



North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund Update Bulletin for Agencies August 2020



Contents

Change to Emergency Award Entitlement.....	1
Covid-19 Update	1
Stakeholder Workshop 2020 Postponed	2
Proposed Changes to the Fund.....	2

Change to Emergency Award Entitlement

On 10 June, the Government announced a one-off emergency fund 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 Council are using part of its allocation to temporarily increase award entitlement for emergency provision from the Local Assistance Fund. From 7 September eligible applicants will now be able to apply for up to three awards of emergency food and/or utility vouchers.

Please note that awards within the previous 12 months are still taken into account. A household that has already received two awards of food and/or utility within the last 12 months (at the time of applying), would then only be eligible for one further application from 7 September.

For applicants, the process remains the same, if they are already working with an Authorised Agent, then the Authorised Agent can apply on their behalf via the online form. For applicants not yet working with an Authorised Agent they will be able to ring Family Fund Business Services to complete two applications (up from one) over the phone; the third application must be done through an Authorised Agent.

This change to emergency provision will be reviewed on 1 December and any further changes, including when emergency awards will revert back to two awards, will be communicated in good time to Agents.

Covid-19 Update

An update was circulated to Agents in March concerning changes to the Fund as a result of Covid-19, such as the pause on clothing awards and the fitting of white goods. Those changes are no longer in effect and the Fund is operating as normal.

Applicants can be reassured that suppliers undertaking deliveries or installations will be adhering to social distancing and other Covid-19 safety measures.

Stakeholder Workshop 2020 Postponed

It will come as no surprise, in light of the changes to daily life in recent months, that the annual Stakeholder Workshop will not be going ahead this year. It is disappointing, as we value the feedback and discussion with partners that the event offers, however, due to space restrictions and building work at County Hall we are unable to host the event and adhere to social distancing and other safety measures.

We will continue to communicate with partners, and we always welcome any comments or feedback you might have, and we hope to see you at the Workshop next year.

Proposed Changes to the Fund

At the Workshop in 2019 and the subsequent update to partners, we set out some proposals to change the Fund in response to demand and spend rising to unsustainable levels. Of the options discussed at the Workshop, restricting non-emergency awards to a lifetime award was taken forward to be worked up as a formal paper for the Council's Executive.

This report was due to go the Council's Executive in April, however, due to Covid-19 this was postponed and a new date will be arranged in the future. We will continue to provide updates on this as it progresses.

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

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