

Local Welfare Provision (LWP)

What is happening in Birmingham
from April 2013?



The end of the discretionary Social Fund: 31 March 2013

- From 31 March 2013, Crisis Loans and Community Care grants will be abolished.
- Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will no longer administer these payments

The introduction of Local Welfare Provision: 1 April 2013

- From 1 April 2013, Birmingham City Council will administer the LWP scheme.
- The LWP scheme will provide discretionary Crisis Grants and Community Support Grants
- LWP will be a final option for people that cannot afford essential items to live safe, healthy and independent lives in their community.



How will the scheme support vulnerable people in Crisis?

- For those in crisis, successful applicants will be awarded pre paid cards for ASDA. This will enable the purchase of emergency food and essentials.
- For those moving into Independent Living and need assistance, successful applicants will be awarded basic furniture and white goods. These items will be delivered and installed.

There will be no cash alternative as part of the LWP scheme.



- The scheme will not make crisis grant awards for lost or stolen money, cash advances for benefit payments, benefit spent, sanctions or disallowances
- It is very important that applicants demonstrate where else they have applied before LWP applications can be considered
- The operation of this scheme is at the Council's discretion and applicants do not have an automatic right to an award



How many Awards can someone receive?

- Applicants will be restricted to no more than 2 awards within a 12 month rolling period.
- This could be 2 Community Support Grants; 2 Crisis Grants or a combination of the two.
- The 12 month period will start from the date their first application was received.
- In exceptional circumstances, based on disabilities, a 3rd application may be considered.



The scheme will not replicate the role of statutory services

- This scheme will not replicate or reduce the responsibility of statutory services that have a responsibility for providing assistance in crisis or community support.
- If someone requires financial help before receiving their first payment of benefit or needs help to meet emergency or unforeseen expenses, referrals should be made to the DWP Budgeting Loans and Short Term Benefit Advances if they are entitled to an 'out of work related benefit'.



Who is eligible for support?

To be eligible for support, an applicant must be:

- Aged 16 or over with a Birmingham address
- Be without sufficient resources to meet their immediate short-term needs or those of their families
- Have demonstrated that the need cannot be met by another source
- Not be a person subject to immigration control or have no recourse to public funds.



- All applicants will need to complete an application form, which is available from Birmingham City Council's website www.birmingham.gov.uk/LWP
- Where necessary, applicants are encouraged to get help to fill this in, especially from agencies that can provide advocacy on their behalf.
- If an advocate makes an application on behalf of someone, the intended recipient must give their consent.

An application must be submitted via the website



Once an application is received, a decision maker will take into consideration:

- The applicant's eligibility
- The immediate and substantial risks to the applicants health and safety
- Whether the need can be wholly or partly met by other sources of help
- The applicants household resources (not just financial)
- Evidence (facts) that can verify the applicant's circumstances and presenting need
- Whether the applicant is receiving support through a care or resettlement plan
- The contextual factors that have contributed to the crisis or care need



- If further information is required, applicants may be contacted by telephone or through their advocate, in order to help an assessor reach a decision.
- When making decisions, an assessor will take into account the schemes budget position.
- Applicants will be notified of their decision in writing or by telephone.
- Decisions on Crisis Grants will be made within 2 working days
- Decisions on Community Support Grants will be made within 10 working days
- An award may be made in full or in part for the items or services requested.
- Some awards may be conditional upon the applicant agreeing to support on debt, employment, health or housing related matters; depending on the nature of the applicant's difficulties



- Applicants will be notified by telephone, writing or through their advocate. While we cannot guarantee an award, we will however, connect applicants with relevant sources of help and guidance that is relevant to their circumstances



Applicants can have their decisions reviewed if they can show a decision has been based on:

- A factual error that was through no fault of the applicant;
- An oversight on a significant piece of evidence; or
- New evidence has come to light – which should be timely and restricted to the events stated in the original application.

For the purpose of clarity, a review will only look at how a decision was made. It is not a process for over-turning decisions – this remains at the Council's discretion.



For further information, applicants and advocates are advised to read the award criteria for Local Welfare Provision.

