



North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund Update Bulletin for Agencies February 2019



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Procurement Update – Change in Administrator

In January the Council concluded a long and rigorous procurement process to appoint a provider to administer the Local Assistance Fund from 1st April 2019, once the current contract comes to an end. **The contract has been awarded to Family Fund Business Services**, the trading subsidiary of the charity Family Fund.

While the quality of all the bids received was high, the evaluation panel, who assessed all the tender responses, were particularly impressed with Family Fund Business Services' experience delivering similar funds throughout the country, their passion for the opportunity and helping others, and the attention to detail that had been provided in their responses.

You can find out more about Family Fund Business Services here:

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/fft>

Handover and the deadline for applications

To facilitate a smooth handover between providers and to minimise disruption for applicants and Authorised Agents it will be necessary to have a short window where applications will not be processed until the handover is complete.

For applications to be processed by Connect Assist they must be received by the following times:

- Standard applications (clothing, household items, white goods) – **5pm, Monday 25th March**
- Emergency applications (food, utility) – **1pm, Friday 29th March**

Applications received outside of this time will be processed by Family Fund Business Services from 1st April.

New application route

From 1st April applicants applying for the first time for food and/or utility in any 12 month period will be able to ring the administrator directly to process this award using the phone number below.

Currently applicants can ring the Council's Customer Service Centre who will pass them through to the administrator to process the application if they are eligible. This change in process does not affect Authorised Agents who are still able to apply on behalf of applicants for the first award of food and/or utility.

Information on the website and in leaflets will be updated to reflect this change and we hope that this will result in a quicker and more effective service for applicants.

New contact information

From the 1st April the existing contact information for Connect Assist will no longer be live, and will play holding information directing applicants and partners to the new information for Family Fund Business Services. You can find this information below:

Phone: 01904 550030

Email: NYLAF@familyfundsolutions.co.uk

Please note that you should only use these contact details from 1st April.

Online application form

Family Fund Business Services are in discussion with Connect Assist and the third party developer about transferring the existing online application forms to Family Fund Business Services. This will ensure continuity over the transition and means that a new application form, online accounts, and usernames and passwords will not be needed. In the event that Family Fund Business Services are unable to do this we will update Authorised Agents in advance of any change.

Further Updates

We will continue to provide updates if there are any changes or further developments, but there will be no change to the existing arrangements until 1 April, as Connect Assist continue to administer the service until 31 March.

Fraud Prevention Event – 11th March

For the first time, the North Yorkshire Local Assistance Fund will be hosting a Fraud Awareness and Prevention Event on **Monday 11th March, Grand Committee Room, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AD, 1-2pm**. The session will be led by Jane Overhill, Senior Fraud Investigation Officer at Veritau Limited.

The session will focus on fraud in the context of the Local Assistance Fund, but there will also be some general information and tips around fraud awareness and prevention. The presentation will be followed by questions and answers.

The session will cover:

- What is fraud, and what are some of the tell-tale signs.
- What you should do if you suspect fraud.
- What can be done about those people abusing their right to support.

- Who are Veritau and what do they do with a case.
- What are some things that can be done to minimise the opportunity for fraud.

If you, or a member of your service/team would like to attend please email nylaf@northyorks.gov.uk to confirm attendance.

Food Parcel Trial

From 1st April we will be looking to trial Asda food baskets as an alternative to vouchers for a time limited period through a small number of pilot Authorised Agents. We are seeking interest from Authorised Agents with good coverage across rural and urban areas in North Yorkshire.

During the trial period those Authorised Agents selected will be able to apply for vouchers as usual, but will also have the option to apply for Asda food baskets instead. We ask that those Authorised Agents involved in the trial provide some feedback to the Fund about the baskets.

If you would like to be involved then please contact: nylaf@northyorks.gov.uk.

Enquiries: nylaf@northyorks.gov.uk

Public information: www.northyorks.gov.uk/nylaf

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