

North Yorkshire County Council
Defra Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies

Proposed allocations

1 Background to Grant

1.1 On 10 June the Government announced an emergency fund of £63 million to be distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. The funding is a one-off contribution for the 2020-21 financial year and is made under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

1.2 Purpose of the Grant

This additional £63 million of funding is intended to help local authorities to continue to support those struggling to afford food and other essentials over the coming months due to COVID-19.

1.3 Grant Allocation

The allocation for North Yorkshire County Council is **£531,942.67**.

1.4 Defra Guidance

The grant can be used:

- to meet immediate need and help those who are struggling to afford food and essentials due to COVID-19
- for existing schemes and other support which deliver the same outcomes and where the need is greatest
- to provide support and ensure the funding meets its objectives
- use cash or vouchers where practical for immediate needs
- offer advice and information to people to help them access longer term support they might need, such as benefits
- ensure criteria and system in place to help detect fraudulent claims
- check for duplication with other support schemes such as the Covid Summer Food Fund
- administration costs should be kept to a minimum.

1.5 Administration

The grant has been designed to make best use of existing schemes and other forms of support to help those in need. Given the flexibility around this funding, Defra expects the administrative cost burden to local authorities to be minimal.

1.6 Grant Period

Funds must be expended within the 2020-21 financial year, but it is expected that the majority will be used in accordance with the grant guidance within 12 weeks of receipt of the funds.

1.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

The government will collect information on spending from this fund in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) COVID-19 monthly financial survey that is sent to all local authorities. This will include details on how much was spent and on which interventions.

Defra will send a short online survey at the end of October 2020 requesting information about:

- type of support provided
- the criteria used to assess claims
- the percentage of the fund spent on administration
- the level of demand for support compared to before the lockdown
- the processes that maintained equality and reduced fraud.

2 Proposed allocation of grant

2.1 It is proposed that rather than establish new process for distribution, the grant is used for existing community support schemes put in place at the start of the outbreak for those people who were shielded or self-isolating but with a wider scope and increased focus on financial hardship.

2.2 Consultation has taken place with all 7 District Councils on the proposals and there is full support from all.

2.3 It is proposed that the grant is used for 2 themes:

- 1. Food Supply and Provision
- 2. Personal hardship and long term financial stability support

2.4 Allocation estimates:

Scheme	Provision	Amount £'000
1	Grants for foodbanks and community food projects	150
2	NYLAF - financial hardship grants for food and essentials	150
3	Grant to Citizens Advice (CANY) for benefits and financial stability advice & support	80
4	Grants to CSOs for support with food and essential items provision and longer term independence and re-integration	150
	Total	530

3. Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Scheme 1: Grants for FoodBanks and Community Food Projects

Open to voluntary and community sector food banks and other food supply schemes (e.g. community kitchens, fridges) for one off grants up to £10,000 for costs related to provision of food for those people experiencing financial hardship.

The grants will be administered by the Stronger Communities team using existing grant application processes and agreements

3.2 **Scheme 2: NYLAF - financial hardship grants for food and essentials**

- Open to individuals and families for the purchase of food and other essential items.
- Open to people in receipt of any means tested benefit
- Open to people with an income of less than £16,105 pa and savings of £1000 or less – flexibility will be applied if savings are tied up in business assets and not accessible

The existing NYLAF Covid-19 Support grant system and award levels – administered by the CSOs - will be used for the processing of all applications however it is likely that the vouchers will be issued directly to the beneficiaries rather than volunteers as was the case for those self-isolating.

3.3 **Scheme 3: Grant to Citizens Advice**

A grant will be awarded to Citizens Advice North Yorkshire (a consortia of CABs operating in the county) to:

- assist people in claiming their full entitlement of benefits
- enable them to have better control over their money
- access other sources of income available to them
- act as a referral, point to other services.

A proposal has been received from CANY detailing the proposal. (Appendix A).

The grants will be administered by the Stronger Communities team using existing grant application processes and agreements

- 3.4 The allocations have been made using experience of demand to date and the availability of other support in place. Expenditure against schemes 1-3 will be prioritised however if the demand is higher than anticipated there will be flexibility to allow for the budgetary provision to be adjusted to better meet demand. The balance will be made as an allocation to Scheme 4 below.

3.5 **Scheme 4: Grants to CSOs for support with food and essential items provision and longer term independence and re-integration**

Funding for community support organisations to coordinate the provision of food and essential supplies, allocate vouchers and support people to regain their independence. This will include support for people who are in vulnerable categories (e.g. homeless) with limited access to finance or food and essential items.

The grants will be administered by the Stronger Communities team using existing grant application processes and agreements

4 Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended that:

- a) the Defra Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies grant of £531,942.67 be allocated as detail in para 2.4.
- b) All grants are administered and authorised by the Head of Stronger Communities in accordance with the criteria outlined in paras 3.1 – 3.5.

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