

Leicestershire County Council Report – February 2024.

Flood-hit residents urged to apply for Government funding

Apply now if your business or home was affected by Storm Henk.

People are encouraged to apply for the funding which includes up to £500 for flooded homes, reduced Council Tax and business rates and business recovery grants, and more information is now available on council websites.

The Government's financial support is made up of:

A £500 grant for households - where the living accommodation has been flooded or the home has been left uninhabitable, such as when utilities have been cut off.

Eligible households may also qualify for the Council Tax Discount scheme - entitling them to a 100 per cent discount for a minimum of three months.

For affected businesses, the following schemes are available:

Business Rates Relief Scheme -100 per cent relief on business rates for a minimum of three months. To qualify, flood water must have entered the property, or the flooding seriously impacted upon the business's ability to trade from the property during Storm Henk.

Business Recovery Grant - A grant payment of £2,500 for those severely affected by Storm Henk, with criteria closely aligned with the Business Rate Relief Scheme.

These are being managed by district and borough councils and application forms, eligibility criteria and extra information can be found on their websites, or by visiting www.leicestershire.gov.uk/flood-funding . Anyone unable to complete the form online should call their local district or borough council for support.

Leicestershire County Council will also be running a property flood grant scheme – where eligible flood-hit property owners can apply for up to £5,000 to help make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding – and more information will be available soon.

Watch out for rogue traders cashing in on storm damage

Residents who have suffered damage caused by Storm Henk are being warned by Leicestershire Trading Standards to be on their guard against rogue traders.

Leicestershire Trading Standards has issued a checklist to help people steer clear of rogue traders and doorstep scams:

Do not agree to any work on the doorstep.

Go online to search for reviews and recommendations.

Is the trader listed as a Limited Company? – if so, it should be listed on Companies House. Does the company exist? If not, the trader is giving false information about their company details.

Obtain a minimum of three quotes by different tradespeople.

Obtain full details of each business that provides a quote, visit any website and/or social media page they hold, check their address on the Royal Mail website.

Ensure that the contract of works required, the quoted and agreed final price are all received in writing.

Never pay in cash - use a secure method such as bank transfer or credit card.

Do not feel pressured to pay prior to any work being conducted. A reputable builder will not request money up front for work that has not been carried out. If the trader is legitimate, they won't mind waiting for you to come back to them once you have made an informed decision. Be wary of those that say they can start straight away, whatever reason they give you.

For contracts over the value of £42, traders must give you a notice that you have 14 days to change your mind and cancel the contract. An exception is if work needs to be carried out in an emergency or at your express request, but you must waive these rights in writing.

Has the trader offered to take you to the bank to withdraw money? If so, this is considered an 'aggressive practice', so consider this a warning sign

Speak to friends or family before parting with any money if you are unsure.

If you feel in immediate danger, call the police on 999 or for a non-urgent matter, call 101

For more advice and guidance, call 0808 223 1133 or visit [Citizens Advice](#). To report a rogue trader, visit our [Trading Standards website](#).

Hospital discharge grant to support unpaid carers still available

Carers looking after a person in the county who has recently been discharged from hospital may be eligible through the Leicestershire County Council scheme, funded by the Government's Discharge Funding grant.

To qualify for the council funded grant, carers aged over 18 will need to show that the cared-for person:

Lives in Leicestershire and is also aged over 18.

Has been discharged from hospital during the past four weeks (at the time of applying).

Needs the carer for help and support to keep them safe.

Needs a level of support that has seen additional costs for the carer since the hospital discharge.

The grant scheme is being administered by Voluntary Action South Leicestershire (VASL) on behalf of the county council.

Carers must apply within four weeks of the person they care for being discharged from hospital. The application form is available on the [Support for Carers website](#).

Carers can also call VASL on 01858 468543 or email maureen@supportforcarers.org and the team will complete the application form on their behalf.

County food partnership receives prestigious honour

The Good Food Leicestershire initiative has won a Sustainable Food Places Silver Award.

The Leicestershire County Council-run Good Food Leicestershire initiative, which works with cross-sector partners to tackle issues from reducing food poverty to diet related ill-health, has been given a silver award from Sustainable Food Places.

Projects include the community fridges in Coalville, Hinckley, Market Harborough and Wigston Magna which have prevented hundreds of tonnes of

food from going to waste. There is also a mobile pantry planned in Melton to help rural areas with food insecurity.

To learn more about sustainable food in Leicestershire, and to sign up to the newsletter, visit [the Good Food Leicestershire website](#).

Free courses available to help people to boost their number confidence

Two free courses which aim to help adults improve their number confidence and reduce costs are running at venues across the county over the next couple of months.

The courses are open to anyone aged 19 and over who either doesn't have a maths GCSE at grade C/4 or equivalent, or who has lost their skills with numbers.

They are being offered by Multiply – a three-year government-funded programme to help adults in Leicestershire improve their numeracy skills and use them in everyday settings in practical ways.

In the [Cook, Meet and Eat](#) course, participants are shown how numbers are used in cooking. They get to create a nutritious, low-cost meal with free recipe cards and ingredients provided and learn some top tips on how to reduce food costs.

The [Keeping Tabs of Costs](#) course helps people to budget better by showing how to compare prices to get the best value and keep track of costs.

Both courses are running between now and the end of March. Cook, Meet and Eat is running at the Polish Social Club in Loughborough, Venture House in Melton Mowbray, The Hub in Syston and Moira Village Hall.

Keeping Tabs of Costs is open for enrolments at Coalville Library, Hinckley Library, and at the Moira Centre and Fearon Hall, both in Loughborough.

More information and sign-ups are available by calling 0800 988 0308 or online.

Family hub network reaches countywide across Leicestershire

Leicestershire County Council launched 19 hubs in 2023, with seven more due to be up and running by the end of March. The Family Hubs network support to Leicestershire parents, carers and families continues to grow across the county.

Since officially launching at the end of May 2023, families have had access to a host of services in their local communities, ranging from antenatal support, new parents groups and 1-to-1 clinics helping people with issues such as mental health, money and housing support.

Families can also visit a Family Hub at their local children and family wellbeing centre or Leicestershire library to join in activities including Stay and Play, Library Wriggly Readers and Holiday Activity & Food (HAF) sessions.

Family Hubs are open to all families and young people, whether they are looking for support on more serious topics, or hoping to take part in a fun, family activity.

Leicestershire is one of 12 local authorities to secure a slice of a £12 million pot of grant funding to transform the way services are delivered for families.

For more information on Family Hubs in Leicestershire and to find one near you, email familyhubs@leics.gov.