

Risk Management Assessment

Risk	Proposed mitigation
<p>R1 - If a decision was taken to revert to using the HSF to provide grocery vouchers to families with children eligible for benefit related FSM to cover all school holidays, this may create dependency and ongoing expectation that DCC will do this in all holidays.</p> <p>The combined proposals, including the pensioner element, means that funds are not available to do this for all holidays in the period.</p>	<p>This group of vulnerable families received a £50 food voucher in June 2022 and £45 in January 2023. Families eligible for FSM will also be able to access other elements of the fund via Childrens Professional grants, district and borough councils and DDF at other times during grant period, including school holidays. This will include promotion of other schemes such as the HAF programme which is targeted at families eligible for benefit related FSM during the Summer, Christmas and Easter holidays.</p> <p>Children’s Professionals will be encouraged to consider families’ needs over the longer summer holidays in terms of the timing of submitting grant applications.</p> <p>In HSF4 schools are active partners in delivering the vouchers, supporting identification and targeting families.</p>
<p>R2 - Not providing grocery vouchers to children eligible for benefit related FSM over holiday periods may risk reputational damage to the Council if other neighbouring local authorities use HSF to continue to fund these. In addition, there is a risk of reputational damage from offering a £40/45 voucher per eligible child because vouchers offered as part of the first HSF in February 22 were £80 per eligible child and in June 22 were £50.</p>	<p>Strategically targeting funding over the grant period, this group of vulnerable families will receive a £40/45 food voucher in June 2023 and January 2024.</p> <p>Eligible families will also be able to access other elements of the fund via Childrens Professionals Grants, DDF, and district and borough councils at other times during grant period. The HAF scheme will also be available in the summer holidays. These alternative routes will be promoted to parents who receive the vouchers via communications via schools and on the council website.</p> <p>It will be made clear on the website that the Council has had to deliver abroad offer – to explain why less funding is specifically directed at families with children.</p>

<p>R3 - Not collecting the correct management information data to enable the Council to retrospectively claim the funds from DWP, given that the grant is paid in arrears.</p>	<p>Officers will ensure careful monitoring of funds the Council distributes. Funding agreements / Service Level Agreements will be put in place with third parties – districts and boroughs and VCS organisations. These measures worked efficiently with the previous HSF allocations.</p>
<p>R4 - Being unable to distribute all available funds to residents (£10.800m) in the timescale allowed</p>	<p>Officers are working with partners and corporately across the council to create a range of accessible routes for residents to access the funds. Additional staff are also being recruited via agency and/or redeployment to increase capacity of existing services including DDF, Call Derbyshire and Early Help and Safeguarding Teams, to help ensure funds can be distributed within the timescale. A significant amount of the funds will be utilised for targeted direct awards for key vulnerable groups Council officers will regularly review the grant spend with partners and finance. Previous HSFs have spent funding in time allotted</p>
<p>R5 - Take up for both grocery vouchers for families and cost of living payments to pensioners and adult social care clients on a low income exceed their expected take up of 95% and risk an overspend.</p>	<p>93% take up/redemption of grocery vouchers was achieved in February 2022, 92% in June 2022 and 96% in January 2023 after significant work was undertaken to contact parents who had not redeemed their voucher (after a month) to encourage them to take it up. With previous schemes, where such a push had not been undertaken, a redemption rate of 85% had been achieved.</p> <p>To mitigate the risk of overspend, the rate of uptake would be carefully monitored, and the scale of work undertaken to contact parents who had not cashed the voucher adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>Both previous iterations of the pensioners/ASC clients voucher offer have achieved 92% take up. Whilst officers work hard to minimise any delay it is recognised with this</p>

	<p>cohort there is an element of people's circumstances changing after the data has been collated – eg entering hospital or a care setting. Some of the risk will be mitigated by the fact some residents will be eligible via both eligibility criteria but would only receive one grant payment. The overall budget will be carefully monitored and the value of the payment set taking into account budget scope accordingly.</p>
<p>R6 - Communications about the availability of the fund do not reach some residents facing financial hardship.</p>	<p>Work will continue with professionals and organisations who work with hard-to-reach groups to promote the fund (BME Forum, financial inclusion groups etc). Information will be made available in different formats and on multiple channels. The Equality Impact will be kept under review to identify and respond to any other groups that may potentially be excluded. Funds provided to 3rd sector organisations will expand schemes already working to identify hard to reach pensioners and unpaid carers.</p>
<p>R7 - Council services could be overwhelmed by demand for support from residents facing financial hardship.</p>	<p>Demand has at times caused significant challenges for service delivery, in particular for Call Derbyshire and the DDF assessment team. Officers have engaged with a wide range of partners to increase the number of access points to the fund, make best use of existing capacity and optimise existing referral routes across the system. Initial work is underway to build an online application for residents to remove pressure from Call Derbyshire, although this in itself may lead to an increase in service demand. Communication about availability of the grant will be planned dependent on demand and capacity levels. Additional staffing set out in the report</p>

	will be maintained as fully as possible for the duration of the period.
R8 - Demand may continue beyond the end of the funding provided by the government	<p>Demand for DDF support has remained high.</p> <p>Communication from the Council to residents and partners will be clear about the scope of offer this additional support because of temporary government funding that ends in 2024.</p> <p>Council officers are engaged in preparatory planning in relation to managing this risk and will bring forward proposals to elected members in the coming months.</p>