

COVID-19 Local Support Grant – Summer Holiday Support

COUNCILLOR LYNNE AYRES - CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES, EDUCATION, SKILLS AND THE UNIVERSITY

CLLR STEVE ALLEN - DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

JULY 2021

Deadline date: N/A

Cabinet portfolio holder: Responsible Director:	Cllr Lynne Ayres – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University Cllr Steve Allen - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities Wendi Ogle-Welbourn - Executive Director: People and Communities
Is this a Key Decision?	YES Forward Plan Reference Number: None – Urgency Procedure Invoked
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO
Is this a project and if so has it been registered on Verto?	NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education, Skills and the University and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Communities are recommended to -

1. Agree the contract exemption is approved for the sum of up to £699k to provide supermarket vouchers in time for the first voucher to be distributed on the 23rd July.
2. Agree to the proposed approach to the distribution and criteria to award the vouchers as outlined in this report.
3. Agree to enter into a contract with Wonde (Furlong House, 2 Kings Court, Newmarket, CB8 7SG) for the period 17TH July to 1st September for a value of up to £699k.
4. Agree the allocation of the remaining funding to support families in Peterborough via our City Hub arrangements.
5. Delegate authority to the Executive Director: People and Communities to effect the matters referred to above.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

1.1 This report is for the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Education, Skills and the University and the Cabinet Member for Communities to consider exercising delegated

authority under paragraph 3.4.3 and 3.4.8 of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph (g) and (d) respectively.

- 1.2 With the approval of the Chair of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee, the urgency and special urgency procedures have been invoked to suspend the requirement to publish the decision on the forward plan for 28 days and the requirement to publish for a 5-day consideration period. These procedures have been invoked due to the need to get the grant out to parents for the start of the summer holidays.

2. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	No	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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3. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Following significant public pressure, Central Government has provided Grant funding to Upper Tier local authorities to support vulnerable families and other eligible individuals over the Christmas, February half term, Easter and the summer half term holidays. As a direct result of the pandemic the funding is clearly directed to support these families with food and utility bills. The key aim of which is that children will not be hungry or cold during these period.
- 3.2 The grant was originally known as the Winter Support Grant and more recently has been called the Covid Local Support Grant (CLSG). Throughout the period of the grant, we have operated two schemes to support our most vulnerable families -
- Support with food – Direct Voucher Scheme. A voucher for a choice of 8 supermarkets was sent to eligible families automatically via an automated system called Wonde which was used by the majority of schools in Cambridgeshire. Each eligible child has received a £15 voucher for each week of the school holidays (£3 per day). Those eligible for the voucher will be those pupils who met the following criteria –
 - Early Years Pupil Premium,
 - Children that access funded two-year-old education
 - Eligible for Free School Meals
 - Students eligible for 16+ bursary.
 - City Hub – for all other families, an offer was made from the hub arrangements. We worked with the voluntary sector to provide the right support for those that need it. Grants were made to support local organisations to make the right support offer. Over 3000 applications were made during the Christmas and half term and support requests include food, household energy bills, clothing, blankets, shoes, and white goods.
- 3.3 From the Christmas allocation to the summer half term, around £1.2m has been spent in Peterborough supporting families with around 50,000 vouchers allocated to date.
- 3.4 On the 21st June, the Department for Work and Pensions write to all Local Authorities to outline an extension to the Covid Local Support Grant for the period from the 21st June to the 30th September. £160m has been allocated nationally and individual local authority allocations were made ‘using the population of each authority weighted by a function of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation’.
- 3.4 The funding allocated to Peterborough can be seen in the table below. The level of funding has decreased from the first allocation as seen in the weekly comparison over.

Period grant cover	Total	Funding Per Week
Christmas and Feb half term	£743,662	£247,887
Easter	£258,352	£129,176 (*)
Summer Half Term	£174,979	£174,979
Summer Holidays	£699,916	£116,652

* Underspent funds from Christmas and Feb HT could be carried forward to Easter.

