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Dear Colleague

COVID-19 WINTER GRANT SCHEME – CHRISTMAS 2020

The purpose of this letter is to provide further information on the process for the distribution of the Covid-19 Winter Grant funding to vulnerable families and individuals within North Yorkshire for the Christmas period. As you will be aware from the early briefing note from Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director – CYPS that was published on the Covid-19 Red Bag on the 20th November 2020, schools, academies, early years' providers and colleges will play a key role in the distribution of this support. Given that the Christmas period is fast approaching, we would like to give you early notification of the funding process in order to ensure that you are able to plan your arrangements for the distribution of the support.

1. Use of the Covid-19 Winter Grant

The Department for Work Pension's (DWP) stated aim of the Grant is "*...to give vulnerable households peace of mind in the run up to Christmas and over the Winter months during the pandemic by helping those who need it to have food on the table and other essentials, so every child will be warm and well-fed this winter*". The initial tranche of the Grant will be available to support households over the Christmas holiday period. Further tranches will be available for school holiday periods up to the 31st March 2021. North Yorkshire County Council is focusing the grant on the purchase of food vouchers and supermarket vouchers to support families with food costs and other essential costs.

2. Allocation of the Covid-19 Winter Grant for Christmas 2020 Period

The grant for the Christmas period will be allocated to educational establishments on the following basis:

Establishment	Grant Allocation Basis
Early Years Providers	<p>3&4 year old children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding who are accessing universal hours on the Autumn 2020 headcount, identifiable on the headcount, under Weightings column with EYPP on FIS Provider Portal.</p> <p>Children in receipt of disadvantaged two year old funding based on the Autumn 2020 headcount</p> <p>Where a child has split hours with more than one provider, funding will go to the provider who has the higher universal hours</p>
LA Maintained Schools & Academies (Years: Reception to Year 11)	The higher of the number of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium - Free School Meals (based on January 2020 census) or pupils eligible for a Free School Meals (as at October 2020 where NYCC administer FSM eligibility checking and January 2020 where FSM eligibility is checked outside of NYCC)
Post 16 Establishments incl. school & academy sixth forms	Students eligible for a Free School Meals (as at October 2020 where NYCC administer FSM eligibility checking and January 2020 where FSM eligibility is checked outside of NYCC))

The grant will be allocated based on a fixed cost of £20 per eligible pupil per week for the 2 week Christmas school holiday period. In addition to the core grant allocation detailed above, establishments will also receive:

- Up to an additional 20% grant funding allocation (rounded to the nearest multiple of £20) to provide further discretion in supporting vulnerable families who do not meet the free school meal eligibility criteria.
- A contribution to the administration costs of purchasing and distributing the vouchers.

An educational establishment will be able to apply to the Local Authority, on an exceptional basis, where its' funding allocation is insufficient to provide the number of vouchers to meet the number of pupils identified as vulnerable. Evidence will need to be provided of any additional requirement.

3. Distribution of the Covid-19 Grant by Establishments to Vulnerable Families

Establishments are expected to use the grant for the direct purchase of food vouchers to support vulnerable families over the Christmas school holiday period. It is expected that the vouchers will be distributed on the basis of £20 per week for the two week Christmas period for each child / pupil from a vulnerable family. Educational establishments are clearly best placed to identify their most vulnerable children, young people and families. It is expected that eligibility to a free school meal, eligibility for EYPP funding and eligibility for disadvantaged two year old funding will be the key priorities used in identifying those families who would most benefit from Covid-19 Winter Grant support. In addition to these pupils, other considerations might include:

- Young carers where the family has a low income
- Pupils who are not eligible for free school meals, but where the family has a low income and is struggling to pay essential household bills over the winter period.
- Post-16 students in receipt of bursary funding
- Pupils from families who are experiencing significant, short-term financial hardship as a result of the Covid pandemic, resulting in them struggling to pay essential household bills

In order to ensure that food vouchers are available to families for the Christmas school holiday period and are distributed as cost effectively as possible, it is strongly recommended that educational establishments directly purchase and distribute food vouchers to their families; the use of third party distributors or the provision of food hampers is not envisaged.

The food vouchers must be distributed to vulnerable families by the 18th December 2020. Early distribution of vouchers is advised in order to mitigate against any disruption in the distribution process due to pupil absence or establishment closure as a result of Covid, bad weather etc.

