

Date 25th October 2023

Financial Support to Households affected by Storm Babet

Background

Following Storm Babet, approx. 150 properties suffered flooding over the weekend of 21st October, resulting in evacuation and considerable damage.

Currently 152 residential properties are known to be flooded (defined as: *1. Water above floor level in habitable areas of the house*).

Support Package Offer Decision

In recognition of the hardship that this has caused, Rotherham MBC will provide two levels of support as follows:

1. Flood Recovery Support Payment of £350 to each affected household.

- 1.1 Eligibility for the Flood Recovery Support Payment is based on those properties that the Council categorises as having been flooded, that is, "*water is above floor level in habitable areas of the house*". Properties where gardens were flooded but water did not enter the property will not be eligible unless the residence is considered unliveable for a period of time as a result of this flood incident.
- 1.2 Where the resident's Council Tax is paid via direct debit, we will make an automatic payment directly into the account where their Council Tax is taken from. We expect to make first payments by Friday 3rd November. If we do not hold resident's bank account records, the £350 can be obtained by completing a simple form on our website. This will be available in the next few days.
- 1.3 The information required on the webform is shown in Appendix A. If a resident from an address known to be flooded completes the webform, the payment will be agreed and paid within 7 days. If the address is not already confirmed as flooded by the Council, further information will be requested to confirm that they are eligible.

2. Discretionary Relief on Council Tax for the period from 21st October to at least 31st March.

- 2.1 For all affected properties as defined above, households will receive a 100% discretionary relief on the flooded property for the period 21st October 2023 until at least 31st March 2024. This relief is being awarded in line with the Council's discretionary relief policy and all properties affected by flooding (as defined in Para.1.1 above) will be considered to be in financial hardship.
- 2.2 Bills will be amended for all affected properties. This will take some time on a property-by-property basis but will be completed as quickly as possible.
- 2.3 In the meantime, residents should not cancel their direct debits.
- 2.4 If a payment is made whilst this work is being undertaken, any overpayments will be refunded.

2.5 For those residents who do not return to their property in the short-term, the Council Tax and Benefits team may require further information to ensure that future billing and benefits are calculated correctly.

Decision Making

The full extent of residents/properties impacted is now being finalised. Numbers may increase further as residents come forward for support or if a financial support package is advertised, however projected costs are currently as follows:

Based on £350 per household:

- 150 properties as at 25th October: total cost £52,500

Formal approval to use the Council's COVID Recovery Fund for this scheme will be requested in the Finance Report to Cabinet on 20th November 2023.

Section 13A Council Tax reliefs can be applied under officer decision, approved by Strategic Director, Finance & Customer Services. The total amount awarded for this decision will be notified to Cabinet on 20th November 2023.

Other Information:

Should the Govt implement their flood recovery framework as currently published, eligibility will only apply where the property is the primary residence.

Appendix A – Proposed webform questions

- First Name
- Surname
- Contact number
- Email Address
- Address
- Is this property your main residence? (Yes/No) ???
- Have you left the property? Yes/No – (If yes, new address?)
- Council Tax account number (if known):
- Name of Bank:
- Sort Code:
- Account Number:
- Account Name: