

Appendix 1 - Scheme Details

This appendix sets out how the scheme will work in detail and will form the basis of the procedures and guidance given the staff who will be administering it.

Criteria

Assistance from this fund will be guided by the following criteria:

- To allow people to return to or remain in the community without the need for extra care
- To support the most vulnerable in urgent situations through signposting to appropriate support services, advice, or through provision and access to goods.
- To use the funds in the short term to prevent further and higher impacts on other service budgets in the city
- To engage individuals with appropriate support services where needed to prevent repeat applications
- To support the most vulnerable in a holistic way which will have a positive effect without the use of cash
- To meet standing statutory duties under Homeless, Equalities, Human Rights Act and Child Protection legislation.

Route In

The council will provide a process for people to make an application to this fund. In addition, where the council identifies specific cohorts of users who have historically accessed the support provided by Community Care Grants who will continue to need the support which the council now provides, elements of the budget may devolved to and directly administered by services that already support those cohorts. (For example most prisoners apply successfully for a CCG when they are discharged so the council is working with services which support prisoners in this process and is considering devolving an element of the budget directly to them to work with the prisoners).

Basic Criteria

In order to make a decision to give assistance, staff will need to be satisfied that one of the following has occurred or is occurring:

- A) There has been an unforeseeable serious and significant emergency or crisis; and:

Failure to give assistance will mean there is a serious risk of significant harm coming to the person or the person's family

Examples of emergencies or crisis:

- A family member has been taken seriously ill or died
- A member of the family has been a victim of crime
- Family possessions have been destroyed in a fire

- B) The person requires assistance moving into, or remaining in the community with the consequence that they will no longer need, or will not need to engage with further statutory care; and:

Giving assistance will mean that the person will not need the statutory care they otherwise would

Circumstances in which no assistance will be given

Assistance will not be given for, or in, the following circumstances:

1. Where other statutory provisions are in place; including but not restricted to:
 - Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) budgeting loans
 - DWP benefit alignment payments
 - DWP statutory social fund payments (for example winter fuel allowance)
 - The requirements under Fair Access to Care Services (FACS); for example, the statutory duty to provide medical equipment
2. Where the applicant could gain assistance privately, either from their own money or resources, or where other people can support them.
3. Rent in advance: this should be applied for from Discretionary Housing Payment
4. Where the applicant has had three payments from the fund already in the last year.
5. For items other than that which the council can provide
6. Where private insurance should cover costs of damages
7. Where liability exists elsewhere which addresses the issue (for example if a ceiling comes down because of a leak in the flat above)
8. Solely due to unexpected budgeting issues without a causal emergency or crisis.
9. To make up for the reduction in another benefit which has been sanctioned

Personal Eligibility Criteria

A person is only entitled to assistance from this fund in the following circumstances:

1. They are resident in the City of Brighton & Hove and must not have moved there predominantly for the purpose of accessing these funds
2. They are in receipt of, or have applied and are likely to be entitled to, means tested benefits or tax credits.
3. Where they do not have the personal means, or cannot otherwise get access to the means, for the provisions required.

Verification

An applicant is required to provide documentation or other evidence which is reasonably required to demonstrate their circumstances; this will include:

- Identification
- Income, savings and bank accounts
- Where crime or lost property is involved, evidence these have been reported to the police
- Other evidence as may be reasonably required to demonstrate the circumstances surrounding an application; for example photographic evidence of fire damaged items
- A council officer may visit a person's property to establish the circumstances of a case
- The council will always seek to verify these items itself before asking the applicant to do so

Provisions

Where a decision is made to give assistance, the council will usually provide it in one or more of the following ways:

1. Direct referral to a list of suppliers who have an account with Brighton & Hove City Council
2. Bus and train tickets from the council's own offices
3. Shop specific vouchers (in the form of pre-paid cards) for clothes and food. These will be standard 'gift cards' and as such not identifiable as originating from this service avoiding any stigmatisation.
4. Payment cards. These will be standard payment cards and are currently in common private use and as such should not be identifiable as originating from this service avoiding any stigmatisation.
5. Payments directly to utility companies via a corporate purchasing card with the ability to make payments onto key and card meters.

In all cases the council will make a decision as to whether it is appropriate to refer an applicant on to other support services where there may be other issues in which they demonstrate they need that support. It is anticipated that there will be cases where a referral to other support services will be an appropriate course of action, where payment from the fund is not.

Award limit

It is not possible to predict every circumstance against which an application to this fund will be made. As such there will be no absolute limit to the level of assistance which may be made. However any assistance which is agreed will reduce the budget and as a consequence reduce the funds available to help other vulnerable people. As such it will be vital to ensure only genuine need is addressed and value for money achieved.

Recovery

In principle the council will treat the value of the assistance given in each case as a loan. However given that this is the first year of the scheme the council will need to maintain a flexible approach as to whether to seek recovery of the value of assistance given on a case to case basis, in terms of what that would mean for the long term sustainability of that individual's financial sustainability and the cost value of that process.

Appeals

An applicant who disagrees with a decision not to give assistance or the level of assistance which has been approved will be able to ask for that decision to be reviewed. A member of staff who was not involved in the original decision will review the original decision.

