

BP Benevolent Fund (bp Helios Fund)

Find out more about our one-off cost-of-living assistance grant worth £2,500 and ongoing financial support

Dear fellow bp alumni,

Aegon is sending this mailing at the request of bp and the BP Benevolent Fund (which is being renamed the 'bp Helios Fund').

The BP Benevolent Fund is a registered charity (registered charity number 803778) and has been operating since 1990 to help former bp employees and their dependants experiencing hardship. We do this through tax-free lump sum payments (grants) to purchase specific equipment (e.g. a new boiler) or help cover costs more generally. Much like a pension fund, the Benevolent Fund is governed by a board of trustees comprising of current and former bp employees.

The bp Helios Fund

Earlier this year, the trustees began making changes to modernise and futureproof the BP Benevolent Fund, and we intend to rename it the 'bp Helios Fund' to strengthen and align its purpose to support former bp employees and their dependants.

With additional funding from bp, the bp Helios Fund will not only continue to provide financial assistance to those most in need, but will also be providing a one-off cost-of-living assistance grant for a specified period (details on page 2).

Importantly, we continue to simplify the application process to make it easier to apply for additional support when it's most needed. We'll have more about this on our new website:

www.bpheliosfund.co.uk.

We are positive about this new chapter, and we look forward to assisting you.

If you have more questions, please check to see if they are already answered on the frequently asked questions (FAQs) page of the website or included in this leaflet on pages 4 to 6. If not, you can use the feedback form on our website, **www.bpheliosfund.co.uk**, to send comments or questions. We can't respond individually to everyone, but we will update our FAQs page based on the key themes we see developing.

Warm regards,

Ian Rushby

Chairman of the BP Benevolent Fund (the bp Helios Fund)

Cost-of-living assistance grant

bp has provided additional funding to support the bp Helios Fund (BP Benevolent Fund) to be able to give a one-off, cost-of-living assistance grant for applicants that meet the criteria set out below. Provided you meet the criteria set out below, the grant is non-taxable.

Please note, only one application per household will be accepted.

Eligibility

You are eligible for this grant if you meet the following criteria:

- you are currently living in the UK
- you are aged 60 or over or can show you have taken benefits from your bp pension (with Aegon) that accrued during your service with bp
- your household income is no more than £30,000 per annum before tax. This includes your income and your spouse/partner's income (if applicable) such as a bp pension, any pension income from other employers, state pensions and benefits (other than disability support), and other income such as rental or investment income
- you worked at bp or one of its affiliates in the UK for at least five years*; or
- if you are the spouse/partner of a deceased former bp employee, and either receive a bp pension as their dependant or you are aged over 60, the former bp employee should have worked for bp or one of its affiliates in the UK for at least five years*.

Amount of grant

Each eligible household will be provided with a one-off, non-taxable grant of £2,500.

How to apply

Applications for the cost-of-living assistance grant open on 1 December 2023 and close 31 March 2024. The application form, which is enclosed with this leaflet, can also be found on the bp Helios Fund website: **www.bpheliosfund.co.uk**

You will need to provide some information to support your income statement on the application form:

- a copy of bank statements showing monthly income for the last three months for you and your spouse/partner (if applicable)
- or, if you complete one, a copy of the latest tax return for you and your spouse/partner (if applicable).

If you cannot provide evidence of the above, please refer to the bp Helios Fund website where you can find support. Please note, Pension Liaison Officers (PLOs) only provide support to BP Pension Fund members.

The application form and photocopies or scans of supporting documents can be sent either by email to: bpheliosfund@bp.com

or via post to: COLAG
BP Benevolent Fund
BP ICBT, Building C
Chertsey Road
Sunbury on Thames
TW16 7LN

If you submit your application by email, this will speed up the processing time. If you apply by post, please do not send any original documents. We cannot guarantee that these will be returned to you. If your application is approved, the cost-of-living assistance grant will be paid into the personal bank account that you provide. The bank account provided must be in your name.

*This condition is waived if you retired from bp service on an incapacity pension or if the person who formally worked at bp died in bp service

Other assistance available

If you need additional financial support, whether you are eligible for a cost-of-living assistance grant or not, you can apply for a standard financial assistance grant.

We are able to help with a wide range of support and services but cannot help with ongoing costs, such as care home bills. Where the NHS does not provide prompt, full, free care (such as dentistry), it is possible that the bp Helios Fund could help you with medical bills.

The types of things the bp Helios Fund can support with include (not a definitive list):

- mobility scooters
- car repairs
- household repairs
- ramps, stairlifts or items that enable greater access or mobility around the house
- cash payment in event of severe financial hardship.

Who can apply for a standard financial assistance grant?

All former bp UK employees and their dependants, regardless of the length of bp service, can apply.

There is no limit to how many times you can apply for a standard grant. Each application will be considered individually based on your needs, and a decision will be made as quickly as possible.

