

# **Local Welfare Provision Policy**

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# **Local Welfare Provision (LWP)**

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to specify how Birmingham City Council Benefit Service will operate the Local Welfare Provision (LWP) scheme and to outline the factors that will be considered when deciding if a LWP payment can be awarded.

The scheme will seek to assist vulnerable people in meeting their needs for subsistence or financial support where they are unable to meet their immediate short

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Emergency Duty Team

x Methods of payments will be respectful of the dignity of those who apply

Each case will be treated strictly on its merits and all customers will receive equal

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7KH %HQHILW 6HUYLFH ZLOO ZKHUH SRVVLEOH VHHN WR checking the availability of state Benefit and other sources of financial assistance that may be available to the customer upon application.

There are two types of areas that will be considered when assessing applications:

## 2.1 Crisis Grants

Crisis Grants (CGs) are designed to meet expenses that cannot be met from another source, that have arisen as a consequence of a disaster and must be the only way of preventing or mitigating serious risk to health or safety to the applicant or a member of their immediate family. Payments would routinely be made to cover the following risks:

- x No access to essential needs (food and heating)
- x Imminent deterioration in health
- x Of children being taken into care
- x Breakdown of the family unit

)RU WKH SXUSRVHV RI WKLW SROLF\ WKH GHILQLWLRQ F HYHQW WKDW FDXVHV JUHDW GLVWHJUDV\ WKH GHILQLWLRQ F WUXFWLQJ explosions or a house fire, but it is not expected that a minor mishap or damage or failure of a household item would be included in this situation in most circumstances. A disaster could also cover having no financial funds available to meet daily living expenses. This list is not exhaustive.

## 3. Claiming and Awarding a Crisis Grant

### 3.1 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for a crisis grant all of the following conditions must be satisfied. Applicants must:

- x Be a resident of Birmingham. This is to avoid people claiming fraudulently across the country.
- x Be aged 16 or over;
- x Be without sufficient resources to meet their immediate short-term needs or those of their family;
- x Not be a person subject to immigration control or have no recourse to public funds.

### **3.2 How to apply**

An application for a Crisis Grant must be made through the online application via the [& R X Q F L O ¶ V Z H E V L W H](#)

Where assistance is required in completing the form, applicants are encouraged to use the existing support mechanisms already in place such as;

- x Voluntary Sector agencies
- x Probation Offices
- x Neighbourhood Offices
- x [& K L O G U H Q ¶ V & H Q W U H V](#)
- x Homeless Centres
- x Charities
- x Housing Advice organisations (for example City Council or Registered Social Landlords)

This list is not exhaustive as there are many such support agencies available across the City.

### **3.3 Applications made by the customer**

- x The applicant completes the online Crisis Grant application
- x Once the application is received by the Benefit Service, it will be assessed. If the form is incomplete or further information is required, the team will call or

customers making repeat applications for Crisis Grants may be signposted to relevant advice and support services.

Once the funding has been exhausted for the financial year, no further awards will be made.

### **3.6 Decision Outcomes**

Once all information to support an application has been received a decision will be made on the same day where possible, or within 48 hours.

Applicants will be sent a letter explaining the decision outcome for both successful and unsuccessful applications. This will include:

- x The amount of CG awarded
- x

### 3.8 Applications made by Service Providers

For Service Providers, the following process will be followed:

- x Customer contacts the service provider for assistance. Service providers complete their internal assessments and identifies the customer may be eligible for a Crisis Grant.
- x Service provider supports the customer to complete the online Crisis Grant application
- x Once the application is received by the Benefit Service, it will be assessed. If the form is incomplete or further information is required, the team will call or write to the service provider or customer for the necessary information.
- x Once received, the Benefit Service will process the application and notify the

## 4. Community Support Grant

A Community Support Grant will be considered to support a return to, or allow a person to remain in, the community or to ease exceptional pressure on families.

Customers will be referred to other relevant departments where applicable, such as Adults & Communities, Children, Young People & Families or Homeless Prevention Team.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances such as someone who lives at home and receives support from their family or family members are unable to assist due to the demands of their own financial, health or general circumstances, applications from single people living with other family members, will not be awarded as they are likely to have access to assistance from other family members.

### Claiming and Awarding a Community Support Grant Award

#### 4.1 Eligibility Criteria

Support Grants will be considered for vulnerable people in financial crisis to support a return to or to allow a person to remain in the community or to ease exceptional financial pressure on families.

