

OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS FORM

State the Delegated Authority that you are relying on in order to make this decision: e.g. specific (identified in constitution) or general

Following approval at the Individual Executive Meeting on the 20 April 2023, delegated authority to approve modifications to the council's Household Support Fund scheme was delegated to the Head of Resident and Business Support.

The delegation provided to the Head of Resident and Business Support ended on 31 July 2023 and as such any small amends to the scheme will need to be approved by the Section 151 Officer.

Executive Report 20 April 2023. [Report.pdf \(middlesbrough.gov.uk\)](#)

Subject of decision: *Household Support Fund Grant*

Following implementation of the original scheme it is proposed to introduce and change a number of elements, whilst remaining within the scope and meeting the priorities set in the Delivery Plan that was approved. It is decided that the awards described in the text of the decision should be provided and made available.

Text of decision: e.g. can include monies received by the Council, list any terms agreed, brief summary of the policy – Do not include any confidential information.

The Household Support Scheme funding allocation covers the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The scheme is fully funded by Central Government as referenced in the Executive Report 20 April 2023 (see above). Funds will be distributed in line with government guidance and the local scheme previously adopted that will provide support to vulnerable households and those most in need. The awards provided for initially are being made and processes are in place to allow their delivery. As was always intended, adjustments to eligibility criteria are appropriate to extend availability of funding for awards to cover circumstances beyond the principal areas provided for, and it has been determined that awards should be made in accordance with the new groups identified below at the corresponding rates.

- **Households with No Children.**

Subject to application, households with no children who are in financial hardship and are a resident of Middlesbrough will be awarded a one-off payment. To qualify for a voucher for £75.00 for a single household and £100.00 for a couple the claimant(s) must be in receipt of a means tested benefit.

- Application for households with savings in excess of £6000 will not qualify.

- **Carers**

Through joint working with organisations who support carers in the community a one-off payment of £100 through a voucher will be made to the relevant carer. To qualify the carer must be a resident within Middlesbrough.

- **Internal referrals**

A payment will be made where an internal referral from a social worker / key worker etc is made. This is where contact with the relevant household via the social worker or Key worker would indicate that the household is showing signs of crisis/financial hardship. A voucher for food and or fuel can be issued subject to following qualifying criteria.

OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS FORM

- Have a rental / council tax liability and live in Middlesbrough.
- Have less than £6,000 in savings.

Cases will be assessed to ensure all benefits and support that are available are being accessed through the Councils Welfare Strategy.

Following receipt of the referral, a one off voucher payment will be made:-

- Single person £50
- Couple £75
- Household with a child(ren) £100

- **Financial Support for those who are new to employment.**

A payment will be made where the claimant has taken up employment and following the transition into work the claimant is incurring additional cost as a direct result of the change in circumstances. To qualify the claimant must have recently taken up employment within the last 12 weeks and: -

- Were previously in receipt of income related benefits.
- Unemployed for 26 weeks or more with no breaks
- Employment must be expected to last 4 weeks or more with evidence required (job offer letter or contract of employment)
- Have a rental / council tax liability in Middlesbrough and
- Less than £6,000 in savings

Awards will be based on applications received and a voucher of £250 will be provided (in addition to support they may have received under other section of the Household Hold Support scheme).

- **Households not in receipt of Benefits**

Due to a lower than anticipated number of applications being received for support from the group, to ensure support is delivered to households not in receipt of benefits, funds will be re-allocated to provide direct awards to Council Tax payers who have been summonsed for a 2023 charge that remains unpaid. £50 will be credited to each account, on the basis that financial assistance provided in this way will reduce the debt for which payment will be sought and allow more income to be retained for living expenses.

The following will be excluded from receiving the award: -


- Households in receipt of CTR
- Dwellings that are not a sole and main residence, including second homes
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Properties where the liable party is a company or organisation
- Debts subject to Charging Orders or Bankruptcy or similar proceedings

Any further changes to the scheme will be subject to a further Officer Delegated Decision.

Reason for Decision

The DWP are providing funding to support vulnerable households who are very much in need against a background of reduced income and rising living costs for many in Middlesbrough. This decision ensures that support is extended to

OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS FORM

continue to meet need as widely as possible.
Other options considered (if any)
NA
Has an Impact Assessment been completed Yes/No – if yes please attach to the decision.
No
Declarations of Interest by any member or relevant local government body
N/A
Who have you consulted as part of the decision making process e.g. Head of Service, Executive Member, Community Association, Surveyor?
N/A
Date of decision
29 September 2023
Service area
Finance Directorate.
Name of Delegated Officer making decision - i.e. Officer who is designated the power in the Constitution
Deborah Middleton, Section 151 Officer and Director of Finance.
Name of the Officer making the decision – if power has been sub-delegated to another Officer.
List of background papers (do not list if contain exempt/confidential information)
 Signed: Mrs Deborah Middleton Dated: 29 September 2023.

OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS FORM