

# Household Support Fund Round 6

October 2024 – March 2025

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## Context

The Household Support Fund (funded by the UK Government) provides support to residents who are struggling with the cost of living. It can be used to help with essential costs such as food and utilities. On 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024, the Government announced a further extension to the Household Support Fund from October 2024 to March 2025.

## **Eligible spend includes:**

*(When making a referral, please select the relevant category below based on what the majority of the grant would be used for).*

**Energy and water:** This may include support with energy bills for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking, or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. It can also be used to support water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, as well as for sanitary purposes and sewerage.

**Food:** The Fund can be used to support with food costs.

**Essentials linked to energy, water and food:** The Fund can be used to provide support with essentials linked to energy, water and food (for example insulation or energy efficient items which reduce bills, the purchase of equipment such as fridges, freezers, ovens, slow cookers or costs associated with obtaining these essentials e.g. delivery, installation). We will consider applications for households on low incomes to be supported to repair or replace white goods and appliances with more energy efficient ones, or to invest in simple energy efficiency measures which will pay back quickly, such as insulating a hot water tank, fitting draft excluders to a front door, or replacing inefficient lightbulbs or white goods. The intention of this is to provide sustainable support which results in immediate and potentially long-lasting savings for the household.

**Wider essentials:** The Fund can be used to support wider essential needs not linked to energy, water or food. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing including uniform, period and hygiene products, essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle, or paying for fuel.

**Housing Cost:** In exceptional cases of genuine emergency where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need, the Fund can be used to support housing costs. The focus of support should be on bills and support for housing costs should only be given where existing housing support schemes do not meet need. These cases should be discussed with the Housing team before any decision is made.

- Ongoing housing support for rent must be provided through the Housing cost element of Universal Credit (UC) and Housing Benefit (HB).
- Eligibility for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) must first be considered before housing support is offered.
- Applicants must first consider whether the claimant is at statutory risk of homelessness and therefore owed a duty of support through the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG).
- The Fund should not be used to provide housing support on an ongoing basis or to support unsustainable tenancies.
- The Fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support, though homeowners could still qualify for the other elements of the fund (such as help with energy, food etc).
- Where a homeowner is having difficulty with their mortgage payments, they should contact their lender as soon as possible to discuss their circumstances as lenders will have a set procedure to assist. Those who are in receipt of or treated as receiving a qualifying benefit could be entitled to Support for Mortgage Interest

- The Fund can exceptionally and in genuine emergency be used to provide support for historic rent arrears built up prior to an existing benefit claim for households already in receipt of UC and HB. This is because these arrears are excluded from the criteria for DHPs.

### **Breckland Council Allocation**

Breckland Council will be allocated £101,045 funding to provide direct financial support over 6 months, which will be distributed in 2 equal rounds. Remaining funds would be rolled over into the next round.

Based on our successful approach over the previous rounds, we will engage with qualifying residents via internal Council services (such as Welfare, Housing, Customer Contact Centre) and external partners working directly with residents.

Grant awards will be fixed, but Breckland Council reserves the right to use its discretion on payment amounts issued, based on individual circumstances, if the reason for the request meets the eligible spend criteria.

The Breckland allocation is limited and demand will be closely monitored. In the event demand exceeds the allocation early, Breckland Council reserve the right to review payment amounts.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- Maximum of one application per household in any **12-month** period
- Applications accepted from professional partners or Breckland Officers only
- Ward Members will refer residents to our Welfare Co-Ordinator, to assess eligibility and ensure wider needs are addressed
- Self-referrals are **not** accepted
- Awards are a fixed amount of £300
- Demand will be monitored, and payment amounts will be reviewed regularly
- The fund cannot be used for mortgage or debt payments
- The resident should have recourse to public funds. If a resident does not have recourse to public funds, their situation must be discussed first prior to an application being made

### **Application Process**

- Identify a resident in need of financial support and confirm eligibility
- With consent, submit a referral on their behalf, clearly outlining how the applicant meets the criteria
- If applicable, please state clearly if the applicant requires additional support from Breckland Council or its partners
- Applications are processed weekly, payments will be made by BACS, subject to approval.
- You should allow up to 10 working days for applications to be processed.
- Concerns regarding an application including but not limited to, its authenticity or duplication, will result in an unsuccessful claim or be deferred to a final decision by Breckland Council's Communities Manager
- Applicants and the referrer will be notified of the outcome of their application via E-mail

**If you are a professional from a local service, please complete the referral form using the link below:**

**[Partners: Apply for Household Support Fund Round 5](#)**

**If you are a Breckland Council Ward Member, please use the following link to submit a Welfare Referral:**

**[Members: Submit a Welfare Referral](#)**

## **Additional Support**

Information on all financial support available to residents can be found on the [Cost of Living](#) pages on our website. For further information on how we can help, please email [community@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:community@breckland.gov.uk)

## **Welfare Support Referral**

Covering the whole of Breckland, our Welfare Officer undertakes a holistic assessment of needs and offer information, guidance and signposting to organisations who are well placed to provide the support someone needs.

The type of referrals we can accept include:

- Low level financial issues
- Health concerns which are impacting well-being
- Loneliness and isolation
- Referrals into hardship funds
- Referrals into targeted support such as social prescribing, whose services have specific referral criteria

We are unable to provide emergency or high threshold support where police, ambulance, fire, GP or social care services are required.

We accept self-referrals or referrals from family, friends or a professional - but you must obtain the person's consent.

Referrals via our online form: [RMM - Public Form \(ecdesk.org\)](#)

## **Collaboration Meetings**

- A multi-agency partnership, working to address low level, emerging needs
- Professionals refer cases to gain support on a range of issues
- Support can be through advice, guidance, or practical support
- Website: <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/community/collaboration>
- To join the partnership, e-mail: [community@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:community@breckland.gov.uk)

## **Food Hubs**

Each of the Breckland based services provide healthy, nutritious food including fresh fruit and vegetables alongside a range of chilled and store cupboard basics and household items - all at a reduced price. They also provide support to community members to help address other challenges that they might be facing, such as debt management, skills and employment, or mental health and well-being; either delivered directly or through partnership with other services.

- The Burrell Shop, Thetford
- Dereham Food Cabin
- The Pantry Kenninghall
- Watton Food Hub

More information on our website: [Breckland Food Hubs - Breckland Council](#)

## **Additional Food Support**

- A Little More Kindness (Attleborough) - [A Little More Kindness – Attleborough Town Council \(attleboroughtc.org.uk\)](http://attleboroughtc.org.uk)
- Mid Norfolk Food Bank\*(Dereham & Swaffham) – <http://midnorfolk.foodbank.org.uk>
- Thetford Foodbank\* (Thetford, Watton & Attleborough) – <http://thetford.foodbank.org.uk>

\*Vouchers available from Breckland Council Contact Centre 01362 656870

## Income/ Benefit Maximisation & Debt Support

- Norfolk Citizens Advice - [Norfolk Citizens Advice \(ncab.org.uk\)](http://ncab.org.uk)
- Citizens Advice Diss, Thetford & District - [Citizens Advice Diss, Thetford & District - Citizens Advice Diss, Thetford & District \(cadat.org.uk\)](http://cadat.org.uk)
- Anglia Revenues Partnership - [Breckland Council Online Services \(angliarevenues.gov.uk\)](http://brecklandcouncilonline.org.uk)
  - Council Tax Reduction
  - Discretionary Housing Payment
  - Exceptional Hardship Payment
- CAP - [Home | CAP UK](#)