



13th February 2026

Dear Parents & Carers,

Since 2021, Norfolk County Council has been providing vouchers of about £15 per month per child to families who have children eligible for free school meals. This has been possible because of funding provided by government called HSF. Unfortunately, this fund is ending on 31 March 2026.

This change means that families who are currently receiving Edenred vouchers through the HSF scheme, will receive their last vouchers in March 2026. We understand that this will be difficult news for some of our families, so we wanted to let you know as soon as possible, allowing you to plan ahead.

Norfolk County Council have asked that we share the following information with you:

Why is this happening?

The government is putting a new Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF) in place that will start on 1 April 2026. The government's rules for this new fund are different; we cannot use this money to pay for voucher schemes like this.

What happens next?

The council is currently planning for the introduction of the CRF and we will update you when we have more information.

The Government is clear that the future scheme must be needs tested and include wraparound support. This means that the current eligibility criteria cannot apply.

- *Although HSF is coming to an end, there will be ongoing support for families in crisis. We would encourage people to visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving which will be kept up to date with any help on offer. * For students living in Cambridgeshire visit: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/communities/support-with-the-cost-of-living>*
- *If families have any unspent vouchers, we would encourage them to redeem them as soon as possible and for the March vouchers to be redeemed within the three-month timeframe to ensure they do not expire.*
- *If families are in difficulty, we would encourage them to contact our Family Hubs services www.norfolk.gov.uk/familyhubs where there is broader support on debt and welfare rights.*
- *The Big Norfolk Holiday Fun programme is continuing, and the Easter programme will launch in the coming weeks. Visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/bignorfolkholidayfun to sign up.*

We want to stress that these changes to HSF are outside the council's control, but we will continue to do all we can to support families in crisis.

We will continue to update you with any further information, as this is released over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,

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