

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

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 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 first 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 from the service user.

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.

The customer does 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 application must pay their council tax to Bolton Council and be responsible for the payment of utility bills, mortgage or rent 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 voucher are available for residents to purchase clothing. We can also provide support to purchase school uniform via the SMART clothing uniform 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 basis.

It will be the responsibility of the client to arrange collection of the items 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 the client will need to ring 01204 331968. They 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 the customer.

The maximum amount that can be claimed on any one referral is £100 per single person and £200 per couple and family.

Please discuss with the customer what their priorities are and document this on the referral form. If the customer applies for multiple items, we can only award up to the above monetary limits, therefore their priority list will then be looked at and awarded accordingly. This is to ensure that we can help as many people as possible.

If the customer has been allocated a bed from Bolton Money Skill's Household Support Fund pot of money, please note this is a separate award and will not be included within this application.

Supporting Information – what do you need to provide?

You will need to provide the following details on the referral form to enable us to process it.

- Name, address, contact telephone number, email address and housing tenure.
- Are there children in the household?
- Does the household have more than £2000 in saving?
- What support is the service user needing?
- If the person applying is a pensioners
- If the person applying is a disabled person

Please note it is the responsibility of the referring officer to check eligibility. We need your help in ensuring the money is directed to those who are really struggling financially.

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

Once the form has been received by the Money Skills team a member of staff will contact the customer within 14 days. Please do not contact us before the 14 days of completing the referral form as this will delay us dealing with the referral.

All vouchers and items will be awarded on a first come first served basis. If you require any further information, please contact:

Catherine Skelton - Housing Sustainability Service Manager

Clare Maskrey - Money Skills Team Leader

on this email address HSF@bolton.gov.uk