



North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund

Update Bulletin for Agencies

March 2020 (Coronavirus)



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Family Fund Business Services

While Coronavirus has had significant temporary implications on the way we work and live our lives, the team at Family Fund Business Services have all the necessary equipment and software to undertake their work from home and as such all applications will continue to be processed as normal.

We would advise at this time that you only ring the helpdesk if your query is urgent and is not related to issues pertaining to the Coronavirus outbreak. For enquiries that do not require an immediate response, you can email this to: NYLAF@familyfundservices.co.uk.

AO White Goods Update

Please find below a service update regarding AO, the NYLAF's white good supplier:

AO will no longer be able to deliver to a room of choice in the home and will now only be delivering to inside the front door of homes for certain items. In addition, AO will only be providing installation services that require safety-critical expertise so that all form of social contact is limited. This is both for beneficiary & family safety and that of the AO workforce.

As a result, AO **will continue to offer** the following installation services:

- Recycling
- American Fridge Freezers
- All cooking (free standing/built-in, electric & gas)
- Built-in microwaves

However, from Wednesday 25th March 2020, AO will **temporarily suspend** the following services to minimise time spent in beneficiary homes:

- Unpack and inspect
- Dry connect / Plug in (this includes fridges/freezers/fridge-freezers)
- Installation of Free standing washing machines
- Installation of Dishwashers
- Installation of microwaves
- Installation of all built-in Washing machines/dishwashers/cooling
- Installation of all LPG appliances

If orders awaiting delivery have any of the affected services that will be no longer carried out, these will be removed from the order and we will contact the end users individually to advise.

AO is continuing to follow Government and NHS advice, and have updated advice for drivers and engineers when interacting with customers. AO will call all beneficiaries & families before a delivery to make sure that the planned delivery can go ahead. If they or a member of their household have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 and are self-isolating, AO will look to push out the delivery to a later date.

Upon arrival at the property, the AO driver will:

- Knock on their door and wait at least two metres away from the door.
- If they are not self-isolating, the beneficiary will be requested to wait in another room while delivery to inside their main entrance takes place and while any of the essential services listed above are completed.
- The AO driver will ask to wash his/her hands when arriving and leaving their home.
- There will be no delivery paperwork to sign during this period.

We will review the situation with AO on a daily basis, and ensure we can return to usual service as soon as Government advice allows.

Utility (Gas/Electric) Support

All major energy providers are implementing measures to support their most vulnerable customers who are self-isolating, and unable to top-up their meters or struggling to pay their energy bills.

This can include sending pre-loaded cards in the post, lowering the cost per unit of energy consumed, delaying payments, as well as other measures. We would encourage all applicants to contact their energy providers in the first instance to find out what support they can receive.

If an applicant is unable to receive support from their energy provider and they need to top-up their meter but are unable to leave the home; an award can be sent to a family friend or relative if they would like a trusted individual to top up their card for them. The details of this individual need to be stated clearly in the application form. They will need to make arrangements with the individual to pick-up and drop-off the card.

If the applicant does not have a trusted individual who can do that for them (they are also self-isolating for example), then they may be able to arrange for a volunteer at a local community support organisation to do this for them, further details below.

Food Vouchers

Like with utility top-up above, food vouchers can be sent to a family friend or relative if they would like a trusted individual to do their shopping for them. Again the details of this individual needs to be stated clearly on the application form. If the applicant does not have a trusted individual who can do that for them, then they may be able to arrange for a volunteer at a local community support organisation to do this for them.

Local Community Support Organisations

North Yorkshire County Council is setting up a network of voluntary organisations and charities across the county, who are coordinating volunteers to help those vulnerable individuals and families who are self-isolating and have no support network around them with their food and essential item shopping.

Further details about this support can be found online here:

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-community-support>

Clothing

With a number of stores now closing and increased restrictions on travel, Park have now suspended their Love2Shop clothing voucher which required in store fulfilment and use.

The Funds alternative supplier – SVM – can provide digital vouchers for a number of outlets. Please note that retailer's online stores may be affected by warehouse closures and other issues related to the measures and restrictions that have been put in place.

We recommend that you **do not apply** for clothing vouchers for applicants unless it is absolutely essential.

Enquiries: nylaf@northyorks.gov.uk

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

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