the funds are being claimed correctly.

The Council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any resident falsifying their circumstances to gain access to the Household Support Fund payment could face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to recovery.

The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead is distributing this funding on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Data regarding awards and applications will be shared with DWP as required. The distribution of payments will also be monitored by RBWM with regard to equalities considerations and geographical spread, to ensure that the Funds are being distributed fairly.

Policy Review

To ensure that the Household Support Fund reaches those households most in need, this policy will be reviewed periodically by the Head of Strategy and the agreed partners set out in Appendix B.

The council therefore reserves the right to modify the allocations process, eligibility criteria, and award sums, as a result at any time.

Appeals

There is no statutory appeal against the decision to award or not award a payment or against the level of payment offered. This is a discretionary fund, with residents identified by our DPs. Residents may put themselves forward for support to Citizens Advice or another of the listed DPs.

Appendix B: Household Support Fund – List of Distribution Partners

Organisation	Current reach (geographical, cohort, numbers supported)	Wider support offer
<p>Citizens Advice East Berkshire (CAEB)</p> <p>CAEB will play an overarching role in identifying residents putting themselves forward for support.</p>	<p>Borough-wide. Since September 2022, have supported 375 residents who live in the borough, with 1,306 issues. 62% of working age, 63% women, 64% had long-term health conditions, and 27% were from a minority ethnic background.</p>	<p>Provide impartial, confidential, and independent advice, and information to residents on their rights and responsibilities. Specifically, on employment, housing, benefits, debt, tax and consumer issues. CAEB also have access to pro bono solicitors who specialise in relationship, immigration, housing, wills & trusts, and criminal law.</p>
<p>Maidenhead Foodshare</p>	<p>Maidenhead. Residents in poverty. All age ranges. Seeing 200-400 families each month.</p>	<p>Subsistence support – food (including fresh fruit and vegetables).</p>
<p>Abri</p>	<p>Social housing in Windsor, Eton Wick, Datchet, and Maidenhead. Residents in social housing from all age ranges, plus wider community.</p>	<p>Housing association. Provide advice and training on budgeting, benefits, and employment. Support tenancy sustainment, distribute utility vouchers, and provide a warm hub once a week.</p>
<p>Housing Solutions</p>	<p>Social housing in Maidenhead. Residents in social housing from all age ranges.</p>	<p>Housing association. Provide advice and training on budgeting, benefits, and employment. Support tenancy sustainment.</p>
<p>Age Concern Windsor</p>	<p>Windsor, Old Windsor, and Datchet. Residents aged over 70, who live alone, with extra care needs. Current client base is 80% female, and 90% White British.</p>	<p>Provide companionship, Meals on Wheels, and other social initiatives (for instance, bingo, and quizzes). Signpost to additional support and assist with paper and online form completion.</p>

West Windsor Hub (WWH)	Windsor. All characteristics (including refugees, and military personnel). Current client base of 450 residents.	Provide a warm space bi-weekly, where residents can socialise, access hot food, drink, and ancillary items to keep them warm. Signpost to additional support and assist with paper and online form completion.
Baby Bank	Maidenhead. Residents with young children, particularly single parents. All characteristics (including refugees). Currently see approx.. 250 families each month.	Provide supplies to help with childcare (for example, nappies, clothing, and formula).
Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Social Prescribing service for the Primary Care networks	Borough-wide. All characteristics – focused on residents with long-term health conditions and disabilities, which are at risk of escalating without financial support to manage their needs adequately over winter.	Refer residents to a range of local, non-clinical services – focussing on social, economic, and environmental factors.
RBWM housing service	Borough-wide. Residents in housing need, privately rented accommodation and at risk of homelessness. All characteristics.	Provide advice, and assistance to residents in need of housing support. Issue housing plans and uphold the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Please note that Achieving for Children will also provide Unique Reference Numbers (URNs) to RBWM care leavers who are resident in the borough, in accordance with DWP guidance on supporting this group.

APPENDIX C - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Essential information

Items to be assessed: (please mark 'x')

Strategy		Policy	X	Plan		Project		Service/Procedure	
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Responsible officer	Becky Hatch	Service area	Policy	Directorate	Law and Strategy
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Stage 1: EqIA Screening (mandatory)	Date created: 22/11/2022	Stage 2 : Full assessment (if applicable)	Date created :
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Approved by Head of Service / Overseeing group/body / Project Sponsor:

"I am satisfied that an equality impact has been undertaken adequately."

Signed by (print): Becky Hatch, Head of Strategy

Dated: 22/11/2022

Guidance notes

What is an EqIA and why do we need to do it?

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.
- Fostering good relations between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.

EqIAs are a systematic way of taking equal opportunities into consideration when making a decision, and should be conducted when there is a new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure in order to determine whether there will likely be a detrimental and/or disproportionate impact on particular groups, including those within the workforce and customer/public groups. All completed EqIA Screenings are required to be publicly available on the council's website once they have been signed off by the relevant Head of Service or Strategic/Policy/Operational Group or Project Sponsor.

What are the “protected characteristics” under the law?

