

## Equality Impact Assessment

**Name of project or proposal (required):** COVID Household Support Fund known as the connect4communities Programme

**Name of accountable officer (required):** Suzanne Smith

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**Department (required):** Childrens' Services

**Date of assessment (required):** 31/03/2023

**Is this a detailed or overview EIA? (required):** Overview

**Describe the current service or policy:**

The DWP Household Support Fund will provide £2,263,152 of funding to the Isle of Wight Council to support those most in need, with costs of utility costs, food, water bills and essential household costs. The grant conditions state the primary use of the fund should be on utility costs, food, and water bills with no ringfencing as to household compositions. A variety of initiatives have been identified working with education establishments and local community partners to ensure households who are most vulnerable have access to food and fuel over the financial year.

**Geographical impact (required):** All IOW

**Describe the proposed change:**

The Household Support Fund is aimed at vulnerable families, particularly those with children, pensioners and individuals and will offer financial support with food and energy bills until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. Working with schools, colleges and early years providers, the proposed programme will deliver food vouchers to a wide range of vulnerable families including young carers, Care Leavers, all households in receipt of Local Council Tax Support, Children in Need, those registered with the Disabled Children's team and the Children's Services Early Years team. We will provide direct financial support to Citizens Advice working directly with vulnerable families not eligible for the food voucher schemes and will provide funding for the homeless prevention team to assist exceptional and genuine emergency cases in accordance with DWP grant conditions. Through grant funding, the programme will provide a range of community led projects to assist with food and fuel need across the Isle of Wight. We will also provide funding to the community pantry scheme for the establishment of three new pantries along with supporting the existing pantries. We will provide discretionary funding for schools to access as supermarket vouchers, which will provide help with the cost of food, generic school uniform items and wider essentials to families in need. We will look to support the IW food partnership, and set funds aside to top up discretionary housing payments, if required. We will also provide direct assistance to community organisations such as Isle of Wight Foodbank, Footprint Trust, IW Carers and Age UK to provide targeted support.

**Who does this impact assessment cover? (required):** Service users

**Has engagement or consultation been carried out? (required):** Yes

**Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform:**

Due to the change in guidance, we have consulted with community and voluntary organisations, town, parish and community council representatives, internal council departments, and Citizens Advice Isle of Wight to determine the most appropriate method of distribution of funds to reach as many vulnerable households as possible across the Isle of Wight. We have also consulted with the existing community pantries to create the offers under a programme name of 'connect4communities'.

**Age (required):** Positive

Impact (required): Children, pensioners, and individuals who are vulnerable (eligible for benefits) or find themselves in hardship due to the impact of COVID 19, this programme, with signposting from agencies, will help to identify and help those people to ensure they have access to food and heating, as well as other basics which may be identified such as cooking facilities, bedding, or other essentials.

**Disability (required):** Positive

Impact (required): Children, pensioners, and individuals with disabilities and who are vulnerable (eligible for benefits or in a low-income setting) or find themselves in hardship due to the impact of COVID 19, this programme, with signposting from agencies, will help to identify and help those people to ensure they have access to food and heating, as well as other basics which may be identified such as cooking facilities, bedding, or other essentials.

**Sexual orientation (required):** Neutral

**Race (required):** Neutral

**Religion or belief (required):** Neutral

**Gender reassignment (required):** Neutral

**Gender (required):** Neutral

**Marriage or civil partnership (required):** Neutral

**Pregnancy and maternity (required):** Neutral

**Poverty (required):** Positive

**Impact (required):** Additional funding will be distributed to help those children, pensioners, families, and individuals who live in poverty or need food, energy, and other basic items, and should have more access to help.

**Rurality (required):** Neutral

Any other brief information which you feel is pertinent to this assessment (optional):

Please confirm that the accountable officer has agreed the contents of this form (required):

Yes