

Plans set out to support pupils eligible for free school meals

Low-income families whose children are eligible for free school meals will be offered vouchers, food or meals to make sure they continue receiving this support, even if they are no longer attending school due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The Government has today, Thursday 19 March, published guidance for schools giving them the flexibility to provide meals or shop vouchers to the 1.3 million disadvantaged children entitled to free school meals if they are no longer attending school, either due to closures or as a result of self-isolating at home.

Schools will be able to provide meals or vouchers for supermarkets or local shops, which can be sent directly to families who are either self-isolating at home or whose schools are closed on government advice. This follows the Education Secretary's announcement on Wednesday that schools will close from Monday until further notice, except for children of key workers and vulnerable children.

The Government has also confirmed that the total value of vouchers offered to each eligible child per week will exceed the rate it pays to schools for free school meals, recognising that families will not be buying food in bulk and may therefore incur higher costs.

The [guidance](#) for schools states they can choose to support eligible children however they believe is most appropriate and headteachers can decide which of the available options will be best for families in their area.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our school leaders and teachers are central to the country's response to these unprecedented challenges, and I want to thank them for their calm resilience in the face of adversity. I am reassured by the support they continue to offer all families, particularly the most disadvantaged.

No child who would ordinarily receive a free school meal should go without this while their school is closed or while they are having to self-isolate at home. By giving headteachers flexibility on how they can get meals or shop vouchers to these children, they can make the most appropriate decisions for families in their communities, and provide immediate reassurance that this important support will continue.

Effective immediately, schools will be able to order vouchers directly from supermarkets or shops in their communities to be emailed or printed and

posted to families, and they will have their costs covered by the Department for Education.

A national approach to providing these supermarket and shop vouchers is being developed. Further details, including the total values being provided, will be provided shortly via the published guidance.

The Government's decision will provide immediate reassurance to families across England that they can still access this support even in the event of having to self-isolate at home or while schools are closed on the Government's advice.

[Find out more about Essex flood alleviation scheme](#)

The design of the scheme is finalised and available to view here:
<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/east-anglia-c-e/coggeshall-flood-alleviation-information-page/>

Residents, partners and interested parties are encouraged to take a look at the Environment Agency's plans before a planning application is submitted.

In October 2001 Coggeshall, Feering and Kelvedon suffered from significant flooding and since then, in May 2012 and February 2014, the villages experienced further flooding.

The Environment Agency has forged a partnership with Blackwater Aggregates to find a financially viable solution.

The option being taken forward combines the construction of an "on-line" dam across the River Blackwater and creation of an extended flood storage area next to the River Blackwater upstream of Coggeshall.

Flood and coastal risk manager for Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, Peta Denham, said:

"We have met with the local action group Coggeshall Residents Against the Quarry (CRAQ) and Priti Patel MP to answer their questions and to keep them up to date with the project.

"We have also replied to questions sent in by local residents.

"We encourage anyone who is interested to examine these final designs before we submit our proposals to the planning authority.

"Once the application has been submitted to Essex County Council's Minerals and Planning Authority (MPA), they will consult with all the appropriate

bodies including the respective parish councils.

“As local residents you will also have the opportunity to offer your views to the MPA.”

Drop-in sessions planned to be held in Coggeshall and Feering on 23 March and 3 April respectively have now been cancelled due to concerns relating to Covid-19.

[Recycling boss misleads investors to fund new equipment](#)

Glass Tech Recycling Limited was incorporated in December 2010 and the company operated as a glass recycling facility.

Karen John (56) was appointed a director of the company in September 2011 and dealt with day-to-day running of the company, having had prior experience of the glass recycling industry.

Over the next few years Glass Tech Recycling invested circa £1.5 million into new machinery intended to produce higher quality recycled glass which would sell at a premium. Some of the investors were also directors of the company.

But in 2019, the investors discovered that Swansea-based Karen John had been misleading them about the output of the machinery and prospective orders in order to secure the funds.

Investors learnt that Karen John had also misled them by inventing a customer and fabricating attempts to recover debts from that customer to the extent that she claimed that Glass Tech Recycling had pursued the fictitious customer through the courts.

Shortly after the investors discovered Karen John's activities, Glass Tech Recycling went into Creditors Voluntary Liquidation in April 2019, with total liabilities of more than £4.1 million.

The liquidation brought Karen John's conduct to the attention of the Insolvency Service, who later pursued director disqualification proceedings following investigations into the Swansea director's activities.

The Secretary of State has since accepted a 5-year disqualification undertaking from Karen John and from 12 March 2020, she is banned from acting as a director or directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

In her undertaking, Karen John did not dispute that she presented inaccurate

and misleading financial information to the board of Glass Tech Recycling, which resulted in further investment and loans to the company of at least £695,000.

David Elliott, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Investing funds to purchase new equipment should have been a legitimate business activity. But Karen John specifically misled investors, including some of her fellow directors, into investing hundreds of thousands of pounds to purchase machinery at much greater risk than she had promised and which was ultimately of no benefit to the company.

