

The introduction of the Crisis and Resilience Fund – Member Briefing

Overview:

The government-funded Household Support Fund (HSF) comes to an end on the 31 March.

From 1 April 2026, there will be a new national fund, provided by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), called the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF).

It provides councils with three-year, ring-fenced funding to deliver financial resilience services and crisis support for residents. East Sussex will receive £6.7m per year in 2026/27 and 2027/28, increasing in 2028/29 when housing-related payments transfer into the main fund.

Key points:

- The CRF is not comparable to the HSF. They are two very different offerings, and some services will be new, while others will change or stop.
- In East Sussex, we previously delivered HSF payments mainly through external providers, which means that we need to re-contract this work before the new scheme can operate. This may cause a gap between some residents' HSF payments ending and CRF payments being available.
- If residents are worried about money, they can find financial support here:
 - [Cost of living support | East Sussex County Council](#)
 - [Welcome to Holiday food and fun | East Sussex County Council](#) – for families eligible for free school meals
 - Check if you are receiving all the financial support that you are entitled to - [Benefits calculators - GOV.UK](#)
 - Advice on debt or benefits - phone the [welfare benefits helpline](#) for free, confidential advice on 0333 344 0681 (calls cost no more than the national rate).
- The CRF offers longer-term stability and a greater focus on prevention and resilience.
- There will be a shift towards investment in services that support financial resilience and capability rather than direct financial support.
- Crisis support will be available but will be needs-assessed and joined up with advice and resilience services.
- The CRF aims to reduce the demand for crisis support over time.
- CRF-funded services will become available in stages – the first being between April and September 2026, allowing time for services to be designed and set up.
- District and Borough Councils will only be responsible for delivering Housing Payments. The majority of other services will be provided by the local VCSE sector.

What CRF will fund

1. Crisis Payments: There will be financial help for residents facing financial shocks, and access to these funds will be provided through the VCSE and ESCC Children's Services.

2. Resilience Services: This will include advice, income maximisation, budgeting support, debt support, food sustainability, employability and tenancy support.

3. Community Coordination: Strengthening how local services and advice networks work together more effectively.

Next steps:

- A full Delivery Plan will be submitted to the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) by 1 July 2026.
- Further details of the services available will be provided to Members as the scheme is finalised.

Additional resources for Members:

- Our dedicated Intranet pages on Financial Inclusion: [Financial Inclusion Programme – ESCC Intranet](#)
- Sign up for the free Money Guiders training here: [Course: East Sussex Money Guiders Training](#)
- Access and promote our [Cost of Living webpages](#) to residents and partners
- Find more resources and reports you can download and share with residents here [Resources – ESCC Intranet](#)

We have collated some potential FAQs (and answers) which may be of use if you receive enquiries from residents.

Q1: Why is the Household Support Fund ending?
A: Central Government has made the decision to end the HSF from 31 March. This is not a result of ESCC policy change or budget cuts locally.
Q2: What is the Crisis and Resilience Fund?
A: The Crisis and Resilience Fund offers Government funding to help people on low incomes and in financial crisis move to a more stable financial position. There are four elements to the fund • A CRF crisis payment scheme • Funding for financial resilience services • Funding for community coordination • Housing payments – these will be delivered through District and Borough Councils in Years 1 and 2
Q3: How are CRF crisis payments different to HSF payments?
A: With the CRF, you will need to evidence that circumstances are having a severe impact on financial wellbeing e.g. redundancy, bereavement, domestic abuse, damage to property through flood or fire etc. You may also need to evidence low income. Recipients will be referred to support services to help them move to a more stable financial position, reducing the need for future payments.
Q4: How can I apply for a CRF crisis payment?
A: ESCC is commissioning a new service to process applications, which will be available online, by phone or in person. ESCC will not be accepting applications directly – these will be made through a delivery partner, which will also process the payment where an application is successful. More details will follow.
Q5: When will I be able to apply for a CRF crisis payment?
A: ESCC has to follow procurement regulations and procedures for awarding the contract for a new CRF crisis payments service in East Sussex. ESCC is working on this now, but the process can take several months. We aim to have a VCSE crisis payment scheme operational by September. We will issue updates as this progresses. In the meantime, East Sussex residents can access local money advice services already in place to access information, advice and support.

Q6: Where can I get updates on progress with the new CRF crisis payments system?

A: All updates will be made available on our Crisis and Resilience Fund webpage: [Crisis and Resilience Fund | East Sussex County Council](#)

Q7: Why are crisis payment schemes available in other areas before they are in East Sussex?

A: Different councils have different systems in place to deliver crisis payments. In East Sussex, we previously delivered HSF payments mainly through external providers, which means that we need to re-contract this work before the new scheme can operate. In other areas, councils may have delivered crisis payments internally, which means they may be able to update and operate a new crisis payments system more quickly. Working with external VCSE partners is preferable in East Sussex as they are well established local organisations that deliver services that are already known to and trusted by East Sussex residents.

Q8: Are housing payments available?

A: Eligible households who currently receive Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs), will be able to make applications for CRF housing payments via their district or borough council, and there will be no break in service delivery in this transition. Please contact your local district or borough council for further details.

Q9: I'm worried about money. Where can I get help?

A: Please see the links below to access further financial support.

- [Cost of living support | East Sussex County Council](#)
- [Welcome to Holiday food and fun | East Sussex County Council](#) – families eligible for free school meals
- Have you checked that you are receiving all the financial support that you are entitled to? [Benefits calculators - GOV.UK](#)
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