



# Household Support Fund 7

## Grants: May 2025 – March 2026

### Programme Guidelines

Grant Name	Maximum Size	Eligibility
Large Grants	up to £40,000	For organisations with an <u>income over £30,000</u> in the last full year.
Small Grants	up to £5,000	For organisations with an <u>income under £30,000</u> in the last full year.

Closing date for applications:	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
Funding Period Ends:	Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2026

## Background to the Fund

**Bolton's Fund, via the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has committed a further £500,000 from the Household Support Fund (HSF) to the Bolton's Fund grants programme to enable Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to support vulnerable low-income households in need, with the cost of living.**

Large grants (up to £40,000) and Small grants (up to £5,000) are to be used to help vulnerable low-income households with crisis and / or preventative support.

**Crisis support includes** helping households with essentials including energy and water bills, food, and wider essentials.

**Preventative support will** prevent vulnerable households from falling into – or falling further into crisis. This could include support to individual residents or wider support within the broader community including warm spaces, friendship and support groups or signposting to advice services or other organisations who provide this support.

Priority households for funding include vulnerable low-income households in need including:

- Households with disabled people,
- Households with children of all ages,
- Households with pensioners,
- Households with unpaid carers,
- Households with care leavers,
- Larger families,
- Single-person households,
- Those struggling with one-off financial shocks or unforeseen events.

In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it can additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need. (This may include households not currently in receipt of DWP welfare benefits).

Please note that the funding now **places emphasis** on supporting households who may not be eligible for other benefits or schemes and on those with complex or multiple vulnerabilities.

**This funding covers the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. All funds must be spent or committed by this date. Grants will be paid in one instalment at the start of the delivery period.**

## Funding Priorities

Projects must achieve at **least one** of the following priorities to receive HSF 7 funding:

1. Provision of crisis support to low-income households
2. Provision of preventative support to low-income households.

**Please see below for further guidance about what a Household Support Fund 7 Grant can be spent on.**

## How much money can you apply for?

Level of grant	Maximum size of grant	Total amount available in this funding round
Large Grants	Up to £40,000*	<b>£400,000</b>
Small Grants	Up to £5,000**	<b>£100,000</b>

\* Organisations must have an **income of over £30,000** in the last full year to apply for a Large Grant. Please apply for the appropriate amount your organisation has the capacity and resources to effectively distribute within the timeframe of the grant (by the end of March 2026).

\*\*Organisations with an **income under £30,000** in the last full financial year are eligible to apply for a Small Grant.

## What are the timescales?

Fund Open	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2025
Deadline for applications:	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
Applications are made online:	<a href="#">Bolton CVS Funding</a>
All Projects must be completed by:	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2026 All funds must be committed or allocated by this date.

## What can you spend the Household Support Fund grant on?

This funding may be used for crisis support and preventative support for vulnerable low-income households in need of additional support who are struggling with essential cost of living costs.

### Definition of crisis support for the purpose of the Bolton's Fund: Household Support 7 Grants.

***Crisis support** is short-term help given to people who are facing sudden or serious difficulties, like not having enough food, heating, or essential items. It's meant to provide quick relief during tough times so people can stay safe and well.*

The grants should be used to fund such activities as providing food, energy top-ups, essential goods, or other urgent support to people who are struggling to meet basic needs.

### Definition of preventative support for the purpose of the Bolton's Fund: Household Support 7 Grants:

***Preventative support** means helping people early—before problems get worse. The funded organisations may offer practical help or advice and activities that improve well-being, reduce hardship, and strengthen communities.*

The grants should be used to fund activities which prevent vulnerable households from falling into – or falling further into – crisis. This could include specific support to individual residents or wider support within the broader community.

Some examples of what the funding can be spent on include:

### Crisis Support

- The grant can be used to support vulnerable households in most need with **energy bills** for any form of fuel that is used for the purpose of domestic heating, cooking, or lighting, including oil or portable gas cylinders. It can also be used to support water bills including for drinking, washing, cooking, as well as for sanitary and hygiene purposes and sewage.