Directors have a responsibility to present an accurate picture to investors to secure funds and Karen John's actions demonstrate that if you choose to ignore this, then you could be investigated and possibly lose the privilege of limited liability trading.

Karen John is from Swansea and her date of birth is December 1965.

GLASS TECH RECYCLING LTD (Company number 07479819)

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Changes to the delivery of our services during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

[I have been made redundant and I need to make a claim for redundancy payments or find out more about my claim](#)

[I am an employer and need help paying redundancy or need to notify the government of potential redundancies](#)

[I need to declare bankruptcy or get a debt relief order](#)

[I need guidance around my company going insolvent](#)

[I need to contact an official receiver about an existing bankruptcy or compulsory company liquidation case](#)

[I need to find out about bankruptcy, debt relief orders, PPI or company liquidations](#)

[I want to submit a freedom of information or subject access request](#)

[I want to submit a complaint about the Insolvency Service](#)

[I want to submit copies of paper documents and forms to the Insolvency Service](#)

I have been made redundant and I need to make a claim for redundancy payments or find out more about my claim

Help for claiming redundancy payments

We are processing redundancy claims as normal. We will write to you once your application has been processed.

Our [redundancy guidance](#) contains information about the redundancy claims process. Please check our guidance for answers to your questions.

If you need to [apply for redundancy payments](#), please complete the online claim. You cannot start the application without a CN reference number. This will be provided by the insolvency practitioner dealing with your employer's insolvency.

If you need help submitting a claim please [email the Redundancy Payments Service](#).

If you do not have access to the internet, and need help completing your claim, you can call 0330 3310020 and leave your contact details. Please be aware that we are currently unable to answer any other queries by telephone.

We expect to make all payments (redundancy pay, holiday pay and arrears of pay) within 6 weeks of receiving your completed claim and information from the insolvency practitioner. We will contact you if we need any further information from you to pay your claim.

To allow us to deal with everyone's claim as quickly as possible, please do not email us to check the status of your claim until after the 6 weeks have passed.

Receiving your redundancy payment

The fastest and most efficient way for us to pay you is by bank transfer (BACS). When completing your claim, please make sure that you have your bank

details with you.

Please be aware that if you opt to be paid by cheque it will take longer for us to process your payment. If you would like to be paid by bank transfer but you did not provide your bank details on your claim, please email us at redundancypaymentsonline@insolvency.gov.uk.

When you email us, please use the subject line "Bank details" and include the following details:

- bank name
- sort code
- account number/roll number
- account holder name

Please make sure you email us from the address you provided when submitting your claim.

I am an employer and need help paying redundancy or need to notify the government of potential redundancies

The government has provided [guidance for businesses](#) and [announced a package of measures](#) to provide support to ensure the impact of COVID-19 is minimised.

Financial assistance for employers unable to pay statutory redundancy payments

If you cannot afford to pay your employees redundancy pay you can [apply to the Redundancy Payments Service \(RPS\) for financial assistance](#). If approved, the RPS will make statutory redundancy payments directly to redundant employees on an employer's behalf.

Advanced notification of redundancies

The government must help employees facing redundancy. If you are an employer who may be making 20 or more people redundant, [you need to complete an advanced notification of redundancies form](#).

I need to declare bankruptcy or get a debt relief order

You can [apply online to make yourself bankrupt](#) if you are unable to pay your debts. The adjudicator is continuing to review applications.

Our [guidance](#) contains information about the bankruptcy process and also provides information about [other ways you can deal with your debts](#) before you apply for bankruptcy.

Debt Relief Orders

To apply for a Debt Relief Order (DRO), [you will need to go through an 'approved intermediary'](#), an authorised debt adviser who will make the application on your behalf.

Our [guidance on DROs](#) explains the process and the Official Receiver is continuing to consider applications.

If you have a DRO and need to contact us, please email us at DR0.Unit@insolvency.gov.uk.

I need guidance around my company going insolvent

A company is insolvent when it cannot pay its debts. Our [guidance](#) provides information about options [when a company is insolvent](#) and [information on liquidation for directors](#).

If this guidance does not answer your question you can contact the Insolvency Service helpline by phoning 0300 678 0015 or [completing our online form](#).

While Official Receiver offices are reopening we continue to expect to deal with most enquiries remotely.

If you have a reference number beginning BKT or LQD, or a query regarding a specific bankruptcy or compulsory liquidation, [contact the local Official Receiver](#).

General guidance on [insolvencies](#) and [bankruptcies](#) is available. If this guidance does not answer your question you can contact the Insolvency Service helpline by phoning 0300 678 0015 or [completing our online form](#).

If you need to contact one of our [Long Term Asset Distribution teams](#) you can find the right email address in our guidance.

