

Community support grants

In a crisis?

On benefits and can't afford essential items?

Can't afford a bed?

Kids outgrown their clothes?



No cooker?

No food?



Our community support grant scheme could help you

Talk to us - we are here to help
0116 454 1019 - 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday



What has changed?

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished community care grants and crisis loans from 1 April 2013. Before this they were paid by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP schemes were replaced with new local welfare provision administered by local authorities in England. In Leicester our scheme is called the community support grant scheme and is run by our revenues and customer support team.

What is the community support grant scheme?

The government gave us some funding to deliver the community support grant scheme to meet local priorities. The community support grant scheme supports vulnerable people who are experiencing financial difficulties. If you are in a crisis situation, or experiencing exceptional financial pressure, you may be able to get some help from this scheme. We only have a limited amount of money, so will prioritise those who are in most need.

The scheme comprises two parts:

- Crisis grant - where you require immediate financial support, because you are unable to meet daily living expenses, and you or your family (including a foster child) could experience health or safety problems without getting this grant. This could be because of sudden misfortune, or as a result of a crisis, emergency or disaster.
- Support grant - where you are suffering financial hardship, but when the need is not immediate. It could help you to return to, or remain in, the community, or to ease exceptional pressure. It is mainly used to help with expenses such as household equipment.

Support will be given in re-use goods, food parcels, prepaid cards, goods or services. Other forms of support may be available in exceptional services.

Am I eligible for a crisis or support grant?

You may be eligible for a crisis or support grant if you meet all of the following conditions:

- are a resident of Leicester, or are able to demonstrate a link to the city
- are aged 16 or over
- are suffering a crisis
- are without sufficient resources to meet your immediate short term needs or those of your family
- are not an excluded person
- have needs which are covered by the community support grant scheme
- are not subject to immigration control
- have not received more than two crisis or support grants in the current financial year.

Please note, there are more detailed restrictions on who can apply for a crisis or support grant and what they can be used for. To find out further information, please contact us using the details on page 6.

Before you consider making an application

As the funding is limited, we will not be able to help everyone. We aim to help those most in need. You may need to consider some of the following before applying to the scheme:

- Getting debt, benefits and money advice.
- Contacting the department for work and pensions if you are awaiting a benefits decision and need some short term support.
- Contacting your utility company if your crisis is because of fuel poverty.
- Using your winter fuel allowance if you haven't already.

You can find out how to get in touch with us and other organisations who can help on pages 6 and 7.

How can I apply for a crisis grant or a support grant?

To make a claim for either, call our community support grant scheme helpline on 0116 454 1019 between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Reasonable adjustments will be made if you cannot complete a telephone application without help.

Applications can be made by yourself or someone acting on your behalf. If you are acting on behalf of an individual, then you will need to prove that you have their consent.

You will have to prove that you meet the conditions of the scheme and provide evidence of any income or capital. All income must be declared and will be taken into account, even that which is not looked at for benefits calculations, such as disability living allowance (DLA) or personal independence payments (PIP).

You will be asked if you have any immediate access to any other financial assistance or funding, so we can compare how much money you have coming in, with what you have to pay out.

If you have applied for a crisis grant before 1pm, you will find out whether you have been successful within two hours of your telephone call. If it is after 3pm, you will find out the next working day.

If you have applied for a support grant, then you will find out within 14 days, from all information received, if you have been successful.



What if I think you have made the wrong decision?

As the scheme is discretionary, there is no right to appeal. However, you may ask for a review of the decision.

You can ask us to look again at the decision within one calendar month of the date of the decision letter, when:

- you have not been awarded a crisis grant or a support grant
- you think the award should be increased
- you disagree with how long we have given you support for
- you don't think the award should have been reduced.



You must:

- submit a request in writing to us – please address it to the head of revenues and benefits and send it to the address on page 6.
- ensure we receive the request within a month of the date of the decision notice
- ensure it is signed by you or by someone who is speaking on your behalf
- tell us why you want us to review our decision, providing any new evidence.

If you still disagree with our decision, the only way you can challenge it further is through judicial review.

What help is available if I am waiting to receive a benefit?

If you are waiting for your first universal credit payment and you are struggling to meet your daily expenses, you can apply for a universal credit advance payment from the DWP. To do this you should call the universal credit helpline on 0345 600 0723.

If you are waiting to receive a benefit which is not universal credit you can apply for a Short Term Benefit Advance at your Jobcentre Plus.

You have to show you face hardship without an advance payment. If the DWP decide you are not eligible for a advance payment, you may be able to get a crisis grant through our scheme. See page 4.

More information about universal credit is on our website:

leicester.gov.uk/universalcredit

Universal credit helpline 0345 600 0723.

How can I get in touch?

We can give you advice about benefits and about managing your money. If you have any questions then you can get in touch.

Revenues and customer support

leicester.gov.uk/housingbenefit

housingbenefits@leicester.gov.uk

0116 454 1006 (Housing Benefits)

council.tax@leicester.gov.uk

0116 454 1005 (Council Tax)

You can visit us at:

Customer Service Centre, 91 Granby Street, Leicester LE1 6FB

Supporting tenants and residents (STAR)

For help and advice if you are at risk of losing your council tenancy
leicester.gov.uk/star 0116 225 4985

Welfare rights service

leicester.gov.uk/welfarerights

welfare.rights@leicester.gov.uk 0116 454 5570

They are open on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, between 1 and 4pm

Where can I get other help and support?

You can also talk to the following organisations for free and independent advice.

Citizens advice LeicesterShire

leicscab.org.uk 0300 330 1025

Community advice and law service

cals.uk.net 0116 242 1120

Shelter housing aid and research project

leicestershelter.org.uk 0116 254 6064

Universal credit

gov.uk/universal-credit

helpline **0345 600 0723**

Department for Work and Pensions

dwp.gov.uk 0345 608 8525

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a different format please
email SDIO@leicester.gov.uk

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In an emergency, out-of-hours (after 5pm and at
weekends or bank holidays) call the emergency
team on **0116 255 1606**.