

Support for Families

We are writing to provide an update for schools about changes to Government support for residents who need financial support.

As previously shared, the Household Support Fund will end on 31 March 2026 and will be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund from 1 April 2026.

Families receiving Free School Meals

Families receiving Free School Meals, who previously got automatic payments during the school holidays (as part of the Household Support Fund), will now need to apply to the Crisis and Resilience fund if they need help during a financial crisis.

We understand that the holidays can be difficult for families on low income, so applications will open early, on Wednesday, 18 March 2026, for these families.

[School Holiday Support Payment | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

While we will do our best to process applications as quickly as possible, if there is a high volume of applications, the Council cannot guarantee that approved funding will be paid by 2 April 2026. To help us prioritise your request, please submit your application **by 25 March 2026**. You can still apply after this date, but it may be less likely that your payment will be made by 2 April 2026.

If you're not in receipt of Free Schools Meals but need help with a sudden financial crisis, you can apply for the Crisis and Resilience Fund from 1 April. More information about the Crisis and Resilience Fund, and how to apply from 1 April 2026, can be found here:

[Crisis and Resilience Fund | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Get support now

If families require support now, they can also visit the Council's cost of living support webpages which bring together information about financial help, advice services, and emergency assistance:

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/benefits-and-welfare-help/cost-of-living>

There is also support available through the Holiday Activities and Food Fund (HAF): [Cheshire West Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

And on Live Well Cheshire West where residents can search for a range of services including food provision, activities, and more: [Home | Live Well Cheshire West](#)

Cheshire West School Relationship Team