- 3.4 Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen around a 26% increase in our FSM (free school meals) numbers to over 9,315 eligible pupils. This is likely to increase further as the furlough scheme is phased out. This has not been reflected in the funding received as the last government data relates to October 2020.
- 3.5 In order to continue the voucher scheme outlined in 3.2, it would cost £963k for the 28 days of the summer holiday. This is not affordable against a grant of £699k. The council is not in a financial position to fund the deficit in the scheme and therefore the criteria for allocation or values need to be reviewed.
- 3.6 We have considered 2 options for the allocation of the grant. These are –
1. £10 a week for 6 weeks for existing eligible pupils in early years setting and schools. This would leave around £12k for additional support through the City Hub arrangements.
 2. £12 a week for 6 weeks for school pupils only. The option falls in line with existing government arrangements for providing free school meals. We have used our local discretion to provide funding to early years parents who meet the low income criteria but they would not be included under this option. There is no surplus funding for the hub arrangements.
- 3.7 Other options such as food parcels were considered but the timescale and administration challenges meant this option was not taken forward.
- 3.8 Under both options the following apply –
- We would no longer provide support for Post 16 students aside from those accessing free school meal entitlement in schools.
 - Included in both options is an assumption that 5% of vouchers are unclaimed. This is in line with previous rounds of the scheme.
 - We will be issuing 2 vouchers – 1 at the start of the holiday (23rd July) and 1 in the middle of the holidays (likely w/c 9th August)
 - To ensure we can meet the deadline for allocating vouchers, an exemption from procurement would be required.
 - The admin costs of operating the scheme will have to met within existing resources in the education directorate.
- 3.9 In considering the fairest option for all families in the city who face financial challenges, it is proposed that **option 1** is used to allocate £60 worth of vouchers during the summer holidays.
- 3.10 In December, we engaged with three suppliers who can distribute vouchers through their system once data from schools has been provided and uploaded into their system. A

number of providers offer this service and do not charge an administrative fee. We have also reviewed a new Crown Procurement Framework RM6255 Voucher Scheme, this framework is designed to be used for Voucher Schemes, but due the short notice of the grant and urgent nature of the issuing of the funds to enable the conditions of the grant to be satisfied it was not possible to use the framework, however given the value for money that can be demonstrated from previously using Wonde coupled with the removing the risk for any potential disruption of service by setting up a new supplier. We considered the breadth of their service, how we could use existing data to run the scheme and the administrative burden on schools and the LA of using their service. As a result, we have decided to proceed with our existing provider called Wonde for the following reasons -

- Wonde has successful been used by all our schools, considerably reducing the administrative burden on them to lawfully collate their eligible pupil data and provide it to us to then distribute FSM vouchers.
- Wonde have an effective system that allows us to make payments to families who are not accessing schools (in early years settings) through securely uploading data into their system. This will ensure accuracy and a timely response to ensure the vouchers are with families in the rounds to date.
- The need to share substantial amounts of personal data create GDPR issues but with Wonde already being able access the majority of this data, in a secure manner, again, the burden to install protective security measures to supply the data to the council is substantially reduced. The system they operate integrates with schools' management information systems which means less data handling for the Council.
- We have reached this decision as this substantially reduces the administrative burden and associated cost on both the Local Authority and our schools, which means more resources can be allocated for families (there is provision in the Grant to charge administrative costs but we are fully committed in our funding).

3.9 Wonde gives parents a good choice of supermarket choices at which to use the vouchers. The available supermarkets are –

- Asda
- Aldi
- Morrisons
- Sainsburys
- Tesco
- Iceland
- Waitrose
- McColls

3.10 Parents will receive the vouchers via email or text message and it is possible for schools to print the vouchers.

3.11 As such an exemption to the Council's Contract Rules is required to allow the Council to award the contract to Wonde which will ensure that the vouchers are distributed to these key cohorts before the end of term.