Vulnerable families with children under the age of two will also be able to access funding for these children via the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund (NYLAF) – details can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/nylaf

4. Grant Payment Process & Conditions

The Grant will be paid to educational establishments by 7th December 2020. The payment methods will be as follows:

Establishment	Payment Method
Early Years Providers*	Via the usual direct bank account payment process (BAFEY) for early years providers which will be run earlier than normal in December 2020.
LA Maintained Schools (Years: Reception to Year 13)	Via the usual direct bank account payment process (BAFS) for LA maintained schools which will be run earlier than normal in December 2020.
Academies (Years: Reception to Year 13)	Via direct payment to the bank account details held by NYCC for the Academy Trust
Post 16 Establishments	Via direct payment to the bank account details held by NYCC for the College

*Schools & academies with early years' provision who normally receive a separate monthly payment for the provision will receive separate payments for main school and early years' provision for the Covid-19 Winter Grant.

In week commencing the 30th November 2020, a grant allocation and monitoring form will be sent to each educational establishment providing details of the Covid-19 Winter Grant payment to be made to them. The grant monitoring form will include a section which will need to be completed by the establishment providing a summary breakdown of the vouchers issued to families (no individual family details will be required), any other support provided from the funding and administration costs. The grant monitoring form needs to be returned to the Local Authority by: 18th December 2020.

The Grant is required to be used as follows:

- At least 80% of the funding is used to support households with children,
- Up to 20% of the total funding to other households experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, poverty during the pandemic
- At least 80% of the funding will be used to provide support with food and utility costs

- Up to 20% of funding can be used to provide support with other essentials (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets; boiler service/repair; purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.)
- A contribution towards grant administration costs

It is expected that the grant funding allocated to educational establishments will be used to support households with children and will support them with food costs through the purchase of food vouchers. The grant allocation will also include a contribution towards administration costs.

Local Authority maintained schools are advised to record the expenditure associated with the Covid Winter Grant under Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) code E24 – Special Facilities.

Detailed grant conditions are provided with this letter. A summary of the key requirements are:

- The Grant funding must be used for the intended purpose
- The support provided to vulnerable families will be in the form of vouchers (value £20 / week / eligible pupil) and not cash payments or hampers
- The support will be distributed to vulnerable families by 18th December 2020
- Educational establishments will retain detailed distribution records for audit purposes
- Educational establishments will ensure appropriate measures are implemented to mitigate risk of fraud.
- The grant monitoring return and use of grant confirmation statement will be submitted to the Local Authority by 18th December 2020

The grant payment includes providing a Free School Meal payment over the Christmas and half term holidays. The Christmas payment will be £20 per pupil per week. This is a free school meal payment and a contribution to bills, but we expect it to be spent on supermarket vouchers and families to make their own budget adjustments.

I would like to thank you for your assistance in distributing this vital support to our most vulnerable families within North Yorkshire and ensuring that, as far as possible, their children have food and are warm over the Christmas holiday period. If you have any queries, please e-mail:

schoolsfinanceteam@northyorks.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name or initials.

Corporate Director – Children and Young People's Service

COVID WINTER GRANT SCHEME
GRANT ALLOCATION STATEMENT & MONITORING RETURN
GUIDANCE NOTES

For Action:
Vouchers issued to pupils by 18th December 2020
Grant Monitoring Return submitted to LA 18th December 2020

The Covid Winter Grant Scheme funding allocation and monitoring return statement has been issued to your establishment as follows:

Establishment Type:	Statement Issued Via:
LA Maintained Schools	Anycomms
Early Years Providers – Private, Voluntary & Independent Sector (incl. Academy early years provision)	Anycomms+
Early Years Providers – Childminders	Direct email from EYFT
Academies	Direct email to central Trust contact from NYCC Schools Finance Team
Post 16 Colleges	Direct email to central College contact from NYCC Schools Finance Team

Part 1: Funding Allocation Statement

Part 1 of the statement provides the Covid Winter Grant funding allocation for your educational establishment (Academy Trusts will receive a separate statement for each North Yorkshire School within their Trust). The statement provides a breakdown of the grant funding allocation including the contribution to administration costs.

