

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Assistant Director - People
to Leadership Panel
of 15 February 2022**

Subject: 2022 Scottish Child Payment - Bridging Payments

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Panel with information relating to the Scottish Government's Child Payment 'Bridging Payments' scheduled for 2022 and to request approval for the use of additional flexible funding, recently allocated to the Council from the Scottish Government, to offer these payments to a wider group of young people.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 considers the proposal for use of the Council's £533,000.00 allocation from the Scottish Government's recently announced £25 million, flexible funding to tackle financial insecurity; and

2.1.2 approves the use of this funding to support the payment of four Child Payment 'Bridging Payments' to a wider group of young people in 2022.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 27 August 2021, the Scottish Government confirmed arrangements regarding four, seasonal, £130.00 Scottish Child Payment 'Bridging Payments' in 2022, which will follow on from the Family Pandemic Payments administered in the spring, summer, autumn and winter of 2021.

- 3.2 These Bridging Payments will be provided for all eligible children and young people of school age, including those aged under 6 who are enrolled in primary school.

- 3.3 The Bridging Payments will be funded on the same basis as the previous Family Pandemic Payments, with the Scottish Government funding payments for the children of families who are in receipt of a qualifying benefit for [Free School Meals](#), as a result of an assessment of household income and this will include families in receipt of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit where the household income is £7,500.00 or less.

- 3.4/

- 3.4 When administering Covid-19 related Family Pandemic Payments in 2021 the Council extended the qualifying criteria to include families who were in receipt of a qualifying benefit for school Clothing Grants, as a result of an assessment of household income. Qualifying benefits for school Clothing Grants include families in receipt of Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit where the household income is £16,105.00 or less. The additional costs were supported via the Addressing Future Needs Grant and the Flexible Funding Grant which were distributed by the Scottish Government in late 2020. A further £250,000.00 to help fund future payments has already been allocated from the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Programme funding, approved by Leadership Panel on 15 June 2021.
- 3.5 Four, equal Bridging Payments of £130.00, totalling £520.00 require to be made in 2022, for each eligible child at Easter, Summer, October and Christmas, to broadly align with the start of school holidays. The funding required to fully commit to the Council's wider eligibility criteria for these payments and the circa 1,300 additional children currently entitled to school Clothing Grants, but not Free School Meals, totals £676,000.00.
- 3.6 On 29 November 2021, the Council's received an allocation of £533,000 from a Scottish Government £25 million flexible fund to tackle financial insecurity was confirmed. [Guidance](#) published with the funding provided advice that allocations should be used to support to low income households, including more specifically, guidance on the funds being used to *'Build upon supports already delivered by local authorities, such as Scottish Child Payment Bridging Payments.'* Colleagues within the Scottish Government's Social Justice Strategy Unit have confirmed that the proposed approach for use of the flexible funding is within the flexibility that local authorities have to support low income households.
- 3.7 The Scottish Government has confirmed that from 2023, Social Security Scotland will extend the 'Scottish Child Payment' to children aged under sixteen. These payments are currently only available to low-income families with children aged under six. It is expected that this weekly payment of £10 will replace the need for future Bridging Payments to be administered beyond 2022.
- 3.8 From 2023 low-income families will need to apply to Social Security Scotland for the 'Scottish Child Payment,' these payments will not be administered by the Council. Social Security Scotland's eligibility criteria will generally only extend to those children in receipt of Free School Meals, as a result of an assessment of household income.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Officers from various services, including Finance, Revenue and Benefits, Thriving Communities, Organisational Development and Housing met to consider Addressing Future Needs and proposals for the use of the £533,000 allocation. It is proposed to use £426,000 flexible funding and £250,000 allocated from Covid-19 Recovery Programme funding to support low income households in South Ayrshire, by extending the eligibility criteria of four £130 Child Payment 'Bridging Payments' to families in receipt of a qualifying benefit for school Clothing Grants. This will benefit an additional circa 1,300 children within South Ayrshire.
- 4.2 If the recommendations in this report are approved, payments will be issued to align with the start of school holidays at Easter, Summer, October and Christmas 2022.

4.3 It is proposed that the balance of funding £107,000 be made available for a community resilience response including the delivery of food and pharmacy items, support for local food banks and a fuel poverty support fund.