3.12 In addition to the Food Vouchers, the scheme is also available to support families and individuals with other immediate needs, including (but not limited to) other essential supplies/food, household energy and water bills, white goods, and boiler servicing and repairs. We will look to use carry over funding from the summer half term scheme and the surplus under option 1 to maintain the direct award scheme that enables trusted community groups and Peterborough hub to directly award food/fuel/cash grants.

3.13 This will enable the Peterborough hub to continue to work directly with the well establish and community and voluntary network across the city to ensure families are able to access the appropriate support that they need. A network that has consistently shown

through COVID how well they're able to work together to meet the needs of Peterborough residents.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 This decision does not require any public consultation in line with grant guidance.

5. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

5.1 The immediate hardship facing many Peterborough Families due to the pandemic will be alleviated through the provision of food vouchers and support with utilities bills and other household support.

6. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

6.1 The timescales for allocating funding are short and we want to ensure that support reaches families in a promptly and efficient way. The decision on funding at a lower rate has the least impact on families of the two options considered.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Alternative options are considered in section 3 of the report.

7.2 It would be possible for the Council to buy vouchers and allocate these but this would take considerable time and significant capacity would be needed. Allocating from an established provider means that the vouchers are at cost and we are not required to pay for a fee for their services.

Two alternative suppliers were consulted and considered for the distribution of food vouchers in December. Given the short notice on the announcement, WONDE is the preferred supplier due to being able to deliver the service within the time constraints of the Grant conditions, their existing schools' database, and the subsequent absence of additional burden or resources placed upon the Council or our schools.

We have also considered alternative methods of distribution via funding schools, but this proposed approach means we can directly get support to those that need it.

8. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

8.1 A contract with Wonde would have no direct financial impact, as they do not charge administrative or other on-costs, making their money on the discount they receive when purchasing vouchers from retailers. As such we would spend up to £699k with the company and receive up to £699k in vouchers. We have modelled the financial demands from parents / eligible children and ensured there is sufficient allocated resources.

Legal Implications

8.2 The council is satisfied that in reviewing the procurement notes 01/20 and 01/21 that the direct award of this grant is done so in accordance with Regulation 32(2)(c) of the Public Contract Regulations 2015:

1) There are genuine reasons for extreme urgency and the Council is reacting to a current situation that is a genuine emergency which is a direct consequence of the timeliness of this grant and the conditions attached to the grant.

2) The events that have led to the need for extreme urgency were unforeseeable, as it could not be reasonable for the Council to commit to any full procurement process without the ability to fund the service, which is done so via the grant.

3) It is impossible to comply with the usual timescales in the PCRs, the only framework has been considered but due to the timeframes attached it has been determined that there is no time to comply with the timeframes set out.

4) The situation is not attributable to the contracting authority, eg:.

The award of contract to Wonde is considered to be compliant with Regulation 32(2)(c)

Equalities Implications

8.3 The limitation of the grant have meant we have had to restrict the scheme from previous rounds including the funding of those in further education. Our proposal outline fits within the requirements of the grant conditions and have been developed following discussion with the Cabinet.

Translations of communications to parents regarding the CWGS will be made available through schools, and provisions for those who are digitally excluded will also be made to ensure everyone can access the support if they need it.

Carbon Impact Implications

8.4 There are no cabinet implications arising from this decision.

9. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

9.1 None.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - COVID Local Support Grant extension: – Final Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England (Extract)

Appendix 1 – COVID Local Support Grant extension: – Final Guidance for County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England (Extract)

