**Household Support Fund**

Applications are now open until 31/03/2022

**Help for Preston residents in need, at a time of crisis over the Winter period.**

The Household Support Fund is to assist residents of the Preston area who do not have enough resources to meet their immediate short-term needs and require assistance with essential items over the winter period. This grant can be used to help towards the cost of food, energy/water needs, essentials linked to energy/water needs and wider essentials such as household bills ,clothing, and white goods.

 It is not intended to cover debt advice or general financial hardship support which is not linked to food, warmth and/or hygiene. The fund  is NOT intended to cover housing costs as there are other benefits and support available to help with these for example Discretionary Housing Payments.

Awards will be made where there is no alternative means of meeting the need.

**Eligibility**

To be eligible for the scheme you must be:

* A resident of the Preston area - please visit [GOV.UK - to find your local council](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council)
* Experiencing financial hardship and not have enough resources to meet your immediate short-term needs

**Support available**

The scheme can help with short-term living costs such as food, gas, electric, water, essential household appliances, council tax arrears, household bills and clothing (this is not an exhaustive list)

If white goods such as washing machines or fridges are required, items will be purchased through the scheme and delivery will be arranged directly to your home.

The scheme will also signpost you to other sources of advice and support to ensure that you get all the assistance you are entitled to. You may be offered a referral for advice and assistance with finance, debt and/or welfare benefits, to help address your long-term needs.

**Restrictions**

The scheme does not cover:

* Any requests for items that are not essential for example debts incurred by gambling or loans/credit cards, overdrafts, HP etc
* Applications from those with sufficient income or savings
* Requests for household items where these are the responsibility of the landlord
* Rent arrears and/or deposits unless meeting exceptional need

**How long will it take for a decision to be made?**

**Customer notice**

We aim to make a decision within 72 hours of receiving all the required information, other than for household goods, where we aim to decide within five working days. Depending on the level of demand for the scheme, this may not always be possible.

To speed up the application process please ensure you fully complete the application form and **provide all the evidence we ask for**.

Please do not chase up your application until at least five working days after it was submitted.

**How to apply**

To apply please complete the Household Support Fund form on line

**Please ensure you upload a recent full months bank statement (dated within the last 2 months) showing transactions, your balance and your name and address. Otherwise we will not be able to consider your application. We will accept screenshots of your bank statement.**

You can also telephone our Community Hub (Preston Together) on 01772 906777 for assistance.

We will need the following information:

* Where you live
* Full household details
* Your circumstances
* Your income
* Your most recent Bank Statement showing one months transactions and showing your name and address – dated within the last 2 months
* What support you need and an in depth explanation as to why the support is required.

**Submitting evidence**

We will contact you if further information is required. Please make a note of your application reference number, as we will ask for this when you are submitting any evidence.

Your evidence can be submitted in the following ways:

* By uploading your documents.
* By email to household@preston.gov.uk

**Please ensure your name, address and reference number is provided along with any evidence documents.**

**Can I appeal a decision if my application is unsuccessful?**

As this is a discretionary scheme there is no right of appeal. However, if you think we have overlooked important information then you can ask for us to look at the application again by emailing household@preston.gov.uk  providing reasons along with your name, address and reference number.

This decision will be final.

**Your privacy**

The information that you provide will be processed in accordance with the (GDPR) and data protection law for the purpose of provision and management of the Emergency Assistance Grant Fund.

Your personal information, where provided, will be processed under Article 6,1 (e) of the GDPR - processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or in the exercise of official authority vested in the controller.