4.4 In line with the conditions of the Scottish Government's flexible funding to tackle financial insecurity, the Council's intended use of the funding will be reported back to the Social Justice Strategy Unit before the 29 April 2022 deadline.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Total funding of £676,000 is required to extend the eligibility for and fund the payment of, four scheduled, £130 Child Payment – Bridging Payments in 2022, to the families of an additional circa 1,300 children, within lower income households who are in receipt of a qualifying benefit for school Clothing Grants but who are not in receipt of a qualifying benefit for Free School Meals. These payments can be met from funds already identified through Covid 19 recovery funding and from SG flexible funding to tackle financial insecurity.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 The risks associated with rejecting the recommendations are that lower income families, with children eligible for school Clothing Grants but not Free School Meals, who have previously received Covid-19 Family Pandemic Payments will be disadvantaged and this may impact on the reputation of the Council.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as [Appendix 1](#).

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document

otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Commitment 2 of the Council Plan: Closing the Gap/Reduce poverty and disadvantage.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor William Grant, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Councillor Brian McGinley, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, and Councillor Peter Henderson, Portfolio Holder for Corporate. The contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.
- 13.3 Consultation has taken place with officers from relevant services with an interest in the Council's recent Scottish Government allocation of flexible funding to tackle financial insecurity and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

14. Next Steps for Decision Tracking Purposes

- 14.1 If the recommendations above are approved by Members, the Assistant Director – People will ensure that all necessary steps are taken to ensure full implementation of the decision within the following timescales, with the completion status reported to the Leadership Panel in the 'Council and Leadership Panel Decision Log' at each of its meetings until such time as the decision is fully implemented:

<i>Implementation</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Managed by</i>
Ensure that the Council's eligibility criteria for Scottish Child Payment – Bridging Payments in 2022 are extended to lower income families in receipt of a qualifying benefit for school Clothing Grants	28 February 2022	Service Lead - Education Support Services
Report back to the Scottish Government's Social Justice Strategy Unit on the Council's use of the flexible funding to tackle financial insecurity	29 April 2022	Service Lead - Education Support Services

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 15 June 2021 - [Covid-19 Programme of Recovery Activity 2021/22 to 2022/23.](#)**

Person to Contact **Mike Newall, Assistant Director – People
County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR
Phone 01292 616231
E-mail mike.newall@south-ayrshire.gov.uk**

Date: 8 February 2022

South Ayrshire Council Equality Impact Assessment Scoping Template

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement under the Public Sector Duty to promote equality of the Equality Act 2010. Separate guidance has been developed on Equality Impact Assessment's which will guide you through the process and is available to view here: <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/impact-assessment.aspx>

Further guidance is available here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities/>

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from 1 April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on Councils to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. See information here: [Interim Guidance for Public Bodies](#) in respect of the Duty, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2018.

1. Policy details

Policy Title	2022 Scottish Child Payment - Bridging Payments
Lead Officer (Name/Position/Email)	Mike Newall, Assistant Director – People - mike.newall@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Age – men and women, girls & boys	n/a	yes
Disability	n/a	n/a
Gender Reassignment (Trans/Transgender Identity)	n/a	n/a
Marriage or Civil Partnership	n/a	n/a
Pregnancy and Maternity	n/a	n/a
Race – people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities and Gypsy/Travellers	n/a	n/a
Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)	n/a	n/a
Sex – gender identity (issues specific to women & men or girls & boys)	n/a	n/a

Sexual Orientation – person’s sexual orientation i.e. LGBT+, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual/straight	n/a	n/a
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights & Children’s Rights	n/a	n/a

3. What likely impact will this policy have on people experiencing different kinds of social disadvantage? (Fairer Scotland Duty). Consideration must be given particularly to children and families.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	n/a	n/a
Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet Basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	n/a	yes
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies	n/a	n/a
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	n/a	n/a
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parent’s education, employment and income	n/a	yes

4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes Consider the ‘Three Key Needs’ of the Equality Duty	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (High, Medium or Low)
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Low
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Low
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues?)	Low
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Medium
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Medium

5. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as Medium and/or High)	YES NO
Rationale for decision: Although the recommendations within the report, if approved, will benefit the families of lower income households in 2022, who are in receipt of a qualifying benefit for school Clothing Grants, any decision does not have a specific or significant, long-term positive or negative impact on groups of people with protected characteristics.	
Signed: Mike Newall, Assistant Director - People Date: 21 January 2022	