- The grant can be used to provide **food**. This can be in-kind or through vouchers or cash to purchase food if vouchers are not suitable, for dignity and choice. The grants can be used to fund food banks or low-cost meals to prevent hunger.
- The grant can be used to support **essentials linked to increasing energy efficiency and water** (for example warm clothing, blankets, the purchase, delivery and installation of energy efficient white goods and appliances such as fridges, freezers, ovens, slow cookers). The HSF recognises that there are a range of costs which directly affect a household's ability to afford or access energy, food or water.
- The grant can be used to support **wider essential needs not linked to energy, water or food**. These may include, but are not limited to, support with other bills including broadband or phone bills, clothing, period and hygiene products, essential transport-related costs such as repairing a car, buying a bicycle, essential household items such as beds, mattresses or cots, or paying for fuel. This list is not exhaustive. It can also include one-off payments to prevent a crisis.
- **Emergency circumstances relating to housing costs:** Individuals in receipt of some other form of housing support could still qualify for the other elements of HSF, such as food, energy, water, essentials linked to energy and water and wider essentials. The grant can exceptionally, and in genuine emergency, be used to provide support for historic rent arrears built up prior to an existing benefit claim for households already in receipt of Universal Credit or Housing Benefit.
- HSF7 grants can be used to **purchase essential household items** related to the provision of crisis or preventative support to vulnerable low-income households. Please note: Bolton's Fund grants from the Micro, Small, Medium or Partnership funds will not usually fund the purchase of equipment for distribution to community members.

### **Preventative support in the wider community**

The goal of preventative support is to support people in the wider community before they reach a crisis, making life easier and communities stronger.

- Grants can be used to **help prevent loneliness** such as through providing friendly social groups, community kitchens, cooking classes, exercise or mental health support in the community.

- Grants can be used **for promoting the re-use and repair of goods** including provision of refurbished laptops for isolated households and access to phone data.
- The grant may be used to provide **supplementary advice services** including debt, Pension Credit, benefit, housing health and/or employment advice to avoid crises or to signpost people to existing support. We encourage providers to work with other VCSE organisations and providers to offer joined-up services. For example, at community kitchens, there could be representatives from advice services who may offer those in need further support, such as checking benefit entitlement or offering financial advice.
- It can be used to fund items that will **improve energy efficiency** – such as insulating a hot water tank, fitting draft excluders to a front door and replacing inefficient lightbulbs or any other measure to reduce household energy costs.
- Grants can be used for the provision of **longer-term and sustainable solutions** – such as assistance with and/or access to affordable food such as subsidised food pantries or community kitchen or for the skills development in areas such as cooking lessons with an emphasis on cost-effective methods or increasing access to digital services or raising confidence with digital skills.

### **Running costs of your HSF project:**

- A maximum of 20% of the grant awarded can be allocated to cover the running costs of your organisation for your Household Support Fund project. This includes administration costs associated with distributing Household Support Fund support to beneficiaries, rent or hire of your premises, heating costs, lighting costs, project management costs, transport costs, volunteer out-of-pocket expenses or staff costs. Please give details of all the running costs you will be claiming in your application. Please note that at least 80% of the grant must be used to support vulnerable low-income households in at least one of the priorities listed above.

### **What can't you spend the grant on?**

#### **This funding round will not fund:**

- The fund cannot be used to provide mortgage support, though homeowners could still qualify for the other elements of the fund.
- Ongoing housing support or support of unsustainable tenancies.

