

BRIEFING WINTER PLAN FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION

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KEY MESSAGES

We are committed to doing everything we can to support people throughout this pandemic, the colder months ahead and EU Exit. Therefore the SG announced on 30 November it is investing an additional £100 million in a Winter Plan for Social Protection to help people and communities through the winter. This package includes:

- **Support for families with children on low incomes (£22m)**
 - A £100 payment for children in receipt of Free School Meals in December (£15.6m).
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- **Supporting services for vulnerable children and young people (£23.5m)**
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- **Enhancing capacity within the third sector and communities (£15m)**
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- **Flexible funding for local authorities moving into level 4 (£15m)**
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
- **Further help with fuel costs (£7m)**
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
- **Further investment in strategic national food activity (£2m)**
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
- **Further investment to support people affected by homelessness (£5.14m)**
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
- **Additional strategic investment to promote equality, tackle social isolation and loneliness and promote digital inclusion (£5.91m)**
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
- **A campaign on benefit uptake and income maximisation (£0.25m)**
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]
- **Reserve Fund to meet potential pressures (£4.2m)**
 - [OUT OF SCOPE]

Top lines

- This pandemic has disrupted lives like never before and caused financial hardship and negatively impact on our wellbeing. Be assured, however, that protecting and supporting people during these unparalleled times is the absolute focus of this government.
- We recognise the significant impact that COVID-19 is having on households and incomes across Scotland.
- The winter period will be challenging for many, with continued COVID restrictions, colder weather and the threat of a no-deal exit from the EU.
- We are committed to doing everything we can to support people throughout this pandemic and have today announced a £100 million package of funding for a Winter Plan for Social Protection (the Plan).

Winter Plan Details

We are making £22 million available to support for families on low incomes

- A £100 per child payment for those in receipt of Free School Meals in December, delivered through local authorities (£15.6 million plus admin costs).
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£23.5 million will be made available to support services for vulnerable children and young people

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We will invest a further £15 million in the Communities and Third Sector Recovery Fund to enhance the capacity within the third sector and communities

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We will provide a £15 million fund for local authorities entering into level 4 restrictions

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We will provide a further £7 million for households experiencing difficulty with fuel costs

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We will invest a further £2 million in strategic national food activity

- [OUT OF SCOPE]

We will invest a further £5.14 million to support people affected by homelessness

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- [OUT OF SCOPE]

We will provide an additional strategic investment of £5.91 million to promote equality, social isolation and loneliness and promote digital inclusion

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We will invest £0.25 million in a national marketing campaign to promote benefit uptake and income maximisation

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- [OUT OF SCOPE]

We will hold a Reserve Fund to meet potential pressures (£4.2m)

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People in need of support should continue to phone the National Assistance Helpline, available on 0800 111 4000.

- The helpline will connect you to your local council, who will be able to provide further advice and assistance.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES ON LOW INCOMES - BACKGROUND / Q&A

Background

We will **invest £22 million to support low income families**, including those in the child poverty priority family groups, with a range of support over the winter period.

The package will provide:

- direct support of £100 to parents of children in receipt of free school meals (approx. £15.6m);
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£100 payment to low income households

£100 per child payment for those in receipt of Free School Meals in December, delivered through local authorities. Reaching in the region of 156,000 children, families could use this to meet the costs of heating, warm clothes, Christmas presents or food etc. and we will also provide a contribution towards administration.

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Q&A

£100 PAYMENT TO LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS.

Q - What is the £100 payment?

We will provide a £100 per child payment for those in receipt of Free School Meals in December, delivered through local authorities. This will help many of the lowest income families across Scotland at a time when households are struggling financially.

We estimate that it will support around 156,000 children, and families could use this to meet the costs of heating, warm clothes. Christmas presents or food etc. This payment will be primarily cash based support offered through extended Free School Meal provision to support families through the challenging Winter period.

Q - Why make a payment?

We are aware of the disproportionate affect COVID-19 is having on people in areas of high deprivation and this is of significant concern, as we know socioeconomic inequalities drive health inequalities. Therefore during the pandemic, we have put equality and social justice at the heart of our response. We have put a range of support in place and recent reports suggest that 1 in 5 households with dependent children are in serious financial difficulty. We are making this exceptional payment to help tackle the financial pressure faced by many families across Scotland at this time.

Q - When will families get the money

Families should have this money before Christmas. In line with the approach outlined in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, increasing household incomes is the most direct way of tackling poverty. This payment will give families the discretion on what the additional money is spent on dependent on their needs – i.e. food, fuel or Christmas gifts. Providing a direct cash payment will enable more families to enjoy the Christmas period, enabling greater access to food, fuel and other essentials and help to reduce potential levels of problem debt to the serviced in the new year.

[REDACTED - OUT OF SCOPE – REMAINDER OF THE BRIEFING DOES NOT RELATE TO THE £100 PAYMENT]