

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How do I apply for a Crisis Grant or a Community Care Grant?

- You can apply for a Crisis Grant or a Community Care Grant by contacting your local [council](#).

### How long does it take for my application to be processed?

- A decision should be made on your application no later than the end of the next working day for a Crisis Grant and within 15 working days for a Community Care Grant.

### Do you have to be in receipt of a benefit to apply for a Scottish Welfare Fund grant?

- You **do not** need to be in receipt of a benefit to apply for a grant. You may be eligible to receive a grant if you are aged 16 or over and on a low income.

### Do you need to have children to get a Scottish Welfare Fund grant?

- **No** - the Scottish Welfare Fund aims to provide a safety net to a wide range of vulnerable people with low income, not just those with children.

### Can I apply if I am subject to a benefit sanction?

- **Yes** – being subject to a sanction or disallowance does not affect your eligibility.

### I have made a new application to the DWP (Department for Work and Pension), but I need help now – what should I do?

- Before contacting your local council you should seek assistance from the DWP. In some circumstances the DWP may be able to provide you with a Short Term Benefit Advance.

### Do I need to apply to the DWP for a Budgeting Loan before asking for a Scottish Welfare Fund grant?

- **No** – eligibility for the Scottish Welfare Fund is not dependent on whether you have asked for a Budgeting Loan.

### I am unhappy with the outcome of my application to the Scottish Welfare Fund, can I appeal this decision?

- **Yes** – if you do not agree with the decision made on your application, you can ask for this to be reviewed by a different decision maker. To do this, you should write to your council within 20 working days requesting this. If you are unable to do this in writing, you should contact your council to discuss alternative. If you are still unhappy, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) for an independent review. SPSO is not part of a council. More information about this service is available at: [www.spsso.org.uk/scottishwelfarefund](http://www.spsso.org.uk/scottishwelfarefund).

### I wish to complain about the way my application was handled by the council, how do I do this?

- You can find information about your local council's complaints procedure on their website, or by contacting them directly. If having been through the council's complaints procedure you remain unhappy, you can ask SPSO to look at your complaint. More information about this service is available at: [www.spsso.org.uk/complaining-spsso](http://www.spsso.org.uk/complaining-spsso)

### I owe my local council money; can I still apply for help from the Scottish Welfare Fund?

- **Yes** – your local council will not take into account any money owed to them, for example, in relation to council tax, rent arrears or parking tickets when considering your application. You cannot, however, pay off debt using a Scottish Welfare Fund grant.

### Does the Scottish Welfare Fund experience depend on where you live?

- **Yes** – the Scottish Welfare Fund is delivered on behalf of the Scottish Government by every council in Scotland. The Scottish Government issues statutory [guidance](#) to councils in order to promote consistency, however, councils have extensive discretion over how the scheme is delivered in their area. By allowing councils to decide how to take applications and what to award, the scheme can be tailored to specific local needs and parameters, providing a more holistic service.

**Do I have to agree to work with other services, like debt advice, if I apply for a Scottish Welfare Fund grant?**

- **No** – you don't have to take any other help, but the council may suggest other services which could help you resolve the underlying cause of a crisis, or help strengthen your ability to live independently.

**I have previously applied to the Scottish Welfare Fund, can I apply again?**

- **Yes** – every application will be looked at on a case-by-case basis. There are, however, some rules about repeat applications to keep in mind. For example, local authorities are not required to consider an application if a person has already applied for the same type of assistance within the last 28 days and nothing has changed. Also, while there is no limit on the number of Community Care Grants an individual can receive in any one year, Crisis Grants are normally limited to three in a rolling 12-month period.

**Will I be sent to a food bank if I apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund?**

- **No** – food banks will not be used to fulfil a grant. If your application is unsuccessful, however, your council may consider signposting you to a local food bank to meet any immediate need.

**Does the Scottish Government provide Scottish Welfare Fund grants?**

- **No** – the Scottish Welfare Fund is delivered on behalf of Scottish Government by all 32 councils. The Scottish Government publishes guidance setting out how the scheme should be administered. Councils have extensive discretion over how the scheme is delivered in their area.

**If I receive a grant from the Scottish Welfare Fund, do I need to pay this back?**

- **No** – any grant provided by the Scottish Welfare Fund does not need to be paid back. Loans are not given through the Scottish Welfare Fund.

**I am about to move to a different part of Scotland, who should I apply to for help?**

- If you are moving home you should apply to your new council. You can check who your council will be by visiting: [www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/local-government/localq/usefullinks](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Government/local-government/localq/usefullinks).