



North Yorkshire Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) – Housing Payments Policy 2026 - 2027

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Policy Statement

1. North Yorkshire Council's objective is to treat every application for a Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) Housing Payment on its individual merits.
2. The Council will operate the CRF Housing Payments scheme in a fair, consistent and transparent manner. The Council recognises that the scheme is discretionary in nature and that there is no automatic entitlement to an award. Each application will be determined having regard to the individual circumstances of the applicant, the available evidence, and the requirements of this policy.
3. The Council will seek to ensure that available funding is directed towards those residents who are most in need of assistance in meeting their housing costs and who are at risk of experiencing financial hardship or housing instability.

Introduction

4. The Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) has been introduced by Government with effect from 1 April 2026 and replaces the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) scheme.
5. Each Local Authority is responsible for the administration of the CRF within its area. The purpose of the CRF is to provide discretionary financial assistance to households experiencing financial hardship, with a particular emphasis on preventing homelessness, supporting the maintenance of existing accommodation, and assisting households to achieve sustainable housing outcomes.
6. CRF Housing Payments may be awarded where the Council determines that an applicant requires further financial assistance towards their housing costs or associated housing needs. This may include circumstances where there is a shortfall between Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element) and the applicant's rent liability, as well as circumstances in which one-off financial support is required to secure or maintain accommodation.
7. In addition, the CRF allows for a broader range of support than was previously available under the DHP scheme, including assistance aimed at preventing homelessness, supporting households in crisis, and enabling residents to move to more suitable accommodation.
8. The Council recognises that the effective operation of the CRF contributes to its wider objectives in relation to housing, homelessness prevention, and the support of vulnerable residents. However, CRF Housing Payments are not intended to provide long-term financial support and should not be regarded as a substitute for statutory benefit provision.

General Principles and Regulations

9. The Council will administer the CRF Housing Payments scheme having regard to Government guidance relating to the Crisis and Resilience Fund, together with relevant legislative frameworks associated with Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

10. Although the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 were originally established in relation to the DHP scheme, the Council will have regard to the principles underpinning those regulations when administering the CRF, insofar as they remain relevant.
11. The Council acknowledges that the CRF is funded by Government and is therefore subject to financial limitations. The total amount that may be awarded in any financial year is restricted to the funding allocation provided to the Council.
12. In administering the scheme, the Council will ensure that decisions are made consistently and equitably, and that proper regard is given to the individual circumstances of each applicant. The Council will also seek to ensure that the scheme is operated in a manner that is transparent and capable of being clearly understood by applicants and stakeholders.

Purpose of this Policy

13. The purpose of this policy is to specify how North Yorkshire Council will operate the CRF Housing Payments scheme and to identify the factors that will be taken into account when determining whether an award should be made.
14. This policy is intended to provide a clear framework for decision-making, whilst retaining sufficient flexibility to ensure that each case can be considered on its own merits.
15. All applications will be treated equally and fairly, and the Council will ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged as a result of discrimination or inconsistent decision-making.
16. The Council is committed to working in partnership with internal departments, registered providers, and external support agencies in order to maximise the effectiveness of the scheme and to ensure that financial assistance is complemented by appropriate support where required.

Statement of objectives

17. In administering the CRF Housing Payments scheme, the Council will seek to achieve a range of objectives which reflect both local priorities and Government expectations. The Council will give consideration to the guidance produced by the Department for Work and Pensions. The Council will treat all applications on their individual merits and will seek through the operation of this policy to:
 - (a) Alleviate poverty;
 - (b) Support vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life;
 - (c) Help and encourage residents to sustain and maintain housing;
 - (d) Prevent and reduce homelessness;
 - (e) Keep families together;
 - (f) Support the vulnerable in the local community to maintain their health and wellbeing;
 - (g) Support disabled people living in significantly adapted accommodation – including any adaptations made for disabled children; and foster carers, whose housing benefit is reduced because of a bedroom being used by, or kept free for, foster children;
 - (h) Help claimants through personal crisis and difficult events;

- (i) Assist persons within the area who qualify for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Element to move or obtain premises more suitable to their requirements; and
- (j) Support people affected by welfare reform changes; and
- (k) Help households move to more appropriately sized and affordable accommodation.

The Council considers that the CRF Housing Payments should be seen as temporary financial assistance. It is not and should not be considered as a way around any current or future entitlement restrictions set out within the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Legislation.

