

October half-term meal vouchers

As you may be aware, Torbay Council has previously received funding from the government under the Household Support Fund to support vulnerable households who need help with significantly rising living costs.

This money has been used to assist households struggling to afford energy, food and water bills, and other essentials.

Torbay Council apportioned some of this money towards ensuring children on means-tested free school meals received meal vouchers during school holidays.

Since the fund was set up in October 2021, we have allocated £1.09million towards holiday meal vouchers, of which £984,000 came from the Household Support Fund. The rest was from council funds.

A new round of the Household Support Fund began on 1 October and Torbay Council will be receiving £1.2 million.

The council will be allocating this money to assist more households in Torbay. To find out what kind of support is available and whether you are eligible, please visit the [Household Support Fund page](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/household-support/) on our website: www.torbay.gov.uk/household-support/.

So that we can help a wider group of people, we've taken the difficult decision not to offer holiday meal vouchers for the October half-term holiday.

Vouchers **will** be available for the Christmas school holidays. The Christmas holidays will also see the return of our Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

This gives children aged five to 16 years old who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals the chance to take part in a range of free activities during the school holiday.

We understand this may be difficult for parents and families this October half-term, but we need to ensure that the money we receive is spread fairly across all Torbay residents.

Help is out there for families struggling with the cost of living and we urge people to get in touch sooner rather than later.

Anyone who needs help should go to our [Cost of Living](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/benefits/cost-of-living/) webpage (<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/benefits/cost-of-living/>) for information on all financial assistance available in Torbay, either from the council or from our partners.

There is information about national schemes and organisations at the government's [Help for Households](https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/) webpage (<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>) including discounts and offers for national retailers.