

Appendix D

SUBJECT: COVID19: Funding for councils to assist those in financial hardship, to afford food and other essentials (local welfare assistance fund)

Summary

1. On the 10th June, the Prime Minister announced an additional £63m funding for councils to assist those struggling financially to afford food and other essentials, due to the impact of coronavirus.
2. The additional funding will allow councils to continue to provide discretionary support to those facing severe hardship to allow them to pay for food and other necessities
3. The funding is a one-off boost to councils and they will have discretion on how best to help those facing severe hardship.
4. Defra will engage with the LGA and councils in the coming days about the detail and to discuss the next steps.

Context

5. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Southampton City Council has provided a comprehensive system of support, working closely with central government, with our community and voluntary sector partners, including our faith communities and mutual aid groups, to support our most vulnerable residents and those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.
6. The Community Hub has provided a route to support more than 10,500 city residents who are classed as extremely clinically vulnerable and who have been advised to 'shield' by central government, enabling the central government team to refer specific issues and manage additional support requests.
7. The Community Hub and citywide community response to support many other vulnerable communities has also included the support of the Saints Foundation to collect prescriptions for shielding residents; a voluntary and community offer supported and enabled by our So:Linked contract and a wide ranging group of agencies and charities dedicated to supporting access to food and essential supplies for those in need, not just those shielding.
8. As of the 10th June the following data has been captured:
 - Total on shielded list – 10,556
 - Those in need of urgent food and medicine – 1,711
 - Ongoing support for basic care needs - 462
 - Support to carry supplies – 625
 - Total calls to Covid-19 helpline (residents) – 2,930
 - Referred to Community Support Hub - 1430 (49%)
 - Of those referred to the hub:
 - 70% need food,
 - 18% need medication,
 - 7% need social contact

- 52% of referrals to the hub are from shielded residents
 - 391 food parcels delivered to households and
 - 740 boxes to individuals (these are in addition to central government supplies)
 - Saints Foundation have received 1,017 requests for prescription deliveries and delivered 967
9. Early indications are that the impact of the pandemic on certain groups within some communities is significant and that hardship is a growing concern. The announcement from central government is therefore welcome.
10. The principles which will be applied to allocation of this funding, once the Southampton City Council share is confirmed, is on needs as demonstrated by the ongoing community response work to protect our vulnerable communities and utilising existing and emerging community and voluntary sector routes and opportunities deemed most effective and appropriate to meet these requirements

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