The following are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age; disability (including physical, learning and mental health conditions); gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

What's the process for conducting an EqIA?

The process for conducting an EqIA is set out at the end of this document. In brief, a Screening Assessment should be conducted for every new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure and the outcome of the Screening Assessment will indicate whether a Full Assessment should be undertaken.

Openness and transparency

RBWM has a 'Specific Duty' to publish information about people affected by our policies and practices. Your completed assessment should be sent to the Strategy & Performance Team for publication to the RBWM website once it has been signed off by the relevant manager, and/or Strategic, Policy, or Operational Group. If your proposals are being made to Cabinet or any other Committee, please append a copy of your completed Screening or Full Assessment to your report.

Enforcement

Judicial review of an authority can be taken by any person, including the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) or a group of people, with an interest, in respect of alleged failure to comply with the general equality duty. Only the EHRC can enforce the specific duties. A failure to comply with the specific duties may however be used as evidence of a failure to comply with the general duty.

Stage 1: Screening (Mandatory)

1.1 What is the overall aim of your proposed strategy/policy/project etc and what are its key objectives?

The overall aim of this policy is to distribute RBWM's allocation of the DWP Household Support Fund (October 2022 – March 2023) to support those most in need, to help with global inflationary challenges and the significantly rising cost of living. This policy is in line with DWP's guidance to Local Authorities and the principles of allocation.

1.2 What evidence is available to suggest that your proposal could have an impact on people (including staff and customers) with protected characteristics? Consider each of the protected characteristics in turn and identify whether your proposal is Relevant or Not Relevant to that characteristic. If Relevant, please assess the level of impact as either High / Medium / Low and whether the impact is Positive (i.e. contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group) or Negative (i.e. could disadvantage them). Please document your evidence for each assessment you make, including a justification of why you may have identified the proposal as "Not Relevant".

Protected characteristics	Relevance	Level	Positive/negative	Evidence
Age	Relevant	High	Positive	There is emerging evidence that the impacts of the cost of living rises are not affecting all communities equally. 18-34s were the group most concerned about cost of living rises within RBWM's recent Resident Survey, and have not been a primary target of previous support schemes. Citizens Advice will therefore ensure that this group are supported as a target group. Older people may also face particular pressures as they are more likely to live alone and to suffer from long term health conditions and disabilities. Age Concern and Frimley ICB have been selected as partners for this reason.
Disability	Relevant	High	Positive	People with a disability are more at risk of financial challenges and may have additional costs associated with managing their disability, especially over winter. Frimley ICB will use their health data to target individuals with disabilities and relevant long term health conditions.
Gender re-assignment	Not relevant	Low	Neutral	To date there is not evidence available that this group are being disproportionately affected by cost of living issues.
Marriage/civil partnership	Not relevant	Low	Neutral	To date there is not evidence available that this group are being disproportionately affected by cost of living issues.
Pregnancy and maternity	Relevant	Medium	Positive	Pregnancy and maternity can place additional pressures on household finances. Baby Bank have been selected as a partner, to ensure that this group are reached through the Fund.

Race	Relevant	Medium	Positive	There is emerging evidence that some ethnic minorities are being disproportionately impacted by the cost of living rises, for example, from Citizens Advice data and through the higher proportions of Black and Asian respondents reporting financial struggles in the RBWM Residents Survey. Citizens Advice will ensure that ethnic minority groups are able to access the Fund, and allocation will be tracked by ethnicity to identify any potential under-representation swiftly.
Religion and belief	Relevant	Low	Positive	Although no specific evidence is available on the impact of cost of living rises according to religion, there are correlations between race and religion, which make it important to ensure that religious groups are fully aware of the scheme – and religious organisations provide an important route into many of our communities. RBWM is working with a number of religious groups through the Here to Help campaign and will share communications about the Fund with them to ensure these communities are aware of the support available.
Sex	Relevant	Medium	Positive	There is emerging evidence, for example through Citizens Advice data, that women are struggling financially due to cost of living pressures, particularly in single parent households. Monitoring of gender will be undertaken to ensure that this group is accessing the Fund proportionately.
Sexual orientation	Not relevant	Low	Neutral	To date there is not evidence available that this group are being disproportionately affected by cost of living issues.

Outcome, action and public reporting

Screening Assessment Outcome	Yes / No / Not at this stage	Further Action Required / Action to be taken	Responsible Officer and / or Lead Strategic Group	Timescale for Resolution of negative impact / Delivery of positive impact
Was a significant level of negative impact identified?	Not at this stage	Monitoring of distribution of funding by protected characteristics, to enable potential issues to be identified and addressed swiftly, for example through outreach.	Becky Hatch, Head of Strategy	Urgent, if issues are identified.
Does the strategy, policy, plan etc require amendment to have a positive impact?	No	None		

If you answered **yes** to either / both of the questions above a Full Assessment is advisable and so please proceed to Stage 2. If you answered “No” or “Not at this Stage” to either / both of the questions above please consider any next steps that may be taken (e.g. monitor future impacts as part of implementation, re-screen the project at its next delivery milestone etc).