

Equalities Analysis Assessment

1. Proposal Summary Information

EAA Title	Household Support Fund
Please describe your proposal?	<p>To seek Cabinet agreement for a programme of activity to be funded from the Household Support Grant</p> <p>The Government has provide Local Authorities with additional funding under Local Welfare Provision payments to support vulnerable residents from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.</p> <p>The scheme is to ensure that vulnerable households get extra support thorough winter with food, utilites, essential clothing and other essentials including housing costs where necessary.</p>
Is it HR Related?	No
Corporate Purpose	Cabinet Report Decision

1. What is the Scheme looking to achieve? Who will be affected?

The objective of the Household Support Fund is to provide support to vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs
Funds should be spent or committed before 31 March 2024 and cannot be held over for future use.

The Council has the flexibility and discretion within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and to apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility.

The Council can also proactively identify households who may benefit. There is no requirement to undertake a means test or conduct a benefit check unless this specifically forms part of the Council's local eligibility criteria.

The Council is also required to distribute at least some of the funding via an application process.

The following groups have been identified as eligible for the local scheme:

Families with children eligible for Free School Meals based on low income criteria

Families with children under the age of 5 on HB/CTR

Care Leavers

Households on Housing Benefit not in receipt of DWP benefits or Tax Credits who may have not been eligible for the Government's cost of living payments.

Hoseholds in receipt of home care where the Council contributes to cost of care due to low income and/or high cost of care.

2. What will the impact of your proposal be?

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(i.e. Please provide a before and after picture of the service that will be affected by your proposal e.g. how does it currently operate and then how it will operate after your proposal has been implemented. Where possible please be clear on the number of people or size of the community affected)

This funding will allow the Council to support households with children and other vulnerable households in the borough experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, poverty during the cost of living crisis. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits.

Automatic support will be provided to around 15,000 children & young people in the borough who receive means-tested free school meals and families with children under 5 in receipt of CTR or HB.

Additional support will also be provided to households in receipt of housing benefit in receipt of DWP benefits of tax credits and therefore not eligible for cost of living payments from DWP. Estimated number of households falling into this category: 2,520.

In addition, the households in receipt of home care, where the Council contributes to the cost of care due to low income and/or high cost of care will also be awarded automatic support. Estimated number of households falling into this category: 2,200.

Each eligible family will receive supermarket vouchers per child which will provide additional support during school holidays.

It is estimated that around 13,900 children (c 8,500 households) eligible for free school meals and additional 1,200 households with children under 5 as identified through CTR and HB records will receive support automatically. It is anticipated that the numbers of children eligible for free school meals will rise by the end of March 2024.

Care leavers (around 300) will also be eligible to for the automatic support.

The scheme will support other vulnerable adults through existing local welfare assistance and voluntary sector with food, utilities and other essentials.

Additional funding will be allocated to the existing Local Welfare Assistance scheme which will allow all households in the borough to make an application if they are facing an immediate financial crisis or there is an immediate danger to them or their family's health and safety. Each application will be assessed on its individual merits and according to the expanded Local Welfare eligibility criteria.

Funding is also being available to voluntary sector who will be responsible for designing their own eligibility criteria and will provide support depending on the needs of the community they support.

2. Impact on Groups having a Protected Characteristic

AGE: *A person of an age or being within an age group.*

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:

Describe the Impact

(Please be as specific and clear as possible when describing the impact and include any local data i.e. service usage. If this is lacking please include regional or national data or research. Please identify

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any differential impact on different age groups. Please note if there is no differential impact on people with this characteristic, please state this)

Children, families and individuals who are vulnerable (eligible for benefits or on low income, eligible for free school meals) or find themselves in hardship will be supported through this programme. The programme will help to identify and support those people to ensure they have access to food and fuel, as well as other basics which may be identified such as cooking facilities, bedding or other essentials.

Those eligible receiving care at home, or only on Housing Benefit or Council tax reduction will be both working age and pensionable age.

Other people of pensionable age, who are experiencing hardship, will be able to make an application to local welfare assistance scheme.

Voluntary sector will also offer support to both working age and pensioners.

All households experiencing hardship will also have access to support through current Local Welfare Assistance scheme and will be able to receive support with food, utilities and other essential items.

The impact will be positive for all irrespective of age.

Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:

The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.

Describe the Mitigating Action

(Please describe any actions you will take to limit the impact of your proposal on this group. Please be open and forthright, decision makers need to be provided with as clear a picture as possible.)

Voluntary sector grants and Local Welfare Assistance with expanded eligibility criteria will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .

In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.

DISABILITY: A person has a disability if s/he has a physical, mental or sensory impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities¹.

