

March 2026

Important changes to holiday food voucher provision in Somerset

Household Support Fund grant ends 31 March 2026

The government's Household Support Fund (HSF) ceases at the end of the month (31 March 2026).

It is being replaced by a new fund called the Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF).

Free school meal holiday vouchers under the HSF scheme

Holiday food vouchers (known to many parents in Somerset as free school meal holiday vouchers) were part of the original HSF government package.

Parents who qualified for the vouchers through the HSF scheme received them as usual during the recent February half-term holiday.

However, this was the final voucher provision of its kind under the HSF scheme. And government have told us there will be no holiday food vouchers issued under the HSF scheme after the 31 March date.

This means no HSF vouchers will be available for parents during the Easter holidays, as these holidays fall in April this year.

What's replacing the meal vouchers?

The government is replacing HSF with a new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF). This new fund will provide access to food help. Any family facing food shortages will be able to secure 'cash-first' support.

However, this is a very recent announcement, and it's a new grant set-up from the government. Somerset Council is required to replace the previous voucher system with new forms of support, and this change has to be made in a short space of time.

Somerset Council is in the process of making that switch and finalising the new arrangements with a designated provider. We will be starting this scheme shortly, and it will be in place before the May half term holidays.

As soon as we are able, we will provide details to staff, councillors, stakeholders and schools about how families can access 'cash-first' support if they are facing food shortages.

Where can I get help during the upcoming Easter Holidays?

In the meantime, and whilst arrangements are being put in place, details of a number of other existing sources of help are listed below, if parents are concerned about the change.

For example, what is absolutely continuing this Easter, as in past holidays, is the [Happy Healthy Holidays \(HHH\) programme](#). This is a brilliant scheme and take up in Somerset has always been very high.

If you receive questions or queries from families, please can you signpost them to the HHH programme, and the many other support options that are available in our communities.

Thank you for sharing, and for your patience.

[The Local Pantry Network in Somerset](#)

[#Help4All](#)

[Community Hubs](#)

[SASP – Happy Healthy Holidays](#)

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

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

Further information on national schemes to support families can be found at:

[Cost of living support: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

[Universal Credit: What Universal Credit is - GOV.UK](#)

[Child Benefit: How it works - GOV.UK](#)

[Free Childcare for Working Parents: Check if you're eligible - GOV.UK](#)