

NEWS RELEASE



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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GET UP TO £140 TO HELP WITH ESSENTIAL COSTS

Residents struggling with the higher cost of living in Wokingham Borough can get up to £140 to help them this summer.

The latest round of the Household Support Fund is open to support residents with food, bills and other essentials. The fund is paid for by the Government. Wokingham Borough has been given £525,000 to help residents until 30 September.

Wokingham Borough Council and its [Hardship Alliance](#) partners are urging residents who have not been given support before to come forward to get it. The fund started in 2021 and this is the fourth extension of support to residents. The amount for individual grants has decreased for the summer months because energy costs are expected to be lower, meaning more residents can get help.

Amy Garstang, manager at Wokingham United Charities and chair of the Hardship Alliance, said: “Even with winter being over we know residents will be feeling the long-term impacts of higher costs. All partners involved in getting money to residents would like to see new applicants come forward for help. You’ll not only get access to funding but a wider range of options beyond the initial payments.”

The parents of children who receive means-tested free school meals in term time can [apply for a grant of £20 per week](#) for each eligible child during the school holidays via First Days Children’s Charity.

Residents who received vouchers to cover the cost of meals in the school holidays from First Days since April 2023, do not need to apply again. Those residents will automatically receive support. Residents who are struggling to pay for essentials can apply for a one-off grant of £70 or £140, depending on their situation.

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The higher payment is available for households that are struggling to pay for essentials and also have four or more people and/or have at least one member who is a pensioner, disabled, or a carer of a disabled adult or child.

Support is available to households who feel they are struggling with rising costs of living as well as people in receipt of benefits.

If you're under age 50:

- Call Citizens Advice Wokingham on [0808 278 7958](tel:08082787958)
- [Apply on Citizens Advice](#) Wokingham website

If you're aged 50 or older:

- Call Age UK Berkshire on [\(0118\) 959 4242](tel:01189594242)
- [Email Age UK Berkshire](#)

Cllr Rachel Bishop-Firth, executive member for resident services, inclusion and fighting poverty, said: “The impacts of the higher cost of living cannot be underestimated. The compounding factors may only really be hitting home for residents now.

“Come forward for help through our partners if you are struggling. Their teams will be able to get you money in the short term, as well as look at other options to leave residents in a better position in the long-term.”

[The Hardship Alliance lobbied Government](#) to continue the fund earlier this year, which was confirmed during the Government’s budget in March.

All the latest cost of living help and advice for the borough can be found on the [cost of living help hub](#). The Government has made £421 million funding has been available to help the most vulnerable across England through the Household Support Fund.

- ENDS -

Further information:

1. For more, email CEM@wokingham.gov.uk