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:

¹ Due regard to meeting the needs of people with disabilities involves taking steps to take account of their disabilities and may involve making reasonable adjustments and prioritizing certain groups of disabled people on the basis that they are particularly affected by the proposal.

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Describe the Impact

(Please be as specific and clear as possible when describing the impact and include any local data i.e. service usage. If this is lacking please include regional or national data or research. Please identify any differential impact on people with different types of disabilities. Please note if there is no differential impact on people with this characteristic, please state this)

The definition of disability is based on whether a benefit recipient has a disability marker on their administrative datasets which is added by officer when a customer states they have a disability and provided appropriate evidence.

The analysis of the housing benefit and council tax reduction data shows that around 23% of those with disabilities and carer's allowance will receive support automatically through the voucher scheme. The breakdown of households with and without children on disability benefits and/or in receipt of carer's allowance has been included below:

	With children	Without children	Total
Households with disabilities	1,426	7,760	9,186
Households in receipt of carer's allowance	1,105	540	1,645
Total:	2,531	8,300	10,831

Other people with disabilities and/or health conditions will also receive additional support if the council contributes to their care due to low income/high cost of care.

Other households with disabilities will have access to support via Local Welfare Assistance and/or via voluntary sector. The impact will be the positive for all irrespective of disability.

Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect: The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.

Describe the Mitigating Action

Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .

In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT: *This is the process of transitioning from one sex to another. This includes persons who consider themselves to be trans, transgender and transsexual.*

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:

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<p>Describe the Impact</p> <p>No data is currently available on the numbers of people with this protected characteristic who are receiving welfare support.</p> <p>Support under the Household Support Fund will affect people with this protected characteristic positively. The impact will be positive for all irrespective of gender reassignment.</p>
<p>Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:</p> <p>The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.</p>
<p>Describe the Mitigating Action</p> <p>Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .</p> <p>In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.</p>

<p>RACE: A group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins or race.</p>
<p>State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:</p>
<p>Describe the Impact</p> <p>There is no data relating to how the proposed scheme will impact those falling under the protected characteristic of race. The impact will be positive for all irrespective of race.</p>
<p>Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect: The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.</p>
<p>Describe the Mitigating Action</p> <p>Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .</p> <p>In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.</p>

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RELIGION & BELIEF: <i>Religion means any religion. Belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (for example, Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect a person's life choices or the way you live for it to be included.</i>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:
Describe the Impact
<p>The proposed scheme will potentially affect all customers irrespective of religious beliefs or none. The changes are not targeted at anyone holding a specific belief.</p> <p>There is no data relating to how the proposed scheme will impact those falling under the protected characteristic of race. The impact will be positive for all irrespective of religion and belief.</p>
Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect: The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.
Describe the Mitigating Action
<p>Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .</p> <p>In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.</p>

SEX: <i>Someone being a man or a woman.</i>
State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:
Describe the Impact
<p><i>(Please be as specific and clear as possible when describing the impact and include any local data i.e. service usage. If this is lacking please include regional or national data or research. Please note if there is no differential impact on a persons gender, please state this)</i></p> <p>The proposed scheme will positively affect all customers irrespective of sex. The impact will be the same for all irrespective of sex.</p>
Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect: The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.
Describe the Mitigating Action

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(Please describe any actions you will take to limit the impact of your proposal on this group. Please be open and forthright, decision makers need to be provided with as clear a picture as possible.)

Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .

In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION: A person's sexual attraction towards his or her own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes, covering including all LGBTQ+ groups.

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:

Describe the Impact

No data is currently available on the numbers of people with this protected characteristic who are receiving welfare support. Therefore, all the proposed elements could affect people with this protected characteristic positively. The impact will be the same for all irrespective of sexual orientation.

Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:

The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.

Describe the Mitigating Action

Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .

In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.

PREGNANCY & MATERNITY: Description: Pregnancy: Being pregnant. Maternity: The period after giving birth - linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, including as a result of breastfeeding.

State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:

Describe the Impact

(Please be as specific and clear as possible when describing the impact and include any local data i.e. service usage. If this is lacking please include regional or national data or research. Please note if there is no differential impact on people with this characteristic, please state this)

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<p>The benefit service holds information on pregnancy and maternity on its administrative systems where it is the primary reason for the incapacity. It cannot therefore be used to accurately assess the equality impacts.</p> <p>The impact will be the same for all irrespective of pregnancy or maternity, as the criteria is related to children of school age and children under 5 and providing additional financial support.</p>
<p>Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect:</p>
<p>Describe the Mitigating Action</p>
<p><i>(Please describe any actions you will take to limit the impact of your proposal on this group. Please be open and forthright, decision makers need to be provided with as clear a picture as possible.)</i></p> <p>Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available irrespective of whether the proposed scheme is chosen. By increasing the funding Ealing Local Welfare Assistance Fund, it is anticipated that people with protected characteristics will not be negatively impacted by the changes</p> <p>In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply.</p>

