



For Immediate Release

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Support available for local families through the Household Support Fund

Central Bedfordshire Council has been allocated £2.9million of Government funding to support households in Central Bedfordshire with food, energy and water bills, and other wider essentials over the next year.

The Household Support Fund is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, and this is the fourth round of funding that the Council has received. It will run until March 2024.

Some of the funding has already been distributed to households. Supermarket vouchers have already been provided to every child eligible for free school meals in Central Bedfordshire to help with food costs. Over the Easter holidays families received a £35 voucher, and over the May half term they received a £17.50 voucher. In total 15,104 supermarket vouchers were distributed, worth £396,533. Support for these families will continue in the summer holidays, October half term, Christmas holidays and February 2024 half term.

As well as children entitled to free school meals, those eligible for support include:

- Children eligible for 2-year-old funding/Early Years Pupil Premium
- Care leavers (young adults aged between 18 and 25 years old that have previously spent time in care before they were 18 years old)
- Claimants of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support including pensioners, disabled people and households with children
- Households with an annual income of less than £30,000 living in a permanent, residential park home or on a council-managed caravan site

Anyone who is eligible for support will be contacted by the Council, but the full list of who is eligible for support and how to apply for a grant is available on the Council's website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/HSG

During the summer holidays, the Council's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is returning to provide free, fun activities for children who receive benefits based free school meals and are in Reception through to year 11 at school – a requirement of the Department for Education who fund the programme. All children who attend face-to-face activities will be provided with healthy snacks and lunch. Sessions are inclusive so are suitable for children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND).

Cllr Hayley Whitaker, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Deputy Leader of the Council said: "The cost of living crisis continues to be felt by many families and households across Central Bedfordshire. The Council has a key role to play in supporting those most in need in our communities, either directly to households, or via various voluntary and partner organisations across the region by distributing food and other essential items."

For more information about who is eligible for support from the Household Support Fund, visit the Council's website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/hsg

