



North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund
Update Bulletin for Agencies
February 2020



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Changes to the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund

The Fund has had to continually adapt since it started in April 2013. Changes to funding, more demand, increased spend, technological advances, changes in administrator, updates to process and so on, have all necessitated change in order to keep the Fund relevant and sustainable for the partners who work with the County Council, and most importantly, for the applicants who seek support.

A consistently high period of demand for the Fund since April 2019, difficulties as to where to refer applicants, and people who are eligible for support but not currently working with an Authorised Agent; have created a number of issues for the Fund and all those involved in helping to deliver the service. Therefore, to help address some of the challenges, we will be implementing some changes to the Fund from 2 March 2020 as outlined below.

1. Vulnerability Thresholds

The vulnerability thresholds have been updated to reflect changes that have occurred since they were last updated, and also to place greater emphasis on the need for a vulnerability to be assessed by Authorised Agents. These updated thresholds can be found on the County Council's NYLAF webpage <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/local-assistance-fund>.

2. Change to the Eligibility Criteria

An applicant must be working with an Authorised Agent to be considered eligible for additional support from the Fund. An applicant not in receipt of support from an Authorised Agent is only be eligible for first time emergency support, which can be done through calling Family Fund Business Services.

This embeds a key principle of the Fund: that applicants should be working with Authorised Agents to receive longer term and more holistic support for their situation, of which an application to the NYLAF can be considered one element of that wider support.

3. Working with Clients

Authorised Agents should only submit applications on behalf of those individuals and families receiving support from their service. While many Authorised Agents already operate this way, this will now become the default position for the Fund. As a result, it will standardise practice across all Authorised Agents. In combination with the publication of Authorised Agents below, this will remove or significantly decrease the number of inappropriate referrals.

4. Publishing the List of Authorised Agents

A high level list of Authored Agents will be published on the Council's NYLAF webpage. This will provide greater transparency for both partners and applicants. In addition, applicants will be able to see if they are currently working with an Authorised Agent to help determine whether they are eligible for an application from the Fund, as explained in '2' above.

The information will be framed in such a way to make it explicitly clear that Authorised Agents will only apply on behalf of those individuals and families who are working with the Agent as part of a wider package of support, and will not accept people who simply present at an Agency seeking an application.

Update on Workshop Proposal

Those of you who attended the NYLAF Stakeholder Workshop in November 2019 will remember that three possible changes to the Fund, to help control significant overspend, were proposed and discussed at the Workshop. There was greatest support from among those present for the proposal to change standard award provision from two awards in any rolling 12-month period, to a lifetime award, which would also permit Authorised Agents to be able to support further applications if there were exceptional circumstances.

Following the Workshop this proposal was developed in more detail and a formal report will be presented to the Council's Executive in the coming weeks. We expect that a final decision, and any required implementation of the change will take place in April 2020 but we will inform all partners at the time if this is the case.

Family Fund Business Services Contact Number

Please can you ensure that if you need to contact Family Fund Business Services, or if you give out the number to applicants, that the correct contact information is provided. Family Fund, the main parent charity, have received a number of NYLAF calls which they are not able to deal with, which prevents them from answering calls from other customers and beneficiaries.

The following contact details should be used:

T: 01904 550030

E: nylaf@familyfundsolutions.co.uk

Enquiries: nylaf@northyorks.gov.uk

Public information: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/local-assistance-fund>

Partner updates: www.nypartnerships.org.uk/nylaf