

## East Riding of Yorkshire Council – Winter Grant Scheme

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### **Introduction**

On 10 November 2020, the Government announced funding to East Riding of Yorkshire Council to support those most in need with the cost of food, energy (Heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials, such as sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers and ovens. The aim is to give vulnerable households peace of mind in the run up to Christmas and over the winter months during the pandemic, so children will be warm and well-fed this winter.

Due to the limited nature of the funding available, East Riding of Yorkshire Council will implement the Winter Grant Scheme as a discretionary scheme in a phased approach, payments will be awarded in 3 payment periods until the one-off funding has been fully utilised. Where the funding is exhausted in period one, further payments will not be made in periods two and three:

- PHASE 1            December 2020
- PHASE 2            January 2021
- PHASE 3            February 2021

Phase one of the scheme will run for the period 1 December 2020 to 31 December 2020, closing date for applications will be 20 December 2020, to allow eligibility checking and payment before 24 December 2020. The Council will not guarantee payment to applicants where applications are submitted after 17 December 2020, before Christmas.

Once the final payments have been made for Phase one, any unspent funds will be used to fund the further phases of the scheme.

**This scheme is not to replicate free school meals for children during school holidays.**

The funding is in addition to the Wider Support Package for disadvantaged families and children, which includes:

- expansion of the Department for Education's Holiday Activities and Food programme;
- increasing the value of the Department for Health and Social Care's Healthy Start vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 from April 2021; and
- £16m to fund local charities through well-established networks and provide immediate support to front-line food aid charities

Councils are given discretion to determine the design of their local scheme, with set objectives:

- use discretion on how to identify and support those most in need
- use the funding from December 2020 up to the end of March 2021 to meet immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford food and utility bills (heating, cooking, lighting) and water for household purposes (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, sewerage and sanitary purposes), or other related essentials. This includes payments made, or committed to, by the Authorities or any person acting on behalf of the Authority, from 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021. For example, this would allow food vouchers issued before the end of the funding period to be redeemed in April 2021. Any unspent funds, will be returned to the Department for Work and Pensions.
- work together with departments, such as social and care workers to help identify and support households within the scope of the scheme.

When deciding how to help people, to consider:

- how you plan to provide support to vulnerable households, in other words, paying into bank accounts, use of cash and vouchers
- any risks associated with these payment methods

In order to be awarded a winter grant, households must fulfil the qualifying criteria set out below.

Protecting vulnerable households is crucial for the population of the East Riding of Yorkshire. By providing as much support as possible to households, this in turn supports the health and wellbeing of residents. This scheme therefore reflects two of the Council's key priorities: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles and Protecting the Vulnerable.

**This scheme will run alongside the Council's emergency assistance scheme, which provides support to residents where they have had an interruption to income. We will also signpost ineligible applicants who have a responsibility to pay rent to the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme.**

### **Section A: Qualifying Criteria**

#### **Households with children**

Eligible households must meet all of the qualifying criteria, as follows:

- Must be an East Riding resident
- Must be responsible for a child, the definition of a child is any person:
  - who will be under the age of 19 as at 31 March 2021; or
  - a person aged 19 or over in respect of whom a child-related benefit (for example, Child Benefit) is paid or free school meals are provided;

**AND**

- Be in receipt of a qualifying benefit which would entitle the child to free school meals:
  - Job Seeker's Allowance (income-based)
  - Income Support
  - Universal Credit - Your annual income assessed by the Department for Work and Pension must be less than £7,400. Any pupil eligible for free school meals before 1 April 2018 when the earned income threshold is introduced will retain their eligibility until then end of universal credit roll-out which is March 2022
  - Child Tax Credit (but NOT receiving Working Tax Credit) – provided your annual income, assessed by the Inland Revenue, does not exceed £16,190
  - (Please note: this amount is subject to change in April every year)
  - Employment Support Allowance (income-related)
  - Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
  - Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

**OR**

- Be in receipt of Universal Credit from 23 March 2020 onwards (new claims from this date), and have a total annual income between £7,400 and £16,000

**OR**

- Where an individual has no recourse to public funds they will only be eligible where there is a genuine care need, for example:
  - there are community care needs
  - they have serious health problems
  - there is a risk to a child's wellbeing
  - and the household is in the process of applying for universal credit but are not yet in receipt of it

### **Households with no children**

- Must be an East Riding resident
- Must be responsible for mortgage, rent payments and utility payments
- Where an eligible child is living on his or her own, they should be treated as a individual for the purpose of the grant allocation

**AND**

- Be a vulnerable adult(s) and be eligible for Adult Social Care, with a current care package in place and have had an increase in food and/or fuel since 23 March 2020

**OR**

- Be a care leaver and receiving support from the Council's Pathways team and have had an increase in food and/or fuel since 23 March 2020

**OR**

- Be working or Self-Employed and have an annual household income of less than £13,600

### **Section B: Exclusions**

Applications from the following will not be accepted:

- Residents not residing within East Riding of Yorkshire Council boundary
- If you child(ren) attend a an East Riding school but reside outside of the East Riding boundary
- Where a child spends time with a parent part of the week, it will be the person who receives child benefit for them that will be entitled to the grant
- A resident non-dependant adult/household will not be eligible for a grant

Fuel payments will not be made for the following:

- Where an applicant is eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment from the Department for Work and Pensions
- Where an applicant is in receipt of the Cold Weather Payment

### **Section C: Payment Awards**

Payments for food and fuel will be allocated based on the figures below.

