

Coronavirus Winter Grant Scheme

The objective of the COVID Winter Grant Scheme is to provide support to vulnerable households and families with children particularly affected by the pandemic throughout the winter period where alternative sources of assistance may be unavailable. The aim is to give vulnerable households\* peace of mind over the Winter months during the pandemic by helping those who need it to keep warm, have food on the table and other essentials.

\*Vulnerable households for the purposes of this funding are not limited to those households in receipt of benefits, many other households are faced with the burden and worry of paying the next utility bill or affording the next food shop due to the pandemic.

This funding has been provided by Solihull Council via the Government’s COVID Winter Grant Scheme

Types of support available :

* **Food, fuel and bills** –
  + support with food vouchers and/or assistance with shopping to ensure vulnerable households have access to hot, nutritious food,
  + financial support to reduce fuel debt where it is affecting a vulnerable household’s ongoing ability to afford their energy bills,
  + financial support for energy and water bills for household purposes, particularly where energy and water costs have increased in vulnerable households due to additional time spent at home by adults and/or children during the pandemic.
* **Other household essentials –**
  + Boiler (and other central heating) servicing and repairs,
  + White goods such as cookers, fridges/freezers, microwaves and other equipment that would improve a vulnerable household’s ability to keep warm and eat hot, nutritious meals,
  + Sanitary products, soap
  + Warm clothing
  + Quilts and blankets
  + Additional oil-filled radiators
  + Other essential items may be considered if it can be established that the purchase of the item would have a direct positive impact on the household’s ability to afford or access food, energy and water.

**General financial hardship support not linked to food, warmth and/or hygiene is excluded from this funding. Housing costs are expressly excluded.**

For the majority of requests Age UK Solihull will arrange to pay for items directly with energy companies/white goods providers, vouchers for high street stores may be provided for food/clothing and in very limited circumstances, cash may be the appropriate method of support.

We want to make referring into this scheme as easy as possible and keep the information required to a minimum however, the scheme is subject to audit by Solihull Council. Households accessing this scheme will be required to give consent to their information being audited by Solihull Council. Any information provided to Solihull Council for audit purpose will strictly relate to the use of the Winter Grant Scheme funding only.

Information required for audit by Solihull Council can include:

* Name
* Address and postcode
* Number of children aged under 18yrs in the household
* Help and support provided
* Value of individual grants made to or payments made on behalf of the household
* Household eligibility for the Winter Grant Scheme

Funding through this scheme has to be provided to households by 31 March 2021. The funding is a fixed amount and will be allocated on a strictly first come first served basis.