The basis for the funding allocation methodology is as follows:

Establishment	Grant Allocation Basis
Early Years Providers	<p>3&4 year old children in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding who are accessing universal hours on the Autumn 2020 headcount, identifiable on the headcount, under Weightings column with EYPP on FIS Provider Portal</p> <p>Children in receipt of disadvantaged two year old funding based on the Autumn 2020 headcount</p> <p>Where a child has split hours with more than one provider, funding will go to the provider who has the higher universal hours</p>

LA Maintained Schools & Academies (Years: Reception to Year 11)	The higher of the number of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium - Free School Meals (based on January 2020 census) or pupils eligible for a Free School Meals (as at October 2020 where NYCC administer FSM eligibility checking and January 2020 where FSM eligibility is checked outside of NYCC)
Post 16 Establishments incl. school & academy sixth forms	Students eligible for a Free School Meals (as at October 2020 where NYCC administer FSM eligibility checking and January 2020 where FSM eligibility is checked outside of NYCC)

Part 2: Grant Monitoring Return

The Grant Monitoring Return is required to be completed with the details of the grant expenditure for your establishment and needs to be **returned to the Local Authority by 18th December 2020.**

The yellow cells need to be completed with the information for your establishment as follows:

Box 1:

Total Allocation split by Household Composition	Families with Children	<p>Spend: Please provide the value of grant expenditure associated with Families with Children. A child is defined as any person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who will be under the age of 19 as at 31 March 2021; or - a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided; or - Where an eligible child is living on his or her own, they should be treated as a 'household' that includes a child. <p>Total Vouchers Issued: Please enter the number of vouchers issued (this should equate to the number of children who have received vouchers or other support)</p>
	Families without Children & Individuals	<p>Spend: Please provide the value of grant expenditure associated with Families without Children & Individuals. Vulnerable households which include a person aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and/or care leavers in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 should be treated as a household without children.</p>

		<p>Total Vouchers Issued: Please enter the number of vouchers issued (this should equate to the number of students who have received vouchers or other support)</p>
	Spend: Admin fee retained	Please provide the value of the grant which has been retained by your establishment for the administration of the grant.

Box 2:

Total Allocation split Category	Food & Utility Bills	<p>Spend: Please provide the value of grant expenditure associated with the provision of food vouchers</p> <p>Total Vouchers Issued: Please enter the number of food vouchers issued (this should equate to the number of children / students who have received vouchers)</p>
	Other Essentials	<p>Spend: Please provide the value of grant expenditure associated with the provision of support for other essentials e.g. warm clothing.</p> <p>Total Vouchers Issued: Please enter the number of children / students who have received other support.</p>
	Spend: Admin fee retained	Please provide the value of the grant which has been retained by your establishment for the administration of the grant.

The totals for Box 1 and Box 2 should be the same values.

Other Essentials:

If you have recorded any expenditure in Box 2 under the “Other Essentials” category, please provide a detailed breakdown and description of the expenditure in Box 3.

Feedback / Comments

You are invited to provide feedback and comments on your experience of administering the grant in Box 4. The feedback received will be used to inform the distribution process for future allocations of the grant.

The Grant Monitoring Return needs to be submitted to the Local Authority by 18th December 2020.

The Return needs to be submitted to the Local Authority by:

Establishment Type:	Grant Monitoring Return submitted via:
LA Maintained Schools	Anycomms Please use the original file name to submit the return.
Early Years Providers – Private, Voluntary & Independent Sector (incl. Academy early years provision)	Anycomms+ Please use the original file name to submit the return.
Early Years Providers – Childminders	Email return to: eyft@northyorks.gov.uk
Academies	Email return to: schoolsfinanceteam@northyorks.gov.uk
Post 16 Colleges	Email return to: schoolsfinanceteam@northyorks.gov.uk

Please contact the NYCC Schools Finance Team at schoolsfinanceteam@northyorks.gov.uk if you have any queries with regard to the Covid Winter Grant allocation received by your establishment or the completion of the Covid Winter Grant monitoring return.

