

Support for families is continuing, but from April 2026 the way help is provided will change.

February half term 2026 will be the final school holiday period where free school meals support is provided automatically in the form of a voucher. However, support will still be available. From April, families who need help will be supported to apply through the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

There is nothing families need to do at this stage. The Council will share clear information ahead of April about how to apply and what support is available.

If you need help now, cost of living advice and support is available through the Council website.

You will also find attached leaflets providing information about Healthy Start and some of the other support available to residents of Cheshire West and Chester.

[Cost of living | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Benefits Calculator

You may not be receiving all the financial support you're entitled to. Our online benefits calculator can quickly show whether you could claim extra help.

[Benefits Calculator](#)

Before you start make sure you have some accurate information to hand about your;

- savings
- income, including your partner's (from payslips, for example)
- existing benefits and pensions (including anyone living with you)
- outgoings (such as rent, mortgage, childcare payments)
- Council Tax bill