



Household Support Fund (1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024)

The fourth iteration of the Household Support Fund was a £1bn grant administered by the Department for Work and Pensions and allocated to top tier local authorities to support vulnerable households with the cost of living. This was a similar fund to the previous Household Support Fund that had been offered, although it was not an extension of previous grants.

The allocation to Leicestershire County Council was £7,240,078. All of the ringfences of previous rounds were removed and local authorities were able to spend the funding in locally-appropriate ways that met the criteria of the fund. All of the money was spent by 31 March 2024. Further information on the fund is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-support-fund-guidance-for-local-councils>.

Overall financial spend

The full amount of the grant of £7,240,078 was spent on the Household Support Fund, broken down as follows:

- Free School Meals (schools and early year providers): £3,794,863 (98,100 awards, sum includes £379,630 of recycled/unclaimed vouchers from previous holiday periods)
- Food vouchers: £1,382,316 (14,136 awards)
- Fuel vouchers: £1,661,136 (13,067 awards)
- Third Party Organisation spend: £400,000
 - Food: £303,926 (41,184 awards)
 - Fuel: £10,940 (255 awards)
 - Essentials linked to energy: £73,269 (942 awards)
 - Wider essentials: £11,865 (83 awards)
- Advice Services: £30,000
- Costs of administering the scheme: £351,392.74

Detail of activities undertaken

- Free School Meals – vouchers for food were issued to children eligible for free school meals in schools and early years settings. £15 vouchers per week of the holidays were made available and were issued by the school or early years provider. £15 was available in May, October and February Half Terms, £90 for 6 weeks of support in the summer holidays, £40 for two weeks of support in the Christmas holidays and £30 for two weeks of support at Easter. 98,100 awards were made in total.
- Food and fuel vouchers – vouchers for food and for credit towards pre-payment or credit meters were issued to people who were referred to LCC by third party organisations. Referrals for support with food and fuel vouchers came to the Council from over 180 local district councils, schools, healthcare, faith-based organisations and charities. Trusted professionals could put forward clients for support from the HSF. Referrals were administered by First Contact+ within the Council's Public Health Department, enabling officers to ascertain if the household in question was in need of any additional support or referral into other Council services, such as the Warm Homes Service. This pot was significantly increased from previous rounds

with £3m being allocated at the start of the scheme. Eventually we spent £3,043,452, with the overspend being managed through unspent and reallocated vouchers from previous rounds. The level of support varied according to how many people were within the household, as dictated by the HSF policy. 14,136 food vouchers were awarded and 13,067 fuel vouchers. (12,073 awards of food vouchers were made and 11,593 awards of fuel vouchers in Apr 2022-Mar 2023).

- Third party organisation spend included local foodbanks, which were helped with the purchase of food, and the Leicestershire and Rutland Re-use Network and Charity Link which were assisted with the purchase of energy efficient white goods and furniture to help households in need.
- Advice was provided to households in need of support with energy efficiency via the Warm Homes Service. The funding enabled the service to expand their work in the county and they worked with 519 clients during this period.

Geographical distribution of awards

The spread of support through the food and fuel vouchers scheme was as follows:

Food

District	Spend (£)	No of vouchers
Blaby	£118,630	1,041
Charnwood	£342,099	3,271
Harborough	£133,310	1,291
Hinckley and Bosworth	£111,802	1,147
Melton	£342,244	3,519
North West Leicestershire	£164,162	1,761
Oadby and Wigston	£98,833	946

Fuel

District	Spend (£)	No of vouchers
Blaby	£135,410	983
Charnwood	£422,212	3,064
Harborough	£163,902	1,192
Hinckley and Bosworth	£139,120	1,055
Melton	£411,446	3,354
North West Leicestershire	£191,472	1,621
Oadby and Wigston	£110,012	909