Introduction

1. The £160 million COVID Local Support Grant extension (CLSG) will be made available to cover the period 21 June 2021 to 30 September 2021 inclusive to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials.
2. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is providing funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs), under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, to administer the scheme and provide assistance to vulnerable families with children and other vulnerable households, particularly affected by the pandemic. County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England have a statutory duty for childcare and have the ability to deliver the scheme through a variety of routes including issuing grants to third parties, providing vouchers to households or making direct provision of food, for example. County Councils are encouraged to work together with District Councils to provide support and ensure the funding meets its objectives. Note: County Councils and Unitary Authorities will be referred to as 'Authorities' throughout the remainder of this guidance.
3. Guidance has been updated to reflect new funding amounts and amended reporting dates. General guidance, including spend frameworks, eligibility and MI completion have remained broadly the same.
4. This guidance sets out the required collaboration between DWP, Authorities, including their delivery partners, such as District Councils and charitable organisations etc., to successfully meet the policy intentions within the agreed framework. It also provides any constraints that we need to work within and the distribution of funding and reporting arrangements.
5. The aim is to give vulnerable households peace of mind as COVID restrictions are eased by helping those who need it to have food on the table and other essentials.
6. Authorities have the local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those children, families and individuals most in need. It is important to stress this covers a wide range of vulnerable households including children of pre-school age too. Targeting this money effectively will ease the burden faced by a wide range of vulnerable households across the country worrying about paying the next utility bill or the next food shop due to the pandemic.
7. Rather than focus on one specific vulnerable group Authorities should try and use the wide range of data and sources of information at their disposal to identify and provide support to a broad cross section of vulnerable households in their area. Authorities have access to a variety of different benefit information through DWP's Searchlight portal which provides information on individual citizen's entitlement to (and confirms receipt of) DWP welfare benefits. However, support is not restricted to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits. Therefore, Authorities should try, where possible, to identify vulnerable households using other sources of information, such as social workers, troubled families' advisors and utility companies.
8. From June 2021 we have started to provide LAs with information relating to Universal Credit claims with limited capability for work or, earnings below the free school meals and free prescription thresholds in your area. You may find this information useful in identifying vulnerable families impacted by the pandemic.
9. This guidance applies to Authorities in England only and should be read in conjunction with the COVID Local Support Grant Determination issued with this guidance.

Objective and key principles

10. The objective of the COVID Local Support Grant extension is to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable.
11. When administering this scheme, you are encouraged to adopt the following principles:
- use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need;
 - use the funding from 21 June 2021 up to 30 September 2021 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food and utility bills (heating, cooking, lighting) and water for household purposes (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, sewerage and sanitary purposes), or other related essentials. This includes payments made, or committed to, by the Authority or any person acting on behalf of the Authority, from 21 June 2021 to 30 September 2021. For example, this would allow food vouchers issued before the end of the funding period to be redeemed in early October 2021. All authorities are encouraged to ensure that any vouchers issued are redeemed before the end of the scheme, or shortly thereafter, or consider recycling unused vouchers;
 - work together with District Councils including, where necessary and appropriate, other local services, such as social and care workers to help identify and support households within the scope of the scheme;
 - Funds should be spent or committed before 30 September 2021 and not held over for future usage;
 - Any underspends from the previous CLSG for the period from 17 April to 20 June 2021 can be used during the CLSG extension to 30 September 2021;
12. When deciding how to help people, you should consider:
- how you plan to provide support to vulnerable households, in other words, paying into bank accounts, use of cash and vouchers;
 - any risks associated with these payment methods – see section Managing the risk of fraud.

Communication

13. The Authority must, as appropriate and practical, reference that the grant is funded by the Department in any publicity material, including online channels and media releases.

Access to data

14. The COVID Local Support Grant extension is being classified as Local Welfare Provision (LWP) and local authorities (LAs) who have signed and returned the relevant section (Annex C) of the DWP/LA Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) have legal permission to access DWP's Searchlight portal. This portal provides information on individual citizen's entitlement to (and confirms receipt of) DWP welfare benefits. Therefore, this data can be used to help Authorities identify those families and individuals to whom to target this support.