I need to find out about bankruptcy, debt relief orders, PPI or company liquidations

Our Insolvency Service helpline provides information processes administered or regulated by the Insolvency Service. This includes bankruptcy, debt relief orders and company liquidations.

You can contact the helpline by phoning 0300 678 0015 or [completing our online form](#).

You can [read our guidance about processes administered or regulated by the Insolvency Service](#).

I want to submit a freedom of information or

subject access request

While all our offices are closed we cannot receive requests for information by post. We are continuing to process Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access requests. To request information please email FOI@insolvency.gov.uk.

I want to submit a complaint about the Insolvency Service

While all our offices are closed we cannot receive complaints by post.

During this time, you can make a complaint by:

Before submitting a complaint, [please read our online complaints procedures](#). It explains what information you need to include in your complaint and how we will process it.

I want to submit copies of paper documents and forms to the Insolvency Service

The Insolvency Service is following the [latest government advice](#) on the coronavirus outbreak, so most of our staff are working away from the office.

We have limited access to paper documents and forms sent in to our offices. To make it easier for you to correspond with us, we now allow copies of paper documents and forms to be submitted by email.

Read our guidance on [how to send copies of paper documents and forms](#) to us during the current pandemic.

[Government agrees measures with energy industry to support vulnerable people through COVID-19](#)

- Measures include ensuring prepayment and pay-as-you go customers remain supplied with energy through challenging times and supporting all customers in financial distress
- industry agreement signed by all UK domestic suppliers and will come into force immediately

New emergency measures with the energy industry have been agreed by the government to protect the domestic energy supply of those most in need during

the disruption caused by COVID-19.

From today customers with pre-payment meters who may not be able to add credit can speak to their supplier about options to keep them supplied. This will benefit over 4 million customers.

This could include nominating a third party for credit top ups, having a discretionary fund added to their credit, or being sent a pre-loaded top up card so that their supply is not interrupted.

More broadly, any energy customer in financial distress will also be supported by their supplier, which could include debt repayments and bill payments being reassessed, reduced or paused where necessary, while disconnection of credit meters will be completely suspended.

Secretary of State for Business and Energy, Alok Sharma, said:

While friends and family will play a role in helping people impacted by the Coronavirus, we recognise there will be many customers who will need additional support and reassurance, particularly those who are financially impacted or in vulnerable circumstances.

The government has committed to do whatever it takes to get our nation through the impacts of this coronavirus pandemic. Today those most in need can rest assured that a secure supply of energy will continue to flow into their homes during this difficult time.

The government and energy industry have agreed to prioritise those existing customers most in need, while identifying customers whose circumstances may have changed as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19.

Chief Executive of Citizens Advice, Dame Gillian Guy, said:

This is an uncertain time for many people. Energy suppliers need to play their part by communicating clearly and supporting their customers as much as possible. Keeping people on supply, making sure they have warm homes and don't face additional financial or other stresses about their energy supply will be essential.

Suppliers will need to put in place support measures for people on prepayment meters, people and families who need to self-isolate or take steps to reduce social contact, and people who may otherwise be in vulnerable situations.

The measures set out and agreed will be implemented immediately by energy suppliers to alleviate pressure on energy customers.

Chief executive of Energy UK, Audrey Gallacher, said:

As providers of essential services and critical infrastructure, the energy industry has well-practised contingency plans in order to ensure the delivery of services and is working closely with the Government on a daily basis to ensure there is no disruption to the generation and supply of energy to customers during these extraordinary circumstances.

The sector is very conscious of the potential consequences for customers confined to their homes for prolonged periods and in particular those customers in vulnerable circumstances or on prepayment meters who may need additional help. Suppliers will be doing all they can to identify such customers and provide additional support wherever possible.

Ofgem will continue to ensure suppliers meet their regulatory obligations. However the government also recognises this will be a challenging time for many supply businesses.

The Chancellor has this week set out a package of targeted measures to support businesses through this period of disruption caused by COVID-19. This includes £330 billion for companies to access loans, a business rates holiday, and help for small firms without insurance. In addition, a new temporary Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme is to be launched in days to support businesses access £1 billion of additional bank lending.

Chief Executive of Energy Networks Association, David Smith, said:

These are unprecedented times but the energy industry is working hard to keep gas and electricity flowing, look after our vulnerable customers and keep customers and staff safe. The UK's electricity and gas network is one of the most reliable in the world and over 36,000 employees are working flat out to continue to provide a safe and reliable supply of energy during this time.

Customers that are unable to top up their pre-payment meter are advised to contact their supplier immediately to discuss how they can be kept on supply. Ofgem recommends consumers leave the meter box unlocked if they need someone else to top up the meter. Smart meter customers should be able to top-up remotely, such as by phone, mobile application or online.

The UK government is working in lock step with the Devolved Administrations, World Health Organization, and international partners to keep the whole of the UK safe. Its approach is clinically led, based on the expert advice of the UK's Chief Medical Officer for England, the NHS and Public Health England.