

City of York Council Household Support Fund 5 Scheme

29 April 24 – 30 September 24

1. York Household Support Fund 5 (HSF) is provided by City of York Council to support vulnerable households in most need of support to help with significantly rising living costs.
2. Grants will be provided through two routes

Route 1 – Direct payment to Council Tax account

3. People of working age who are receiving Council Tax Support, around 4500 households, will receive a credit to their council tax account. These payments are intended to help families with household bills.
4. The credit from the Household Support Fund will be no higher than £110 per household.
5. Eligible households will be identified by CYC Revenues & Benefits based on the customers Council Tax Support claim. Eligible credits will be applied direct to the customers Council Tax account. Customers will not need to apply for the credit.

Route 2 - Discretionary applications

6. The discretionary scheme for York residents, who are not eligible for the direct Council Tax credit, and need financial assistance to help with the rising living costs will open on 29 April 24.
7. Applications can be made at **www.york.gov.uk/householdsupportfund**
8. The Fund is intended to cover a wide range of low-income households in need, including
 - families with children of all ages,
 - pensioners,
 - unpaid carers,
 - care leavers
 - disabled people,

- larger families,
 - single-person households, and those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events.
9. Grants will be through a discretionary means tested application which will require applicants to prepare some financial information.
 10. York HSF can provide assistance with
 - Food
 - Energy bills – electricity, gas, oil
 - Water bills (including sewerage)
 - Other essential costs linked to energy or water
 11. Other wider essentials on a discretionary basis, these may include for example
 - a. support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, and essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle, or paying for fuel.
 - b. Some exceptional housing costs
 12. Approved awards for assistance with food, energy bills – electricity, gas, oil and Water bills (including sewerage) will be standard amounts based on household size.
 13. Applications can also be made for exceptional financial circumstances relating to other essentials which will be assessed on a discretionary basis. Any exceptional discretionary awards will be made on an individual basis as appropriate.

Who can apply?

14. The scheme is open to City of York residents who are over 16 years of age, who require urgent financial assistance over the period. This includes residents with No Recourse to Public Funds.
15. To be considered you must need financial assistance to help with significantly rising living costs and have inadequate savings to meet eligible costs in line with the scheme.
16. A person in need of additional support may include, but not restricted to:

- Anyone suffering severe financial hardship
- Someone age 24 or under with an Education, Health and Care plan
- Someone age 19 or under classed as not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- A person who has a physical or sensory impairment, learning disability or mental health problem¹.
- Elderly, frail or confused older people
- People who are seriously ill or have a severe long term health condition.
- People who are recently bereaved
- Pregnant women or those who have recently given birth
- Recently unemployed people
- Care leaver
- Those fleeing domestic abuse
- Those who have difficulty in understanding, speaking or reading English

Who cannot apply?

17. The following categories of people do not qualify for help:
 - a. People who do not live within the City of York Council boundaries
18. Assistance will be considered based on propensity to pay essential bills in line with the scheme eligibility criteria. We will use monthly expenses, liabilities and capital for your household to determine this.

¹ The Royal College of Psychiatrists and Money Advice Trust's Debt collection and mental health: ten steps to improve recovery provides useful guidance and further definition of what constitutes a mental health problem

How to apply

19. Route 1 - Eligible households will be identified by CYC Revenues & Benefits based on the customers Council Tax Support claim. Customers will not need to apply for the credit.
20. Route 2 – Residents can apply at www.york.gov.uk/housholdsupportfund
People who are not able to apply online can apply via phone on 01904 551556
Advice and support are available from advice services across the city, see www.york.gov.uk/benefitsadvice or City of York Council Benefits Advice on 01904 552044 (10.00am - 4.00pm, Monday to Friday) or email: incomeservices@york.gov.uk

What information I will need to provide

21. We will need to information about your circumstances and what assistance you are applying for.
22. We will need to ask for information and evidence to show applicants meet the criteria, such as
 - your household includes a child/ren
 - you are a person in need of additional support
 - Your household income, savings, and expenditure, including
 - Earnings
 - DWP benefits
 - Any other income
 - Readily available funds - cash in hand, in the bank or building society accounts.
23. We may ask for further information about your personal circumstances in depth to make sure you are seeking all available support.
24. When applying for assistance with
 - Energy bills – electricity, gas, oil
 - Water bills (including sewerage)
 - Other exceptional emergency costs

25. We will need to see evidence you are liable for these costs and the amounts owed and how your utilities are paid for e.g., Pre-payment meter, monthly direct debit, and quarterly.

How many times can I apply

26. There will be one application award payment per household. The funding is ring-fenced and covers the period from 29 April 2024 until the 30 September 2024.
27. Route 1 – Council Tax Credits to be made in June for period 01/04/23- 30/09/24
28. Route 2 - Discretionary payments will be made on an application basis through to 30 September 24.

How will awards be made

29. Route 1 – eligible households of working age who are receiving Council Tax Support, will receive a credit to their council tax account.
30. Route 2 - Discretionary awards will be assessed on the criteria set out. Applicants who are assessed as outside the criteria will be directed to alternative advice and support as appropriate.
31. Direct grant awards will be made via e-vouchers or payments will be made to the applicant's bank account.

Advice and support

32. Where grants cannot be awarded residents will be signposted to other advice and support. Including
 - other financial support such as Universal Credit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments, York Financial Assistance Scheme (YFAS)
 - Advice agencies for further information and advice, if there may be other support available or you are not seeking the support you need. For example, this could be getting you some advice and help on how to prepare an income and expenditure budget or by helping you to access more specialist support such as, for example, StepChange debt charity.

Reviews

33. The whole scheme (Direct payments & Discretionary awards) is discretionary meaning that there is no right of appeal. However, you do have the right to a review if you are unhappy with our decision. In this case the decision will be looked at again by someone who did not make the original decision.
34. Where the Council cannot help it will provide you with information about other agencies that may be able to help and where appropriate, make a referral on your behalf. If you remain unhappy you can use the Council's complaints process.
35. We will not review a claim if the funding is exhausted, or the scheme has closed (30 September 2024).