15. Staff accessing Searchlight will need to be registered with the Employee Authentication System (EAS). Further information on Searchlight can be found in the local authority Searchlight Training Pack available in the Searchlight folder on Glasscubes (the LA/DWP online collaboration tool). If your Authority needs to discuss access to Glasscubes, contact DWP at lawelfare.lasupport@dwp.gov.uk and we will arrange for this to be provided.
16. Authorities do not have permission for the purposes of this scheme to access the 'Income' data provided on Searchlight for the Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme.
17. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential customers who may be eligible for the scheme from their own records, they can access Searchlight to verify each claimant's DWP benefit entitlement (although benefit entitlement is not a condition of support).
18. We intend to provide authorities with details of UC claimants in their authority whose income is below the Free School Meal and free prescription thresholds for both individuals and summary level by Ward. Authorities also have access to their own non-DWP data to help identify vulnerable households who may be eligible for support under this scheme.

Working with other organisations

19. Authorities should develop a 'local eligibility framework and approach' to enable them to distribute grant funding that best supports vulnerable families and individuals. The focus is on the provision of food, energy, water and/or associated financial support to vulnerable households with children (see the definition of a child under paragraph 26). A proportion of funding (up to 20%) is also available for vulnerable households without children (including individuals) so that no vulnerable household is excluded.
20. Authorities have flexibility to develop a local delivery approach that best fits the scheme's objective. Where Authorities choose to work with multiple organisations to provide a local delivery network or where Authorities choose to engage with District Councils to deliver this grant on their behalf, detailed arrangements and funding should be made available to those organisations as soon as possible so that support for vulnerable children and families can be provided as soon as is practically possible.
21. County Councils are encouraged to work collaboratively with District Councils and other organisations in their area who may come into contact with those households who are eligible and would benefit from this grant. Authorities that do not have the mechanisms in place to administer this grant are encouraged to consider whether District Councils are better placed to do so on their behalf. If Authorities decide to engage with District Councils in this way they are encouraged to do so as quickly as possible to ensure roles, responsibilities and effective arrangements are put in place to deliver the scheme promptly and efficiently. Where Authorities are working with Third Party Organisations (TPOs), this should be done on an objectively fair, transparent and non-discriminatory basis, having regard to the time available to deliver the scheme.
22. DWP Jobcentre Plus staff have been made aware of the scheme extension and will aim to connect their local partners to raise awareness and support Authorities with the delivery of the scheme to ensure it is making a real difference at a local level.

Establishing eligibility

23. Authorities have the flexibility within the scheme to identify which vulnerable households are in most need of support and apply their own discretion when identifying eligibility. Authorities can request applications for support or can proactively identify households who may benefit, or can take a mixture of the two approaches. There is no requirement for Authorities to undertake a means test or conduct a benefit check unless this specifically forms part of the Authority's local eligibility criteria. In accordance with their general legal duties, Authorities must have a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining their approach including how they are defining eligibility and how households access the scheme.

24. Awards must be based on the following framework:

- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to support households with children, with up to 20% of the total funding to other households experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, poverty during the pandemic. This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits;
- at least 80% of the total funding will be ring-fenced to provide support with food, energy and water bills for household purposes (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, and sanitary purposes) and sewerage. Within this condition there is flexibility about the proportion of support allocated to food and to bills;
- up to 20% of the total funding can be used to provide support with other essentials clearly linked to the scheme conditions (including sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, etc.), in recognition that a range of costs may arise which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access food, energy and water;
- the scheme is not intended to cover payment of rent or other housing costs because these are not directly related to food or utility bills and other benefits and support is available to cover these costs. Nor is it intended to be used for the provision of general advice on managing debt and/or financial hardship;
- it is important that Authorities develop overall policies appropriate for their areas, and proportionate procedures, for the allocation of the grant monies by reference to the above criteria;

Funding overlap

25. Authorities should consider the household circumstances when making a decision to spend this grant. Households may be receiving other forms of support and this should be taken into account to avoid duplicating provision where possible. However, families receiving other forms of assistance are not excluded from receiving support through this grant. For example, a household may:

- have additional wider needs in terms of food;
- need support with provision for cooking, lighting, heating and/or water (including sewerage);

- require other essential supplies;

Definitions

26. For the purpose of this grant (and without prejudice to other schemes):

- The definition of a child is any person:
 - who will be under the age of 19 as at 30 September 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

27. Where an eligible child lives on his or her own, they are a household that includes a child covered in the 80% allocation for households with children.