Application forms for standard grants are available on the bp Helios Fund website:

www.bpheliosfund.co.uk

Standard grants are generally tax free. However, in some circumstances, tax may be applicable, and you will be responsible for paying any tax incurred.

Frequently asked questions

Cost-of-living assistance grant (COLAG)

1. What is included in the calculation for annual household income of no more than £30,000 (before tax)?

Income includes all the following in respect to both you and your spouse/partner (if applicable):

- employment income
- income from private (company) pensions, including bp
- income from state pension
- state benefits (e.g., housing benefit, pension credits), but excluding disability benefits
- income from rental properties
- income from other charities
- income from investments.

You will need to provide some information to support the income figures in the application form:

- a copy of bank statements showing monthly income for the last three months for you and your spouse/partner (if applicable); or
- if you complete one, a copy of the latest tax return for you and your spouse/partner (if applicable). Note: state disability benefit information should be excluded from this calculation.

2. I worked for bp or one of its group companies in the UK. However, I now live outside of the UK. Do I qualify?

No, the cost-of-living assistance grant (COLAG) is available only to those currently living in the UK.

3. I'm the spouse/partner of a deceased bp employee. Do I qualify for the cost-of-living assistance grant?

Yes, provided you meet the following criteria:

- you are currently living in the UK

- your deceased spouse/partner worked for bp or one of its affiliates in the UK for at least five years*
- your household income is no more than £30,000 per annum before tax. This includes your income and your spouse/partner's income (if applicable) such as a bp pension, any pension income from service with other employers, state pensions and benefits (other than disability support), and other income such as investment and rental income.

4. I worked for a part of bp that has now been sold to another company. Am I still eligible for the COLAG?

Yes, provided you meet the following criteria:

- you are currently living in the UK
- you are aged 60 or older or can show you have taken benefits from your bp pension (with Aegon) accrued during your service with bp
- your household income is no more than £30,000 per annum before tax. This includes your income and your spouse/partner's income (if applicable) such as a bp pension, any pension income from other employers, state pensions and benefits (other than disability support), and other income such as rental income
- you worked for bp or one of its affiliates in the UK for at least five years*.

5. Do you need me to send original documents or certified copies?

No. Please do not send any original documents. We also do not require any documents to be certified. Please only send scanned documents by email or photocopies by post. Please ensure that all scans/ photocopies are legible. If you send any original documents by post, we cannot guarantee that the original documents will be returned to you.

*This condition is waived if your deceased spouse/partner retired from bp on incapacity benefit or died in bp service.

6. How long will it take to process my claim?

All applications will receive an acknowledgment following initial processing. This will be received more quickly if you apply by email.

Please ensure that your application is complete, legible and signed, and that you have included the required evidence of income to assist faster processing of your application. If anything is missing, or your application is illegible or unsigned, this will delay the process.

We will aim to process applications within six weeks of sending you an acknowledgment of receipt. You will receive an email (or letter if you have not provided us with an email address) to confirm the outcome of your application as soon as a decision has been made. Your payment should then follow shortly after.

Please note that application processing times will vary depending on the volume of applications received. However, all applications received by 31 March 2024 will be processed.

7. Both myself and my spouse/partner worked for bp. Do we both qualify for the COLAG?

No, the COLAG is a one-off lump sum of £2,500 per household.

8. I used to work at a bp petrol station (the retail part of the business). Am I eligible for the COLAG?

No. If you used to work in the retail part of bp, e.g., in a bp petrol station, the Retail Trust (a separate Trust) may be able to provide you with support. To find out how they may help, and any eligibility criteria, please visit www.retailtrust.org.uk

9. My application for a COLAG was rejected. Can I challenge the decision?

There are several reasons why your application might have been rejected. If your application was incomplete, illegible or unsigned (and you did not correct these errors within a reasonable period after receiving an email or letter from us setting out the errors), then your application will have been automatically closed and rejected. The circumstances in which a decision will change is limited. If you believe the bp Helios Fund has overlooked something

in your application, please respond to the email or letter you received, which contains contact details for escalation and an explanation for why your application was rejected.

10. My household income is over £30,000 per annum (before tax) but I am still struggling. Are there other ways the Fund can help me?

You may be eligible for a standard financial assistance grant. Please refer to the bp Helios Fund website www.bpheliosfund.co.uk for an application form and details of the information required.

11. My parent is eligible but unwell. Can I complete the application form on behalf of my parent?

This is acceptable provided you have your parent's permission to do so or are otherwise authorised to do so. If eligible for the COLAG, payment will be made to the same bank account that was provided in the application form.

12. Do you need information about any savings?

For the COLAG, we are not requesting details of any savings you may have. However, any income from savings is required (e.g., interest from a savings account or dividends from shares).

If you are applying for a standard financial assistance grant, the bp Helios Fund does require additional details such as any savings and debts that you may have.

