

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

Email (required): suzanne.smith2@hants.gov.uk

Department (required): Children's Services

Date of assessment (required): 29/04/22

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

Describe the current service or policy:

The DWP COVID Household Support Fund will provide £1,131,576 of funding to the Isle of Wight Council to support those most in need, with costs of food, energy, and water bills and essential household costs. The grant conditions state the primary use of the fund should be on food, energy, and water bills with at least 33% of the fund spent on families with children, at least 33% of the fund ringfenced to households with pensioners and up to 33% on other households including individuals. 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 6-month period.

Geographical impact (required): All IOW

Describe the proposed change:

The COVID 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 30th September 2022. Working with schools, colleges and early years providers, the proposed programme will deliver food vouchers to a wide range of vulnerable families for the Easter holiday as well as eligible households in receipt of Local Council Tax Support over the summer period. We will provide direct financial support to Citizens Advice working directly with vulnerable families not eligible for the food voucher scheme 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 two new pantries along with supporting the existing pantries with food costs.

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 around the distribution of funds, we have consulted with Adult Social Care and Housing Need teams (ASCHN) and the Revenues and Benefits team to determine the most appropriate method of distribution of funds to reach as many vulnerable adults' as possible across the Isle of Wight. We have also consulted with Citizens Advice and the existing community pantries along with community groups 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 are in need of food, energy, and other basic items, 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