

Household Support Fund (HSF) – Bolton’s Money Skills Service - Guidance for applicants

Bolton Council has received a pot of funding from the Department of Work and Pensions and central government and Bolton’s Money Skills Service has been allocated a small amount of the total fund to help vulnerable customers who are struggling financially due to the cost-of-living situation. The grant is discretionary, and awards will be assessed on the information below.

It is a limited pot of money, and it will be awarded on a first come, first served basis to those in need. It is available from now until the end of March 2024. Applicants who are not awarded the grant, where possible, will be directed to alternative advice and support as appropriate. Bolton’s Money Skills Service will utilise their allocation of money, in two periods. The 1st period will run from July 2023 until the money has been utilised and the 2nd period will run over the winter months.

The Household Support Fund is open to those aged 16+ who are being financially impacted by the cost-of-living situation and have savings of less than £2000. We may request evidence of this.

The grant can help:

- Families, both lone parents and couples, who are responsible for at least one child.
- Single people
- People in need of additional support. A person in need of additional support may include, but is not restricted to:
 - Anyone suffering severe financial hardship.
 - Anyone who has a disability.
 - Pensioners
 - People who are seriously ill or have a severe long term health condition.
 - Someone aged 24 or under with an Education, Health and Care plan (EHC)
 - Recently unemployed people
 - People on zero-hour contracts
 - Care leavers
 - Those fleeing domestic abuse.
 - Those who have difficulty in understanding, speaking or reading English.

You do not need to be claiming DWP welfare benefits to be eligible to make a claim.

We are particular keen to help and support those residents that haven’t benefited from any previous cost of living support.

The scheme can be administered regardless of immigration status, if there is a genuine need that does not arise solely from destitution, e.g:

- There are community care needs

- They have serious health problems
- There is a risk to a child's wellbeing

To be eligible to apply for the Household Support Fund (HSF), the applicant must pay their council tax to Bolton Council and be responsible for the payment of utility bills, mortgage, rent or service charge at the property.

HSF cannot be used if other support mechanisms have been accessed for the same request. However, a family or individual can be supported more than once should the local authority deem it necessary. All awards should be reported separately.

What support / items can be provided by Money Skills?

- **Keeping Warm** – Clothing vouchers are available for residents to purchase clothing. We can also provide support to purchase school uniform via the SMART clothing uniform shop in Bolton.
- **Cooking Savvy and on a budget** – Air Fryers / Slow Cookers / Microwaves / Toasters
- **Preventing damp and mould** – Airers and heated airers
- **Digital Inclusion** - Mobile phones

Each referral will be assessed on an individual base.

Large items will need to be picked up from the One Stop Shop at Bolton Town Hall on a Wednesday or Friday between 9.30am and 2.30pm. On arrival at the One Stop Shop please ring 01204 331968. Please note it is your responsibility to ensure you have transport to collect the items. You will need to show ID, such as a utility bill, in order to collect the item. Vouchers will be emailed once the email address has been verified by you.

Maximum amounts of award will be:

Singles - £100

Couples and Families - £200

When completing the referral form you will be asked to prioritise what you need. If you request multiple items, please note we can only award up to the above monetary limits, therefore your priority list will be awarded accordingly, and you may not be awarded all you are requesting.

This is to ensure that we can help as many customers as possible.

Supporting Information – what do you need to provide?

You will need to provide the following details on the application form to enable us to process it:

- Name, address, contact telephone number, email address and housing tenure.
- Are there children in the household?
- Do you have more than £2000 in savings?
- What support do you need?
- Are you a pensioner?
- Are you or anyone in the household classed as disabled?
- Preferred method of communication

The referral form can be found and completed online at <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/hsf>

Once the form has been received by Money Skills a member of staff will contact you within 14 days. Please do not contact us before 14 days of completing the referral form as this will delay us dealing with the referral. If you have any questions, please contact us on HSF@bolton.gov.uk

All vouchers and items will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.