Where an application is made for other items such as sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets, boiler service/repair, purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers, ovens, they will be assessed on an individual need basis. Amounts award are based on the Councils Emergency Assistance allocations. The Council will carry out an assessment of an applicant's incomings and outgoings to determine if they are suffering hardship.

Where a child or individual is eligible for a grant, they will receive a payment for phase one to cover the period 1 December 2020 to 31 December 2020.

Where further phases of the scheme are released, multiple payment awards can be made, where the applicant still meets the eligibility criteria.

<b>Household</b>	<b>Grant Awarded per child or individual – Food</b>	<b>Grant Awarded per household– Fuel *</b>	<b>Grant Awarded per child/individual - Other</b>
Award amount	£45.00	£30.00	Each application to be determine on need and funds available

**\*where an eligible person is in receipt of Winter Fuel Payment/Cold Weather payment they will not be entitled to the Fuel element of the grant**

The Council will not award grants where funds are no longer available to do so.

Applicants will have exhausted other options of applying to Charitable Trust for items first, such as Turn2Us.

#### **Section D: Applications, Evidence, Monitoring, Assurance**

All applicants must comply with the terms and conditions detailed below:

- East Riding of Yorkshire Council, in the operation of this scheme, reserves the right to request any evidence, explanation or proofs that it deems necessary and reasonable, in order to properly assess an applicant's entitlement to a grant award. This condition applies at any time during or after the application process.
- In order to monitor the outcomes and effectiveness of the scheme, East Riding of Yorkshire Council reserves the right to request any evidence, explanation or proofs that it deems necessary or reasonable. This is to satisfy the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) requirement that all grant recipients may be required to provide, on demand, all evidence and proofs to DWP as DWP deems necessary. These conditions apply during and after the application process.
- If an applicant fails to satisfy all reasonable requests, made by the Council, the Council reserves the right to either not pay an award, or request the repayment of an award already paid.
- Any refusal to cooperate with the Council for the purposes of the functions of Section D of this scheme (this section) will result in the rejection of the application and any grant payments already made, will be recalled.

#### **Applications and Evidence**

All applications must be submitted online through the specified application process hosted on the Council's website by 20 December 2020. Where the applicant is unable to submit an online application, telephone applications can be made through the Council's benefits contact team by 18 December 2020.

Only one application per household will be accepted:

- Applicants must provide their date of birth and National Insurance number to allow their identity to be checked.
- Applicants must provide evidence of their identity, such as passport, driving licence or bank statement
- All applicants must provide a bank statement to verify their bank details for payment
- Where an applicant is in receipt of a qualifying free school meal benefit, the council will verify their income using our secure link to the Department for Work and Pensions
- Where an individual is applying based on their earned income, they must provide their last wage slip or latest self-employed account
- Where an application has a care package in place the Council will verify this with the Council's Assessment and Payments team.
- Where an application has a valid claim for council tax support or housing benefit, we will obtain consent from the applicant and verify evidence by way of their claim

#### **Payments and fraud prevention.**

The Council reserves the right to undertake any checks it considers necessary to prevent fraudulent payments of grants.

Payments of the grant will be a one-off lump sum per household and will only be made direct into a UK bank. Any bank details supplied will be subject to anti-fraud measures. Payments will only be made into accounts that are in the name of the applicant.

The Council will not accept any deliberate manipulation, misrepresentation or fraud. Any business caught falsifying their records to gain grant monies will face prosecution and any grant funding issued will be clawed back. Grants paid in error will also be subject to claw back.

#### **Appeals**

There is no formal right of appeal if a grant application is not successful, however, the applicant may ask for their case to be reviewed, within 7 days of their decision.

All reviews will be undertaken by a senior officer who was not involved in making the original decision. This approach ensures the review is impartial, fair and consistent.

All applicants who have requested a reconsideration will be formally notified of the outcome.

#### **Data Protection and anti-fraud measures**

We will use your information to assess your application for a grant. We will confirm information about you and your account with credit referencing agencies. We will do this to ensure that the details you give are correct and that your identity is valid.

Where it is suspected that an applicant has obtained Emergency Assistance by misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact this will be investigated under East Riding of Yorkshire Council's Fraud Policy in line with the Theft Act 1968 sections 15, 15(a), 17 & 24(a) and Fraud Act 2006 sections 2,3,4,6 & 7.

If you provide false or inaccurate information, we will record this. We and other fraud prevention agencies may use and search these records to prevent fraud.

The Council and the Government will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud. Any individual caught falsifying their records to gain grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back.

To minimise the risk of fraudulent grant claims, the Council's Fraud Investigation Team will carry out anti-fraud checks. We may use data provided by third parties in undertaking verification of claims. We will store this information electronically and will share it with other Council Officers who may be involved in considering your grant.

The Council is compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and is compliant with all its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation.

All data collected will be stored in accordance with the law and will be destroyed in-line with the Council's data retention policy.