Main Features of the CRF Housing Payments scheme

- 18. The CRF Housing Payments scheme is discretionary in nature and there is no automatic entitlement to an award. An applicant may receive assistance where the Council is satisfied that the criteria set out in this policy have been met and that there is a need for financial support.
- 19. The scheme is cash-limited, and the Council must ensure that expenditure remains within the funding allocation provided by Government. As such, the Council will have regard to the level of funding remaining when determining applications.
- 20. CRF Housing Payments are not payments of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. However, in many cases, applicants will be in receipt of one of these benefits and will require additional assistance to meet their housing costs.
- 21. The scheme allows for flexibility in the types of support that may be provided, including both ongoing assistance with rent shortfalls and one-off payments to address specific housing needs.

Amounts that cannot be covered by a CRF Housing Payment award

- 22. The elements of a claimant's rental liability or shortfall in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element) that cannot be met by a CRF Housing Payments are:
 - Ineligible charges: service charges that are not eligible for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element) cannot be covered by a CRF Housing Payment;
 - Sanctions and reductions in benefit;
 - Suspended payments of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit;
 - Shortfalls caused by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit overpayment recovery;
 - Universal Credit reclaims of payments on account; or
 - Any amount of Council Tax Reduction.

What is a housing cost shortfall

- 23. A shortfall between the rental liability and payment of Housing Benefit or payment of Universal Credit (Housing Element) can occur due to:
 - The rent determined by the Rent Officer or the Local Housing Allowance being lower than the claimant's eligible rental liability;

- A social sector occupation charge being applied due to the size of the claimant's household;
- A reduction in Local Housing Allowance rates for under 35 year olds;
- The excess income taper being applied within Housing Benefit;
- The excess income taper being applied within Universal Credit
- A non-dependant deduction being made;
- The Benefit Cap has been applied;
- The limitation of dependant's additions being applied (working age); or
- Where the claimant can demonstrate that they are unable to meet the housing costs from their available income.

How to Claim a CRF Housing Payment

24. A claim for a CRF Housing Payment must be made via the Council's website or a claim form provided by the Council where this is available. Verification of information will be undertaken and evidence may need to be provided in relation to the claimant's income and expenditure.

Commencement of a Housing Payment Award

25. The start date of an award is determined by the Council and can be either:
- The Monday following the date that the claim for a CRF Housing Payment is received by the Council;
 - The date on which entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element) commenced; or
 - The date on which the need arose.

Backdating

26. When deciding whether to backdate a Housing Payment, each application will be considered on its own merits.
27. The Council will normally only consider a Housing Payment where the linked Housing Benefit or relevant award of Universal Credit (Housing Element) is payable. This is of particular relevance to requests for a period of backdated Housing Payment, since backdating cannot cover arrears accrued while not in receipt of these benefits.

Period of a CRF Housing Payment Award

28. In all cases, the Council will decide the length of time for which a Housing Payment will be awarded on the basis of the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the claim.
- The minimum period for which the Council will award a CRF Housing Payment is one week;
 - The Council will usually award a Housing Payment for not less than 3 months or 13 weeks where it is to meet a shortfall;
 - The Council will not normally award a Housing Payment for a period exceeding 12 months;

- Where a claimant is disabled, living in specially adapted accommodation the Council recognises that it may be appropriate to make long-term Housing Payment awards, exceeding 12 months; and
- The Council is mindful that it may be appropriate to make longer term Housing Payment awards in exceptional circumstances.

Awarding a Housing Payment

29. In deciding whether to award a CRF Housing Payment, the Council will consider the following:
- The shortfall between Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element) and the eligible rent liability;
 - Any steps taken by the claimant to reduce their rental liability;
 - The financial and medical circumstances (including ill health and disabilities) of the claimant, their partner, any dependants, and any other occupants of the claimant's home;
 - The income and the *essential* expenditure of the claimant, their partner, any dependants, or any other occupants of the claimant's home;
 - Any savings or capital that might be held by the claimant and/or partner;
 - The level of indebtedness of the claimant and/or partner;
 - The nature of the claimant's and/or partner's circumstances;
 - The amount already allocated and committed up to the cash limit set by the Secretary of State at the time of the application;
 - Any other special circumstances brought to the attention of the Council.
 - Any steps already taken by the claimant to improve their financial situation; and
 - Any previous CRF Housing Payment awards that may have been made.
30. The Council will decide how much to award based on the individual circumstances. This may be an amount below the difference between the rent liability and the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (Housing Element).
31. An award of a Housing Payment does not guarantee that a further award will be made at a later date even if the claimant's circumstances have not changed.

