

County Council: 17 March 2026

Agenda Item No. 8(e) – Motion from Councillor Bryony Goodliffe

Proposed by Councillor A Whelan Seconded by Councillor Murphy

Additions in bold and deletions shown in strikethrough

This Council notes:

- that ~~there are around 25,000 children in Cambridgeshire who qualify for the support from Pupil Premium~~ **support**, ~~(also known as free school meals) and many of these children are living in~~ **reflecting the continued impact of poverty and the**, ~~struggling following years of austerity and the~~ **Cost-of-living crisis on many families**. ~~Pupil Premium funding entitles a child or young person to a free school lunch during term time and additional funds to support their education to help reduce the attainment gap of children and young people living in poverty.~~
- **that** Cambridgeshire County Council has shown its commitment to assisting families who have an extremely low income through a very successful **holiday supermarket voucher scheme funded through the Government's Household Support Fund**, ~~programme which gave these~~ **providing direct assistance to** families entitled to Pupil Premium funding vouchers for major supermarkets during each full week of school holidays.
- **that councils had previously been able to provide holiday voucher schemes through the Household Support Fund but that the new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) guidance issued by the Labour Government does not allow the use of blanket voucher schemes.**
- ~~that a report to Children and Young People Committee in 2023 showed the value of these vouchers and that comments from recipients indicates the great need for the support the voucher scheme has offered their children and young people.~~
- that in May 2025, the Cambridgeshire independent poverty strategy commission report was published, and a countywide multi-agency officer delivery group subsequently established to address the recommendations.
- **that the Labour Government guidance for the Crisis and Resilience Fund requires local authorities to prioritise targeted support for households experiencing a financial shock and to focus on building financial resilience, rather than providing universal cost-of-living payments.**
- **that the requirement for case by case assessments limit councils' ability to continue the broad or blanket holiday voucher schemes previously funded under the Household Support Fund**
- **that the Equality Impact Assessment produced by this Council dated 9th January 2026 highlights the negative impact of the Labour Governments actions in removing the holiday meal voucher scheme funding.**

- **that councils across the country are now having to redesign their support schemes to comply with the Labour Government's revised rules, including the expansion of the free school meals programme and the Holiday Activities & Food and the removal of the two-child benefit cap changing the number of families in financial crisis.**

This Council believes:

- **that no child in Cambridgeshire should go hungry during school holidays.**
- **that families facing financial hardship should continue to receive support from the County Council.**
- **that the Labour Government have failed those in most need by removing holiday meal support.**
- **that the Government should provide sufficient and flexible funding to allow councils to support families effectively during school holidays.**

This Council resolves:

- to request that the Anti-Poverty Strategic Lead officer and the poverty strategy delivery group **explores ways to provided targeted holiday support including** considering funding for an ongoing holiday voucher scheme for families who experience financial shock (as set out in the Crisis and Resilience Fund guidance) within the CRF delivery plan **and subject to the rules of the CRF funding.**
- to use a proportion of the £5.3million pa Crisis and Resilience Fund allocation, subject to approval by Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee, to **prioritise support for children and families facing financial shocks, including access to food support during school holidays where this meets the CRF eligibility criteria and if a holiday voucher scheme is agreed to pay** for the scheme which should begin in the autumn of 2026 and last for the duration of the local government settlement, ~~reviewed in line with DWP national guidance.~~
- that this scheme, **if agreed**, is prioritised in the use of Crisis and Resilience Fund due to **recognising** the lifelong impact **on children** of growing up in poverty ~~on children~~ and the impact it can have upon their physical ~~health~~, **and** mental health, educational attainment and life chances.
- that a scheme is considered which ~~is~~ **provides** cost effective, value for money **support for those families facing financial shock in accordance with CRF eligibility** ~~and that~~ can be communicated to ~~the majority of those~~ families who qualify for Pupil Premium and live within Cambridgeshire County Council boundaries.
- that financial management and prevention advice are **integrated into any such scheme to provide financial resilience support, including access to advice**

on benefits, debt and financial management in accordance with the CRF scheme. ~~also offered to these families upon receipt of support.~~

- **to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions requesting that the Government provide sufficient funding to enable councils to continue supporting families during school holidays.**
- that updates regarding this Motion should be provided to Spokes of the Communities, Social Mobility and Inclusion Committee.