

Member Information Sheet



From:	Laura Annandale Head of Service, Early Help Commissioning
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Date:	13 March 2026
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To:	All Members
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A quick guide to the Crisis and Resilience Fund

Many households in Somerset continue to face significant financial hardship – including food and fuel price concerns.

The Council has approved a new three-year Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) to support residents on low incomes who experience a financial shock, as well as to strengthen long term financial resilience.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has provided this funding to local authorities so they can deliver crisis support locally, and build long-term resilience for their vulnerable households.

Somerset Council has been awarded £21.5m of funding to be spread across three years.

The CRF replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF) which ceases on 31 March 2026.

The CRF will be in place from 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2029

Here is a link to the Executive Paper for full details on the CRF : [Crisis and Resilience Fund 2026-27 to 2028-29.pdf](#)

The Paper was introduced on Wednesday 11 March 2026, by Cllr Heather Shearer, Lead Member for Children, Families and Education.

Aims of the CRF

- ✓ Short term financial support for financial shock
- ✓ Boost people's financial resilience longer term
- ✓ Improve community level support

Key changes from HSF to CRF

- ❖ Funding secured for three years
- ❖ Individual support, not blanket provision, and 'cash first'
- ❖ Council's advised to move towards personalised community based support

CRF is allocated across four key areas

- Crisis Payment - Providing support to those in crisis. This includes emergency grants approved within 24 hours for food and fuel
- Housing Payment - Providing financial support towards housing needs, to those who face a shortfall in meeting their housing costs
- Resilience Services - Funding for services delivered by local authorities or external providers to improve financial resilience
- Community Coordination - Investment in activities that connect and enhance the local support landscape

The new, proposed model ensures coordinated crisis help, preventative services, and community level resilience, improving outcomes and reducing pressure on statutory services.

There are significant changes, however. This legislation has come late, and with a lot of guidance and detail to unpack.

CRF delivery

Through this funding, support will continue for residents who are struggling with the ongoing pressure of rising living costs.

Having a confirmed three-year settlement gives the Council the stability to plan, prioritise and protect those most at risk.

The CRF will work alongside the many schemes we already have in place for people facing immediate financial hardship.

Our aim will be to ensure every resident has access to the right support at the right time.

The Council recognises that to reach the widest range of vulnerable households, many delivery routes will be needed.

For example, we know Somerset's VCFSE organisations are well placed to identify need early and offer accessible support.

We will also work with our schools, and through our community champion networks to reach those families in need.

Please bookmark our [cost of living support page](#). That's where the latest CRF details and assistance will be found, as the programme begins to roll out in April 2026.

Food provision during the Easter holidays

Alliance Lead

Colleagues in Children's Services (Commissioning) are working hard on the CRF grant and are finalising new arrangements with a designated provider.

After the Scrutiny call-in period and subsequent award of contract to the Alliance Lead charity, our Commissioning team at Somerset Council, the Alliance Lead and the wider CRF Alliance will come together to design and deliver on a comprehensive offer of support which will be available from early April.

Whilst these new and complex arrangements are being put in place, details of a number of other existing sources of help are available, if parents are concerned about the change.

These include:

The [Happy Healthy Holidays \(HHH\) programme](#). Available to children eligible for free school meals access to holidays clubs and camps along with a meal during the school holidays.

The next programme will run during the Easter holidays from Monday 30 March - Friday 10 April 2026.

And also:

[#Help4All](#)

[Community Hubs](#)

[Healthy Start – NHS – healthy food and milk](#)

[The Local Pantry Network in Somerset](#)

[Cost of living support for Somerset residents](#)

Citizens Advice Somerset

Outside of the decision at Executive, and the CRF funding, we're working with Citizens Advice Somerset.

The CA have funding that will support an Easter voucher scheme for eligible families. This funding conversation is separate to the grant announcement in the Executive Paper, but links with it.

The CA's Easter Family Support scheme will enable families to access support if they are receipt of free school meals and experiencing financial crisis.

The CA will have a team of advisers who will help families over the phone with an online application for support, or parents can apply via an online form on their website.

Families will be asked to provide some evidence (UC statement, Child Benefit award letter and bank statement) to demonstrate financial hardship.

Support will be given by means of a grocery voucher for their chosen supermarket for two weeks of support with food costs over the Easter School Holidays.

For reassurance, a dedicated CA phone line and process for food support for any education settings and their families that are concerned about how they will manage over the Easter holidays will be in place.

The go live date is imminent. Details will follow shortly for Members to share. Communications will be drafted and issued widely to support this CA scheme.

Please note: The Council knows where there is need. We know the families, and we will be supporting them at Easter and into the future.

If you'd like more information or reassurance, please find staff and councillor contact details below.

For more information contact:

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