

Winter Grant Scheme Update – January 2021

The Cabinet received an update on the Covid Winter Grant Scheme (WGS) at its meeting on 14th December 2020. WGS is a 170 million pound fund provided by the government and distributed to local authorities.

Slough Borough Council was allocated £475,125.36 to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic.

When administering this scheme, the LA must:

- use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need
- use the funding from **December 2020 up to the end of March 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.

Free School Meals during the February Half Term

There has been a significant amount of national press coverage recently regarding the provision of free school meals during the forthcoming half term between 15th to 19th February.

It is confirmed that Slough Borough Council will use WGS funding to continue to support the approximately 5,500 children eligible for free school meals by providing food vouchers during this half term.

All eligible children will receive £15 vouchers via the school and will be reimbursed by the local authority.

This follows on from the support over the Christmas period (£30 per pupil was provided for the two weeks) which means a total package of approximately £247,500 has been provided between December 2020 to March 2021.

WGS funding is also being used to continue to provide other support to families of vulnerable children. Families known to the Council's Early Help Hub and families known to Slough Children's Services Trust will be able to access support in the same way they did over the Christmas period.

All early years children eligible for the early years pupil premium are included. Funding was distributed to all eligible families over the Christmas period and this will be repeated at February half term.