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
COVID WINTER GRANT SCHEME
LOCAL ELIGIBILITY FRAMEWORK – GUIDANCE AND CONDITIONS OF GRANT**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance sets out the framework to help meet the policy intentions. It provides information on constraints that we need to work within and the distribution of funding and reporting arrangements.
- 1.2 The Department for Work and Pensions stated aim is “...to give vulnerable households peace of mind in the run up to Christmas and over the Winter months during the pandemic by helping those who need it to have food on the table and other essentials, so every child will be warm and well-fed this winter.”
- 1.3 The local eligibility framework includes payments to:
- a) Schools and Academies (5-16) – based on the higher of free school meal and pupil premium data
 - b) Post-16 schools (16+) – based on free school meal data
 - c) Early Years (2-5) – based on Early Years Pupil Premium data
 - d) Care Leavers – eligible Care Leavers including: care leavers living independently or semi-independently, care leavers living in supported lodgings and those living in independent emergency accommodation.
- 1.4 The total amount of funding being allocated to this scheme is £1,434,400

2.0 Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this grant is to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable.
- 2.2 These conditions of grant set out the terms on which the grant is made by the Council to the Recipient and are intended to ensure that the grant is used for the purpose for which it is awarded.
- 2.3 The initial grant payment will cover the two-week non-term time period, typically from Monday 21st December 2020 through to Monday 4th January 2021.

3.0 Payment of Grant

- 3.1 The Council will pay the grant in early December 2020. The grant will not be increased in the event of an overspend by the Recipient in its delivery of the project, without prior written consent from the Council.
- 3.2 The grant will only be paid into an ordinary business bank account. The recipient shall not transfer any part of the grant to bank accounts which are not ordinary bank accounts, without the prior written consent of the Council.
- 3.3 The Recipient shall promptly repay to the Council any money incorrectly paid to it either as a result of an administrative error or otherwise. This includes situations where either an incorrect sum of money has been paid or where Grant monies have been paid in error before all conditions attaching to the Grant have been complied with by the Recipient.

4.0 Use of Grant

- 4.1 The grant will be used by the Recipient for the delivery of the project. Recipients should organise the purchase and distribution of food vouchers or supermarket vouchers for eligible households and individuals.
- 4.2 To enable households and individuals to retain maximum choice in their purchase of food and essential items, Recipients should avoid the purchase and distribution of hampers, without the prior written consent of the Council.
- 4.3 To minimise the risk of fraud, Recipients should not, under any circumstances, disburse the grant as cash payments to households or individuals.
- 4.4 Vouchers should be purchased and distributed to a fixed total of £20 per week per eligible child.
- 4.5 The Recipient shall not spend any part of the grant on the delivery of the project after the grant period. It is accepted that food vouchers or supermarket vouchers provided to families or individuals may be redeemed after Monday 4th January.
- 4.6 Should any part of the grant remain unspent at the end of the grant period, the Recipient shall ensure that any unspent monies are returned to the Council within 14 days of the Council's request.
- 4.7 The Council reserves the right, at its discretion, to withhold or suspend payment of the grant and/or require repayment of all or part of the grant if:

- (a) the grant is used for purposes other than those for which they have been awarded.
- (b) the grant has not been spent within the required timescale
- (c) the Recipient is, in the view of the Council, to have acted negligently or dishonestly in delivering the project or undertakes activities that are likely to bring the reputation of the project or the Council into disrepute
- (d) the Recipient provides the Council with any materially misleading or inaccurate information

4.8 Where the Council requires the Recipient to repay any amount of the grant, the Recipient shall repay the amount concerned within fifteen (15) working days of receiving the demand for repayment. The liability to meet such a demand shall be enforceable as a contractual debt.

5.0 Monitoring and Reporting

5.1 The Recipient shall keep separate, accurate and up-to-date accounts and records of the receipt and expenditure of the grant monies received, including all invoices, receipts, and any other relevant documents for a period of at least six years.

5.2 Records will include:

- a) the monitoring form which must be completed and returned to the Council by the specified date
- b) a record of households and individuals who have been in receipt of the scheme for audit purposes (but which will not routinely be required by the Council)

5.3 The Council shall have a right to review the Recipient's accounts and records that relate to the expenditure of the grant and shall have the right to take copies of such accounts and records.

5.4 The Recipient will facilitate with all statutory requirements as regards accounts, audit or examination of accounts and returns applicable to the grant.

5.5 The Recipient will monitor the delivery and success of the project and will complete and return the monitoring form to the Council by the specified date.

6.0 Data Protection

6.1 Recipients will comply with all applicable requirements of the Data Protection Legislation.

7.0 Defintions

7.1 **Council:** North Yorkshire County Council

Recipient: school, academy, multi-academy trust, post-16 college, or early years' provider receiving and administering a grant payment