

## **News Release**

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### **COVID financial support scheme launched to help residents with household bills**

Blackpool Council has launched new COVID financial support grants to support those who are struggling to pay essential household bills as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Blackpool scheme is part of the government's wider COVID winter grant scheme and can provide assistance to families and those who are vulnerable if they have been financially impacted by coronavirus, particularly over winter.

The scheme has been launched to specifically help those who have been affected financially by the pandemic, for example if a member of a household has:

- Had a reduction in income due to being furloughed
- Been made redundant or had contract work ended
- Been laid off or had working hours reduced

The grants are to be used where residents have arrears or are struggling to pay essential household bills, like gas and electric, united utilities or council tax, along with other essential expenses.

The scheme does not cover housing costs, such as rent or mortgage payments, as alternative support is available for this.

Those who are awarded the grants will not receive cash but will have payments made directly to the suppliers they are struggling to pay.

Cllr Lynn Williams, Leader of Blackpool Council, said:

***"This support scheme has been launched at a time when we know many Blackpool residents are facing substantial financial difficulties as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic."***

***“The winter months have seen further hardship as we have had more national lockdowns and many businesses have been forced to close or reduce staffing.***

***“We hope these grants will give families assistance to get out of arrears and can offer support where needed to pay essential bills and ease the pressure slightly.***

***“We would encourage anybody whose working hours have decreased due to the pandemic to apply for the grant if they are struggling to make ends meet.”***

Residents who think they are eligible for the grant should apply as soon as possible via the council website, where they are asked to submit information and supporting evidence of the bills they need assistance with.

Visit [www.blackpool.gov.uk/CovidSupportGrant](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/CovidSupportGrant) for more information and to apply for the COVID financial support grant.

Support with rent for those who receive housing benefit can be found at [www.blackpool.gov.uk/DHP](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/DHP)

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