Change in Circumstances

32. The claimant has a duty to notify the Council of any change in their circumstances. They must report the change as soon as possible and not later than one month from the change occurring.
33. The Council may revise a Housing Payment award to take account of a change in circumstances at any time whether to the advantage or disadvantage of the claimant.

Payment of CRF Housing Payments

34. The Council will decide the most appropriate person to receive a CRF Housing Payment based upon the circumstances of each case. This could include paying:
- The claimant;
 - Their partner (if resident in the household);
 - An appointee;
 - Their landlord (or an agent of the landlord); or
 - Any third party to whom it might be most appropriate to make payment.
35. The Council will pay an award of CRF Housing Payment by the most appropriate means available in each case. This could include payment by but is not restricted to:
- Direct to bank; or
 - Crediting the claimant's rent account.
36. Where the award is made on an on-going basis, the payment frequency will normally be aligned to the Housing Benefit or the Universal Credit payment cycle.

Notification of the CRF Housing Payment award

37. The Council will normally inform the claimant in writing of the outcome of their application within 28 days of receipt of all information. Where the application is unsuccessful, the Council will provide reasons why this decision was made and explain the right of review.
38. Where the application is successful, the Council will notify the claimant of the amount to be awarded and how payment will be made.

The Right to seek a review

39. CRF Housing Payment decisions are not Housing Benefit or Universal Credit decisions and are therefore *not* subject to the statutory dispute mechanism. However, all Councils are expected to set up an appropriate review process.
40. The Council will operate the following policy for dealing with requests to review a refusal of an award, the decision to award a reduced amount, the decision not to backdate or a decision that there has been an overpayment of a CRF Housing Payment:
- (a) A claimant (or their appointee or agent) who disagrees with the decision may dispute the decision. A dispute must be made in writing to the Council within one calendar month of the written Housing Payment decision being issued;
 - (b) Upon receipt of a dispute, the CRF Housing Payment award decision will be re-considered by an officer who was not involved in the first decision and notify the claimant of the outcome in writing;
 - (c) As part of the dispute process the Council may feel it appropriate to offer the claimant an explanation of the decision by telephone, at interview, or in writing, in order to seek to resolve the matter. Where agreement cannot be reached a re-consideration will be carried out;

- (d) This review will be carried out by the Council and the decision will be final with no other right of appeal;
- (e) Where the claimant is still aggrieved, the decision may only be challenged via the judicial review process or by complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

CRF Housing Payment overpayment recovery

- 41. The Council will seek to recover any CRF Housing Payments found to be overpaid.
- 42. Recovery will usually involve issuing an invoice to the claimant or the person to whom the award was paid.
- 43. Under no circumstances will recovery be made from any amounts of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit due to the claimant (except if the claimant requests this method of recovery specifically in writing).

Publicity

- 44. The Council will publicise the scheme and will work with all interested parties to achieve this. A copy of this policy will be made available for inspection and will be posted on the Council's website.

Fraud

- 45. The Council is committed to identifying and subsequently investigating suspected fraudulent claims to Housing Benefit and CRF Housing Payments. Individuals who falsely declare their circumstances in order to claim a CRF Housing Payment will have committed a criminal offence, which may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated under the Fraud Act 2006.

Reporting

- 46. The Council will maintain records of applications received, decisions made, and expenditure incurred under the scheme.
- 47. The Council will report this information to Government as required and will monitor the outcomes of awards to ensure that the scheme is achieving its objectives.

Policy Review and delegation

- 48. This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if appropriate, to take account of operational adjustments and /or changes to legislation. The Council is keen to ensure that all decisions are made in a consistent manner and procedures will be developed accordingly to ensure that all applications are treated in a fair and appropriate manner directly in line with this policy.
- 49. The Council's S151 Officer has delegated powers to amend the policy in order to ensure compliance with the Department for Work and Pensions and Council requirements. In turn,

the Assistant Director, Customer and Revenues and Benefits is responsible for the implementation of the policy.

50. Delegated authority has been granted to the Council's Head of Benefits and Welfare who will be responsible for the day to day administration of CRF Housing Payment awards and will ensure that staff operate the policy in a fair and consistent manner across the whole of the North Yorkshire area.