Household support fund family vouchers

**Frequently Asked Questions**

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# Overview

The household support fund family vouchers scheme provides eligible families with a one-off supermarket voucher worth £70 per eligible child.

Families in Portsmouth can apply for a voucher in February and March 2023.

# Eligibility

To be eligible, you must meet all of the following criteria.

1. You must be resident in Portsmouth City Council's area (PO1 - PO6);
2. You must be responsible for a child born on or after 1 September 2006, OR be at least 10 weeks pregnant;
3. You must not have received a £70 voucher for this child from a school or childcare provider in December 2022 or January 2023;
4. You must have a total household earned and unearned income (excluding benefits and tax credits) of below £935 per month (or £863 per four weeks if paid weekly, fortnightly or every four weeks) in the latest pay period prior to your application, OR be registered for the Healthy Start scheme;
5. You must have submitted a complete application before the scheme closes.

This can include parents who meet all criteria above, who have children who are home-schooled (elective home educated), who attend independent schools in Portsmouth, or who live in Portsmouth and attend school outside the city.

# Entitlement

One £70 supermarket voucher eCode per eligible child, or per eligible pregnant person.

# How do I apply?

Applications must be made using the online form at [www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/benefits-and-support/help-and-support/money-advice/household-support-fund/](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/benefits-and-support/help-and-support/money-advice/household-support-fund/)

If you are unable to complete your application online and upload relevant photos or scanned images of documents, you can get face-to-face support by visiting:

Advice Portsmouth - for anyone who lives or works in Portsmouth:

<https://adviceportsmouth.org.uk/>

Your area housing office - if you're a council tenant:

<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/contact-us/#housing>

# Evidence

You will be asked to upload evidence about your circumstances. Please supply clear scanned images or photos of the relevant documents.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proof of identity | Any of the following:  Bank or building society statement  credit card statement  household bill such as a gas or electric bill  landline phone bill  valid EU or UK driving licence |
| If you are receiving Healthy Start payments | Healthy Start payment card showing recipient name |
| If you are working | Payslips for the last month or four weeks, depending how often you are paid |
| If you are receiving Universal Credit | Your most recent Universal Credit statement, showing:  Which month it is for  The number of children in your household (if any)  The earnings or self-employed income used in the assessment |
| If you are receiving any of the following:  Child Benefit  Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance  Income-related Employment and Support Allowance  Pension Credit  Child Tax Credit  Working Tax Credit | Your most recent award letter for each benefit or tax credit you are receiving, showing:  Your name  Address  Date of the letter  The number of children included in your assessment  The amount of benefit or tax credit you are entitled to |

If an application is submitted without all of the evidence needed, you will be contacted by email within 14 days, giving you another 14 days to provide the evidence. This time period may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

# Decisions

You will be contacted by email within 14 days to tell you the outcome of your application, which will be either:

1. Eligible, and value of eCode awarded
2. Ineligible
3. Application incomplete - further information or evidence required

There is no right to appeal a decision, but you can ask for the decision to be reviewed if you believe it has not been based on the correct information. A review can consider the decision whether to award a voucher, and the value of the voucher awarded.

To request a review of a decision, you must reply to the email telling you the decision on your application, or email [hsfapplication-basedschemes@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:hsfapplication-basedschemes@portsmouthcc.gov.uk), within 14 days of receiving the decision on your application.

# How is the payment made?

Eligible recipients will be sent an eCode to the email address provided in your application, using the Edenred voucher system. The email will be sent by [noreply@edenred.co.uk](mailto:noreply@edenred.co.uk), headed “Congratulations, we have exciting news for you”.

Please check your junk and spam folders, as both the decision and eCode emails may go there, depending on your inbox settings.

The maximum eCode value is £200:

* Parents entitled to £70 or £140 will receive one eCode to the value of their entitlement.
* Parents entitled to £210, £280 or £350 will receive 2 emails with 2 different eCodes.
* Parents entitled to £420, £490 or £560 will receive 3 emails with 3 different eCodes etc.

# Redeeming your eCode

The eCode is a unique 16 digit code that you use to create a supermarket voucher, by visiting Edenred's redemption website at [www.selectyourcompliment.co.uk/grocery](http://www.selectyourcompliment.co.uk/grocery) to create the vouchers of your choice, up to the total value of your eCode. The link to the redemption website is included in the eCode email.

You can use the eCode to create a voucher for one supermarket for the full amount, or split the amount into vouchers for different supermarkets.  The supermarkets available are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Aldi | Asda |
| Company Shop | Farmfoods |
| Iceland | Marks and Spencer |
| McColls | Morrisons |
| Sainsbury's | Tesco |
| John Lewis / Waitrose |  |

**Please note**, it is not possible to change the supermarket once you have redeemed your eCode, because there is no way for PCC or Edenred to get a refund on a redeemed eCode.

Vouchers are sent by email to the email address you provide when you visit the redemption website, usually within an hour of placing your order, although occasionally there are delays. Please check your junk and spam folders.

The voucher has a barcode which will be scanned at the supermarket checkout for payment. This can be presented either on a smartphone or printed out.

Anyone who has access to an eCode or voucher can use it, there is no ID check, so please treat eCodes and vouchers as if they are cash and keep them safe.

# How can the voucher be used?

You can use the voucher to buy anything in your chosen supermarket, except for age-restricted items (e.g. alcohol, lottery tickets etc). The voucher can be used for groceries, clothing, bedding or any other household essentials.

Supermarket vouchers do not have to be spent in full on one occasion. The remaining balance will stay on the voucher, and you can use the same voucher barcode at a later date to use some or all of the remaining balance. The remaining balance can be checked by following the instructions on the voucher.

# How long are vouchers valid for?

Voucher eCodes are valid for three months. If the eCode is not redeemed into a supermarket voucher in this time, it will expire, and you will no longer be entitled to the voucher.

Once redeemed into a supermarket voucher, the voucher expiry date varies according to each supermarket's rules, but all supermarket vouchers are valid for at least 12 months.

# Exclusions

This scheme has a limited amount of funding, and it will close on 31 March 2023, or sooner if the funding is used up. Any applications received after the scheme closes on 31 March 2023 will not be eligible for a payment.