**Winter Hardship Payment for Low Income Families (V001)**

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**Q Do I have to apply for the Hardship payment for low income families?**

No application for the £100 Winter Hardship Grant will be required if you are already in receipt of Free School Meals/School Clothing Grant on the basis of low income eligibility.

**Q When will I receive the Hardship payment for low income families?**

This will be paid into bank accounts from Friday 18/12/2020 however, this can take a few days to clear so could be a few days after.

We do not hold bank details for a small number of people, these payments will be sent as a Paypoint “Cash Out” Voucher on Friday 18/12/2020 either by SMS or Post depending on the details held on record. SMS vouchers will be sent by text messages to mobile numbers held on record on Friday 18/12/2020. Post vouchers will be received a few days after the 18/12/2020 depending on Royal Mail delivery dates.

**Q How much will I receive?**

The Winter Hardship payment of £100 is per child and not per household.

For payments made into Bank Accounts families with more than one child will receive one payment for all children, eg 2 children payment of £200, 3 children payment of £300, etc.

For payments made through Paypoint families with more than one child will receive one SMS or Post Voucher per child, eg 2 children 2 separate payments of £100, 3 children 3 separate payments of £100, etc. Please note SMS Vouchers will show as at text message from “Cash Out” with a 7 day expiry date, post vouchers will be sent in a letter with a 14 day expiry date. These vouchers can be redeemed for cash at any local Paypoint Store.

Locate your local Paypoint Store: <https://consumer.paypoint.com/cashout>

**Q What if my bank account information has changed?**

If your Bank Account information has changed since your online application for Free School meals, please email Covid19WinterPay@northlan.gov.uk and we can check and resolve any issues.

**Q Can you confirm the eligibility criteria for the Hardship Grant?**

Eligibility for Free School Meals based on low income, is as set out below:

1. A child is eligible to receive Free School Meals, where the household is in receipt of: • Universal Credit (where monthly earned income is not more than £610); • Income Support; • income-based Job Seeker's Allowance; • income-based Employment and Support Allowance; • support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
2. ii. A child is also eligible to receive Free School Meals, where the household is in receipt of: • Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and household income is less than £16,105; • both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit and have an income of up to £7,330.
3. A child might still get a free lunch in school if their household experience financial hardship. This could be because: • Their immigration status means they cannot get help from the government; • They're still waiting on their first Universal Credit notice.

**Q I think I am eligible for the School Clothing Grant/Free School Meals, but have not previously applied. Can I apply now?**

If you are eligible for either a School Clothing Grant or Free School Meals (not including the universal provision for P1-P3) but have not yet applied for the 2020/21 school session, you can apply now through our application process, which is now available online.

<https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-meals/free-school-meals-and-clothing-grants/free-school-meals>

You must include the evidence to support your claim when you submit the online form. Once your eligibility has been verified, you will be issued with a payment in accordance with the published guidelines.

**Please note to be eligible for the £100.00 Winter Hardship Payment applications must be received before 22.12.2020.**

**Q My children are in P1 to P3 and normally get a school lunch in line with the Scottish Government policy for free school meals for P1-P3. Why are we not being allocated a payment?**

The provision of universal free school lunches for P1 to P3 is a different commitment to the provision of free school meals as a result of the financial impact COVID-19 is having on parents/carers. The Scottish Government guidance is clear that providing school meals or vouchers during this period does not apply to the universal provision of lunches for all P1-3.