28. Vulnerable households which include a person aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and/or care leavers may still be eligible for grant support however that support falls within the 20% allocation to households without children.

29. The definition of energy includes any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking and lighting, including oil and portable gas cylinders. There is no prescriptive definition of other essentials although these should be related to food, heating, lighting, cooking, water and sewerage needs. Authorities have discretion to assess what is reasonable to assist those experiencing or at risk of poverty during the Covid-19 pandemic. Illustrative examples include: a warm blanket or duvet, heater, essential toiletries such as sanitary products. It is not intended to cover debt advice and general financial hardship support not linked to food, warmth and/or hygiene. Housing costs are expressly excluded.

30. Third party organisations may include but are not limited to:

- Registered charities and voluntary organisations
- Schools
- Food banks
- General Practitioners
- Care organisations

Annex A

Questions and answers

Q1. Why is DWP asking County Councils and Unitary Authorities to administer this instead of District Councils?

A1. County Councils and Unitary Authorities have a statutory duty regarding children. This is not to suggest that District Councils are not capable of delivering support. It reflects the focus of this grant and that support could take many, broad, forms and, therefore, the funding sits better with County Council and Unitary Authorities.

We would encourage County Council and Unitary Authorities to work with their district partners, as well as other organisations, as appropriate, to ensure the most effective support is delivered to as many families as possible.

Q2. Is it acceptable to use the grant funding for Free School Meals?

A2. The COVID Local Support Grant extension is not intended to replicate or replace Free School Meals and Authorities should avoid duplicating provision where possible and focus support to those most in need.

However, Authorities have discretion over how they use the funding within the grant framework and within the stipulated time period.

Therefore, Authorities may choose to offer COVID Local Support Grant extension awards to families in receipt of Free School Meals over the entirety of the summer holidays, if they consider this to be appropriate in their area.

Q3. Can the Scheme be used flexibly for more strategic activity such as advice provision around financial hardship?

A3. The COVID Local Support Grant extension is designed to support families with children and other households in need, who may be in a variety of circumstances. It is not intended to just replicate or replace Free School Meals provision. Authorities should avoid duplicating provision where possible and focus support to those most in need.

Authorities have discretion over how they use the funding within the grant framework and within the stipulated time period. Therefore, Authorities may choose to offer COVID Local Support Grant extension awards to families in receipt of Free School Meals over the entirety of the summer holidays if they consider this to be appropriate in their area.

Should Authorities choose to adopt this approach, they must fund the additional activity to address wider financial hardship through means other than the COVID Local Support Grant extension.

Q4. Can we make multiple awards to the same people or families?

A4. A family or individual can be supported on multiple occasions throughout the life-time of the scheme, should an Authority deem it to be necessary. All awards should be reported separately.

Q5. Can Searchlight information be used by Authorities to help identify suitable recipients for the COVID Local Support Grant extension funding?

A5. Searchlight can only be used to verify a specific individual's DWP benefit information. Universal Credit award information is available on Searchlight. Therefore, if an Authority identified a group of potential claimants who may be eligible for the scheme from their own records, they can access Searchlight to verify those claimants' DWP benefit details.

Q6. Does there need to be a complaints and appeals process?

A6. The appeals process falls within each Authority's normal complaints and appeals process. Authorities will be responsible for making determinations on eligibility and as such will need to decide how they administer any complaints or appeals.

Q7. Are there any other sources of guidance?

A7. DWP will continue to update a comprehensive Q&A log based on questions raised by Authorities. This will be reissued in due course.