

REPORT OF THE
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
PART II

186. LOCAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE

1. On the 21 October 2015, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services noted the development of Local Welfare Assistance (LWA) in Hampshire and the associated risks and issues. He approved a grant of £200,000 to SCRATCH (Southampton City and Region Action to Combat Hardship) to support the FairShare model, set out in the report, and agreed a number of key objectives for LWA subject to available resources and funding in the future.

2. In April 2013 a proportion of the money that had previously supported the Government's Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans was transferred to Local Authorities to provide LWA under local discretion and determination. Hampshire County Council developed a system of support to help build the resilience of residents when facing critical need and potential hardship and to ensure money was used to target identified needs and not create its own need or demand.

3. Following the announcement that no further LWA funding would be forthcoming, it was agreed (by the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, who had responsibility for the service at the time) that underspent funds for LWA in Hampshire would be available to spend on projects over 3-5 years that would look at sustainable support in critical areas of need for residents. It was subsequently agreed to align LWA with the Supporting Troubled Families Programme, which now comes within the remit of the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

4. The future for LWA has taken into consideration findings and data generated through delivering a programme of activity with local partners and through the management of associated contracts and grant funded activity over a period of 2 years. There are three identified main areas of crisis that require significant investment and would seem to be best supported through the remit for LWA. These are food poverty, fuel poverty and furniture (including white goods). These are the main factors for overcoming, or preventing, hardship and crisis but equally prove the biggest risk to a finite pot of funding. Through maintaining strong links with local partners an opportunity to develop a FareShare model, provided/coordinated by SCRATCH across Hampshire has been identified. By utilising £200,000 of the LWA budget as a grant over two years LWA could develop a self-sustaining model (through income generation) of support from third sector partners to address the impacts of food poverty, the need for furniture and white goods and fuel poverty.

Further details can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings.htm by typing in the relevant reference number:

- Local Welfare Assistance (search item reference 6960)

COUNCILLOR KEITH MANS
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services

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