<p>MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP: <i>Marriage: A union between a man and a woman. or of the same sex, which is legally recognised in the UK as a marriage</i> <i>Civil partnership: Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a range of legal matters.</i></p>
<p>State whether the impact is positive, negative, a combination of both, or neutral:</p>
<p>Describe the Impact</p> <p>The proposed scheme will potentially affect all customers irrespective of marriage. The impact will be the same for all irrespective of marriage or civil partnership. There will be a positive impact to all households as the scheme provide additional financial support to vulnerable households.</p>
<p>Alternatives and mitigating actions which have been considered in order to reduce negative effect: The alternative to the scheme is to reduce support for children eligible for free school meals and increase local welfare assistance funding or create a separate scheme accessible by application only. Both options would increase administration costs and reduce level of support available to residents. Under such proposals, some of the families would also be at risk of missing out on the support available.</p>
<p>Describe the Mitigating Action</p>
<p><i>(Please describe any actions you will take to limit the impact of your proposal on this group. Please be open and forthright, decision makers need to be provided with as clear a picture as possible.)</i></p> <p>Voluntary sector support and Local Welfare Assistance will continue to be available to vulnerable residents and providing support with food, utilities and other essentials .</p>

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In order to realise this potential positive impact it is important that service users with protected characteristics (as well as front line workers and volunteers who work with service users who have protected characteristics) are aware of the scheme, who may benefit and how to apply. A communication plan to promote the support being provided has been prepared, with support for residents in applying from the contact centre and community hubs. The voluntary sector and schools will also be engaged to promote the scheme.

3. Human Rights²

4a. Does your proposal impact on Human Rights as defined by the Human Rights Act 1998?

No

(If yes, please describe the effect and any mitigating action you have considered.)

4b. Does your proposal impact on the rights of children as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?

No

(If yes, please describe the effect and any mitigating action you have considered.)

4c. Does your proposal impact on the rights of persons with disabilities as defined by the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities?

No

(If yes, please describe the effect and any mitigating action you have considered.)

4. Conclusion

(Please provide a brief overview/summary of your analysis in light of the protected characteristics. Please describe the overall impact of your proposal where possible and mitigating actions undertaken by other areas of the Council or by local partners)

The impact will be the same for all groups having a Protected Characteristic. The Household Support Fund scheme builds on support provided to vulnerable households in the borough. Where possible, the Council has used its data to identify any households eligible for the support.

Additional households not identified through the data available can still apply to the Council for the support following the Local Welfare Assistance route.

² For further guidance please refer to the Human Rights & URNC Guidance on the Council Equalities [web page](#).

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4a. What evidence, data sources and intelligence did you use to assess the potential impact/effect of your proposal? Please note the systems/processes you used to collect the data that has helped inform your proposal. Please list the file paths and/or relevant web links to the information you have described.

(Please list all sources here: i.e. local consultation, residents' survey, census etc.)

Where available, Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction data extracted from Northgate system.

5. Action Planning: (What are the next steps for the proposal please list i.e. when it comes into effect, when mitigating actions linked to the protected characteristics above will take place, how you will measure impact etc.)

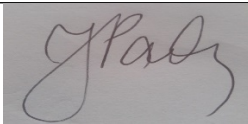
Action	Outcomes	Success Measures	Timescales/ Milestones	Lead Officer (Contact Details)
Awareness of Local Welfare Assistance Scheme	Easing financial hardship	Cases will be reviewed on a case to case basis.	Local Welfare Assistance will be available through 2023/24.	Kulbinder Thakur 020 8825 6479

Additional Comments:

6. Sign off: (All EAA's must be signed off once completed)

Completing Officer Sign Off:	Service Director Sign Off:	<i>HR related proposal (Signed off by directorates HR officer)</i>
Signed: J. Pavlides	Signed:	Signed:

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 Name (Block Capitals): Joanna Pavlides Date: 20/3/23	Name (Block Capitals): Alison Reynolds Date:	Name (Block Capitals): Date:
For EAA's relating to Cabinet decisions: received by Committee Section for publication by (date):		

Appendix 1: Legal obligations under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:

- As a public authority we must have due regard to the need to:
 - a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- The protected characteristics are: AGE, DISABILITY, GENDER REASSIGNMENT, RACE, RELIGION & BELIEF, SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, PREGNANCY & MATERNITY, MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

- Having due regard to advancing equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, involves considering the need to:
 - a) Remove or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
 - b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant characteristic that are different from the needs of the persons who do not share it.
 - c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

- Having due regard to fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not, involves showing that you are tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

- Complying with the duties may involve treating some people more favourably than others; but this should not be taken as permitting conduct that would be otherwise prohibited under the Act.