13. How do I know my data will be confidential and secure?

The BP Benevolent Fund Trustee Ltd is responsible for your personal information and is registered at Chertsey Road, Sunbury on Thames, Middlesex TW16 7BP. We will use the information you provide in the application form to determine if you are eligible for the COLAG. For more information on how we process your personal data, please see our privacy notice on the bp Helios Fund website: www.bpheliosfund.co.uk

14. Where can I get support if I have a question?

If you need assistance, please check the bp Helios Fund website:
www.bpheliosfund.co.uk

15. Will this impact my means-tested state benefits?

This should be a charitable grant and should not impact your means-tested state benefits to the best of our knowledge. Notwithstanding, the bp Helios Fund is not responsible for how this grant may impact any means-tested state benefits you may receive. If you are receiving means-tested state benefits, you may want to check the point with the appropriate government department.

16. I can only provide my net income figures. Is this okay?

If you do not have a tax return and are sending us bank statements, please make it clear whether the income is before or after tax by adding a note. If it is after tax, we will make an assumption about tax.

17. I do not know my exact employment dates. Are you able to provide them?

No, please provide us with estimated dates of employment in the application form and your service will be checked on receipt and process of your application. If you cannot estimate your dates, you can leave it blank.

18. Can you provide more clarity on income earned from investments?

Interest earned from investments should be disclosed in your application form, regardless of when it was earned e.g., quarterly, or monthly. Please accompany your application with your last three months bank statements or latest tax return. If the interest earned does not show in your last three months bank statements, you do not need to provide further evidence of the interest earned.

19. Is the cost-of-living assistance grant repayable?

No, the grant does not need to be repaid.

20. Does a pension that has not yet started being drawn (a deferred pension) need to be disclosed in my application?

This is viewed as deferred income and therefore does not need to be disclosed in your application. Please only include pensions that have started to be paid.

21. Is this a scam?

No, this is not a scam. Official communications were issued by the BP Pension Fund on behalf of the BP Benevolent Fund (bp Helios Fund) due to their access to a distribution list. The new website: **www.bpheliosfund.co.uk** also holds all official documentation.

22. I live in a care home. Can I apply?

Yes, you can. This makes no difference to your application as long as the care home is a UK address.

23. Can I apply before 1 December 2023?

Yes, all applications submitted before 1 December 2023 will be accepted. Processing, however, will only start from 1 December 2023.

24. How do I know my data is safe?

To provide some reassurance on security of the information you provide us:

- we have undertaken robust digital security checks to ensure the systems used by the administrator are secure
- postal applications are carefully stored
- physical applications and evidence will be shredded by the administrator once loaded digitally for processing
- we have robust data privacy agreements in place. You can find a copy of the agreement in the documentation tab on the website.

25. I live with my children. Does my children's income count towards the household annual income I need to disclose?

No, only you and your spouse/partner's (if applicable) income is considered under household income.

26. I am applying as a dependant/spouse of my deceased partner. Do I put my National Insurance (NI) number?

Yes, please provide your NI number and not your deceased partner's. However, please provide your deceased partners dates of service with bp and what part of the business they worked in.

27. Does my service at a bp affiliate prior to being bought by bp count towards my total years of service?

Yes, it does. Please include this in your start date in the application form.

28. Do I need to declare disability income in my application?

No, to confirm, disability benefits such as an Attendance Allowance do not need to be declared as income for the COLAG.

Standard grants

1. What information do you need to consider a financial grant?

To enable the bp Helios Fund to review the case, they need a completed application form, bank statements and a minimum of two quotes for the service or goods asked to be provided.

2. Is there a limit to how many times I can apply?

No, we often receive repeat applications, and each one is considered on its own merits. Just because a previous application was declined does not mean that future requests will not be accepted, and vice-versa.

3. What charges are there for help?

None, the Fund does not charge any interest.

4. If successful, where or who do you pay the money to?

If the bp Helios Fund approves a grant, the money will be paid directly to the provider or supplier of goods/services.

5. What are the criteria for applying for a hardship grant?

Where an applicant is in severe financial need, the Fund could consider a hardship grant. This is a one-off grant of up to £1,000 that can be paid quickly to meet a significant short-term need. This could include an outstanding bill that, if not paid, would result in services being cut-off. In these cases, the bp Helios Fund would speak to the applicant to gather details of the urgent need and gain an overview of their financial situation. Due to the urgency of the case, only a completed application form and details of the significant financial hardship are required. Only in rare circumstances should an applicant get more than one hardship grant. It does not impact the ability to request other types of support from the Fund.

6. I have further questions on the standard financial assistance grants. Where can I get support?

Please refer to the bp Helios Fund website (www.bpheliosfund.co.uk) for where you can find support.

7. I am in debt – can the bp Helios Fund help?

The Fund is not able to provide financial advice. In the first instance, anyone in debt should seek help from a qualified debt support charity. If you are working with a charity and they recommend a specific area where the bp Helios Fund might provide help, then we can consider it.