**Usual exceptions apply:**

- Trips, outings, meals, parties or any other one-off activity that does not demonstrate significant community benefit.
- The purchase of alcohol.
- Activities of a political or specific religious nature.
- Projects that will be primarily of benefit to people living outside the Bolton Local Authority Area.
- Work that statutory bodies (such as schools or local authorities) have a duty to fund.
- Local government or NHS bodies.
- Wages of sports coaches and instructors (paid or volunteers) who are not listed on Bolton Council's Sport Coaches and Instructors Register, where the grant is for work with people aged under 18 years' old.
- Individuals or organisations on behalf of individuals.
- Costs to be passed on to other organisations, for example, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) applying on behalf of schools.
- Project and delivery costs incurred or those that are paid for, before a grant is confirmed.
- Projects taking place outside of the UK.
- Deficit funding or repayment of loans, interest or fines.
- Fundraising for another organisation.

**Important - Data Collection Requirements**

Please read the Household Support Fund 7 – Monitoring Requirements document before submitting your application.

**Who is eligible to apply?**

To be eligible to apply for a Household Support Fund Grant, your group or organisation must be:

- A constituted voluntary or community group
- A registered charity
- Another type of constituted not for profit organisation.

Other eligibility factors include:

- Your group or organisation must be based and/or provide benefit to people living in the Metropolitan Borough of Bolton (Bolton Council's local authority area).



- You must have a bank account in the name of the group (not an individual) with at least two signatories.
- Organisations must be up to date with the monitoring returns for any previous grants managed through Bolton CVS.
- Eligible groups and organisations can apply for a Bolton's Fund: Household Support Fund 7 grant even if you have been awarded a Bolton's Fund grant at a different level in the last 12 months (e, g. a Bolton's Fund Micro, Small, Medium, Partnership or HAF grant). See the Bolton's Fund page on the Bolton CVS website for details.
- There is no minimum income eligibility for Bolton's Fund: Household Support Fund 7 grants. Your application will be strengthened if you can demonstrate you have the resources and capacity needed to effectively distribute the HSF grant.

**Applications to the fund:** if you are applying for a grant of over £5,000 you must be registered as a Community Interest Company, a Registered Charity or other incorporated organisation. If you are not sure, please contact us before applying.

**There are minimum standards you must meet to be eligible to apply for funding – please read our “*Minimum requirements for applicants and what we can fund*” document before submitting an application - click [here](#) to access them.**

## Risk Management

- Successful applicants will need to have procedures in place to ensure their work complies with official guidance.
- Successful applicants will need to comply with all food safety regulations. Where necessary (where higher risk foods or cooking for the community) successful applicants will need to be registered with the local authority. Please see Bolton Council [food business registration](#) for more information.

## How to Apply

Log on to the Bolton CVS website and go to: [Login for Funding Applications](#)



**Assistance:** If you have difficulties accessing an online format or would like help with your application, please contact Bolton CVS for support. We are here to help.

## About Bolton's Fund

Bolton's Fund is a community grants pot that plays a crucial role in providing investment into Bolton's VCSE sector. Since 2019 it has played a vital role in driving innovation and fostering projects aimed at benefiting people and communities across the borough.

Bolton's Fund is principally funded by Bolton Council with additional contributions from other organisations including NHS Bolton (Integrated Care Partnership) and the Sir James and Lady Scott Trust.

The overall goal of the Bolton 2030 Vision is to reach the destination goal of becoming:

*Active, Connected and Prosperous. A great place to live, work, visit or study*

## Resources on the Bolton CVS Website

The following guidance documents are available on the Bolton CVS Bolton's Fund webpage [here](#).

We recommend that you read the guidance documents before applying for a Bolton's Fund grant.

## Support and Further Information from Bolton CVS

If you would like to chat about a potential application or you need help with the application form, please contact us on:

01204 546 010 or email [funding@boltoncvs.org.uk](mailto:funding@boltoncvs.org.uk).

You can also refer to the funding information pages on the Bolton CVS website: <https://www.boltoncvs.org.uk/funding>

**Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (CVS)**

**Registered Charity No: 1003123**

**Registered Company No: 2615057**

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