

Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) Guidance - Hertfordshire County Council Allocation

Overall Aim of the CRF

To create a **sustainable, coordinated, cash first welfare safety net** that:

- Responds quickly to financial shocks
- Reduces long term hardship
- Strengthens community support systems
- Provides a consistent and resilient local welfare landscape across England

Allocation

£9.1m per year for 3 years. Funding increases to £11.4m in year 3 (28/29) due to the addition of Discretionary Housing Payments post Local Government Reorganisation.

Last years Household support Fund allocated £10.8m, a 15% reduction and with an 11% reduction the year before, Hertfordshire County Council has seen this funding reduced by 26% across the last 2 years, losing £3.2m of funding.

Timeline

March – Hertfordshire County Council are in the process of gaining agreement for allocation plans proposed. Once agreed there will be further communication with Districts and Boroughs.

Purpose of the CRF

The Crisis and Resilience Fund provides multi-year, ring-fenced funding to English local authorities to:

1. Support low income households facing financial shocks.
2. Build individual and community financial resilience, reducing long term crisis need.
3. Strengthen local welfare ecosystems through coordinated partnerships.

It replaces:

- Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) from April 2026.
- Elements of the Household Support Fund.

Funding is delivered via the Local Government Finance Settlement.

CRF Structure: Four Required Delivery Strands

1. Crisis Payments

- Cash first grants to meet urgent, short-term needs such as:
 - Food, hygiene essentials, utilities
 - Essential furniture and appliances
 - Travel costs, digital connectivity
 - Emergencies such as homelessness, domestic abuse or loss of income
- Should be person centred, needs based, and available year round.
- No prescriptive eligible item list; LA discretion applies.
- Not a substitute for ongoing income.
- Must use at least two application routes (online, phone, face to face).
- Warm referrals to support services are required.

2. Housing Payments (Stays with District and Borough Councils until year 3/LGR)

Replaces DHPs but maintains similar rules.

- For people entitled to Housing Benefit or UC Housing Costs who face a shortfall.
- Can cover rent shortfalls, deposits, rent in advance, removals.
- Cannot be awarded to people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).
- Phased transition:
 - Years 1–2: same distribution model as DHPs including districts.
 - Year 3: Only Unitary Authorities + applicable County Councils receive allocations.

3. Resilience Services

Funding for programmes that reduce future crisis demand, this is the priority in Hertfordshire. Examples include:

- Debt, welfare, energy and budgeting advice
- Income maximisation (benefit checks, employment support)
- Access to affordable credit, saving products, insurance
- Community hubs, digital inclusion interventions Authorities must show how services achieve outcomes such as:
 - Reduced emergency food need
 - Reduced priority debt
 - Increased incomes/savings
 - Reduced repeat crisis applications

4. Community Coordination

Funding to improve the **local support ecosystem**, including:

- Partnership building and shared directories
- Referral pathways across statutory, VCS and community partners
- Co-location of services
- Data sharing and mapping of need
- Multi-agency early intervention models

Key Delivery Principles

CRF schemes must be:

- Person centred
- Needs based
- Holistic
- Trauma informed
- Built on warm referrals and a “no wrong door” approach

Accessibility must be ensured through:

- Multiple application channels
- Formats such as Easy Read / large print
- Support for digital exclusion, disabilities, terminal illness, carers

Eligibility and NRPF

- Crisis Payments: Possible for NRPF households only via alternative legal powers (Children Act, Care Act, NHS Act).
- Housing Payments: Not available to NRPF households.

Applications & Targeting

- Applications accepted all year.
- Third parties (e.g. VCS organisations) may apply on behalf of residents.
- LAs should also proactively target vulnerable groups using data (e.g. UC data share).

Funding, Admin & Compliance

- LAs control how funding is split between strands (except Housing Payment minimum expectations).
- Admin costs allowed, but must be reasonable and proportionate.
- Funding must not duplicate existing central government funded activity.
- Strong fraud prevention and due diligence required.
- Unspent or misused funds may be recovered.

Reporting & Evaluation

LAs must:

- Submit annual delivery plans
- Provide six monthly MI returns
- Track core outcome indicators
- Participate in national DWP evaluation
- Keep an audit trail for all spending