

Covid Winter Grant Scheme offers help to vulnerable families

HOUSEHOLDS across the county who are struggling to make ends meet during the pandemic will get help this winter from East Sussex County Council thanks to financial support worth more than £1.5million.

The council is receiving the funding through the government's Covid Winter Grant Scheme which aims to support those most in need with the cost of food, energy and water bills, and other associated costs.

At least 80 per cent of the total funding is ring-fenced by the government to support households with children, with up to 20 per cent of the total funding available to support other households including individuals who need help during the coming months. The scheme runs until 31 March 2021.

Funding will be allocated to those already receiving support and to organisations that provide support for those in need. The council will be contacting eligible people and organisations direct.

Around £900,000 will be used directly by the council to fund initiatives including food vouchers during the Christmas holidays and February half term for vulnerable children in Early Years settings and pupils eligible for Free School Meals, small grants to families within the Troubled Families and Rethinking Families Programme, and support for vulnerable families and young people being supported by Children's Services.

The funding will also enable the council to award grants ranging from £3,000 to £100,000 to a number of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations across the county so they can continue their vital work helping their communities during this challenging time.

Cllr Keith Glazier, Leader of the Council, said: "The coronavirus pandemic has hit vulnerable families and children particularly hard, and we know there are many residents across the county who are struggling to feed their children and pay their bills.

"The Covid Winter Grant Scheme will allow us to provide support to East Sussex families and individuals who are experiencing financial hardship, ensuring children will continue to be fed in the holidays and residents can keep warm this winter."

Families who are eligible for food vouchers through the Free School Meals programme will receive them from their school or education provider before the end of term. Families can apply for Free School Meals at any time.

More information about the scheme can be found on the coronavirus community support pages on the council's website

at <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/emergencyplanningandcommunitysafety/coronavirus/coronavirus-community-support/>

For more information on Free School Meals and how to apply, please visit <https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/school-life/meals/free/>

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