The Applicant:

- x Must be a resident of Birmingham. This is to avoid people claiming fraudulently across the country. Consideration will be given to those fleeing domestic violence and resettling in Birmingham.
- x Be aged 16 or over
- x Must be in receipt of, or expected to receive Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Related Employment Support or any type of Pension Credit (currentl \ N Q R Z Q D V S R S W H G ¶ % H Q H I L W R U
- x If not in receipt of any of the above benefits be able to demonstrate that the individual is without sufficient resources to meet their immediate short-term



needs or those of their family and demonstrate that the need cannot be met by another source

- x Not be a person subject to immigration control or have no recourse to public funds.

This will change with the introduction of Universal Credit and the policy will be updated at this time.

An application for a Community Support Grant does not give automatic entitlement to

The officer will consider the full circumstances before deciding whether or not to award a Community Support Grant payment. In deciding whether to award a grant, the assessor will take into account the following as applicable to the application:

- x The exceptional nature of the customer and their family circumstances;
- x Will the grant keep the family together, will it support a young person in the transition to adult life, or will it assist in the safeguarding of a vulnerable adult or child;
- x



### 4.3 Forms of support

Community Support Grants will be considered for the provision of;

- x Furniture
- x White goods
- x Household goods

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other agencies that may assist.

The applicant will be required to provide all information needed in order to make a determination on their claim. Further investigation may be considered if, for example, the information supplied is insufficient; the information supplied is improbable or contradictory; the application is for a new item when the cost of repair would be less.

Information provided may be shared with other council departments and /or relevant external organisations, such as the Department for Work and Pensions in order to check information, protect public funds and in order to identify any additional help and support that might be available.

### 4.4 Award Values

There will be no minimum payment for Community Support Grants as each case will be assessed on individual circumstances. Award values will be at the discretion of the Council but will be based on standard prices for items required to include the cost of delivery.

- o The amount of CSG awarded and the items authorised
- o The right to request a review
- x Alternative options will be in place for those who do not have a permanent contact address. This might include a letter to the agency acting on behalf of the applicant or a letter being sent to an alternative address provided by the individual.
- x The items will be delivered to the property address on the date specified.
- x No alternative cash payments will be made

#### **4.6 Review/ Reconsideration**

An applicant can ask for reconsideration if they can demonstrate there has been:

- o a factual error based on the decision made or
- o an oversight on a significant piece of evidence or
- o where new evidence has come to light, that was not provided with the original application.

In these circumstances, the request must be made within 10 working days of the original decision. Any request outside of these timescales will not be considered.

Such requests must be made in writing to:

Benefit Service, PO Box 8267, Birmingham, B4 7XF.

This review will be carried out by the Benefit Service Appeals team. Their decision will be final with no other right of appeal.

#### **4.7 Applications made by Service Providers**

For Service Providers, the following process will be followed:

- x Customer contacts the service provider for assistance. Service providers complete their internal assessments and identifies the customer may be eligible for a Community Support Grant.
  - x Service provider supports the customer to complete the online Community Support Grant application
  - x Once the application is received by the Benefit Service, it will be assessed. If the form is incomplete or further information is required, the team will call or write to the service provider or customer for the necessary information.
  - x Once received, the Benefit Service will process the application and notify the
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## **5. Excluded items and services for Crisis Grant and Community Support Grant applications**

The Local Welfare Provision for Birmingham is designed to provide financial assistance to vulnerable people to meet their immediate essential living costs.

Crisis Grants/Community Support Grants will **not** be awarded for certain items not considered to be part of this scheme. A full list of the excluded items is shown at

Appendix 1.

## **6. Monitoring arrangements and managing the Local Welfare Provision Scheme**

The Benefit Service will undertake monitoring of the number, amount and period of CGs and CSGs awards in relation to Local Welfare Provision budget on a monthly basis. There must be sufficient budgetary provision available to meet the City & R X Q F L O ¶ V F R P P L W P H Q W W R I X Q G W K H V F K H P H

The Benefit Service will also monitor cases where a request has been refused to ensure decisions are being made fairly and consistently. In line with our general equality duties, we are required, in the exercise of our functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

By monitoring a sample of both successful and refused cases, we will be able to proactively identify any potential inequalities by keeping the outcomes under review. This data may formulate decisions in relation to future Local Welfare Provision policy and interventions for Birmingham.

## **7. Publicity**

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all relevant stakeholders and partnership organisations will be made aware of the scheme.

## **8. Fraud & Error**

Birmingham City Council is committed to the identification and prevention of fraud in all its forms. Where it is alleged or considered an application may be made fraudulently, the matter will be investigated and if fraud is found to have occurred, action will be taken including criminal proceedings, where relevant.

