

Westmorland and Furness Household Support Fund – crisis support for households in need: How to refer in vulnerable clients

Westmorland and Furness Council has set aside £1m (of a £3.5m government fund) to **help people struggling to afford energy, food, water bills and other essentials**. The application-based fund will be available until 31 March 2024 and comprises **an online application or a telephone-based service** which will provide **vouchers** that can be redeemed at post offices **to pay for household essentials including utilities, food, and other essentials**.

You can refer clients to this service or residents can apply themselves (see details below).
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We are encouraging referrals by our partners (including registered charities, DWP Job Centres as well as internal services within the Council (e.g., Adult Social Care and Children’s services, Housing, Customer services, Community development officers).

The Fund is intended to support a wide range of **low income households in need** including **families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people** (disabled people in particular may be facing acute challenges due to the disproportionate impact).

The Fund will support low-income households with essential costs related to **energy, food, water, and essential wider costs**. A sustainable contribution towards energy costs is particularly encouraged for example, the insulation of hot water tanks, fitting draft excluders to a door, or replacing inefficient lightbulbs or white goods.

The Fund can support **housing costs** where existing housing support schemes do not meet this need.

Eligibility:

Households facing an emergency Welfare need, crisis or severe hardship will be eligible for support, advice and guidance with the option of being signposted or referred to a service that will best meet their needs. People may also get practical help through food banks, recycled furniture, and white goods.

People may be eligible for support if they are:

- A person or family residing in Westmorland and Furness
- 16 and over
- Have low income or no access to funding
- Facing crisis or severe hardship

Groups most likely to be considered for financial assistance are those with:

- Children under the age of 16
- Long term health issues / Disability or are
- Elderly

Financial assistance will be made to meet the immediate crisis/ hardship, allowing the person time to link with other agencies.

Please refer vulnerable clients to this fund if they are struggling to cover household expenses.

Contact:

- For more information on the support and advice available to help with the cost of living, please visit [Cost of Living Support - financial support | Westmorland and Furness Council](#).

To **submit a referral application**, you can:

- [Apply online](#) - This is the quickest way to support your clients to apply. Your application will be assessed and prioritised by the Welfare Team.
- Call the Welfare Team on **0300 373 3300**. We are prioritising calls from high-risk groups.