

## **SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND - MYTH BUSTING Q&A**

### **You have to be on certain qualifying benefits to apply for a Scottish Welfare Fund grant.**

**False:** You don't need to be on benefits to be considered for a grant. But, you do need to be on a low income, either in or out of work.

- The key test for a Crisis Grant is the severity of the risk to your health or safety.
- The key test for a Community Care Grant is what you might need to allow you to stay in your own home and have a settled way of life.

### **You have to have children to get a Scottish Welfare Fund grant.**

**False:** You don't have to have children to get a Scottish Welfare Fund grant. You are more likely to get an award if you do have children because we want to make sure that children are protected. But, we have changed the Fund to make it easier for people without children to get a Community Care Grant when they are under exceptional pressure.

### **You can't get a Scottish Welfare Fund grant if you have been sanctioned.**

**False:** The Scottish Welfare Fund cannot provide a regular source of income if you have been sanctioned by DWP. But, it can help out in a crisis. We have changed our guidance to Councils to make that clear.

### **You can't get a Crisis Grant if you have applied for DWP benefits.**

**False:** If you are making a new claim for DWP benefits, you should try to get help from DWP before you ask the Council for help. In some circumstances, DWP can give Short Term Benefit Advances to people who are making new claims for benefits.

### **You can't get a Community Care Grant for everything.**

**True:** There are some items that are not part of the Scottish Welfare Fund – such as payments to cover debts, or work-related expenses. There is full list of things that are not available from the Fund on the Scottish Government website. Also, as the Fund is budget-limited, we might not be able to provide the same items for everyone. For example, a washing machine might be essential for one person, but only desirable for another.

### **You need to have been refused a Budgeting Loan by DWP before you can apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund.**

**False:** You don't need to have asked DWP for a Budgeting Loan before you ask the Council for help from the Scottish Welfare Fund.

**You can't ask for an appeal or a review of a decision made about an application to the Scottish Welfare Fund.**

**False:** If you are not happy with the outcome of your application, you can ask the Council for a review. There are two stages of review for the Scottish Welfare Fund.

- For the first stage, a different decision maker will look again at your application. They might make the same decision, or they might make a different one. They will write to tell you what they have decided.

If you are still not happy, you can ask for another review.

- This time a group of people from other parts of the Council who are not part of the Scottish Welfare Fund team or who are from outwith the Council will look at your application. They might decide that the decision is correct, they might ask a decision maker to ask you for some more information, or they might make a different decision. Again, they will write to tell you what they have decided.

**You can't have an award if you owe the Council money.**

**False:** Councils can't refuse your Crisis or Community Care Grant application because you owe them money, for example council tax or rent arrears or unpaid parking tickets. But, you can't get a Scottish Welfare Fund grant to pay any sort of debt.

**The Scottish Welfare Fund is different depending where you live.**

**Yes and no:** Scottish Welfare Fund grants are paid out by every Council in Scotland. There may be differences in what you are offered in different areas. For example, you might be given a pre-paid card by one Council and vouchers by another. But the basis of the scheme is the same across Scotland.

**Councils don't trust applicants. That's why they give out goods and vouchers rather than money.**

**False:** Councils choose the best way to pay grants in their local area, making use of contracts to get the best value for money and allowing them to help more people from the Fund. Cash substitutes like PayPoint and AllPay can be the quickest way to get cash to people without them having to travel to Council buildings.

**You have to take other services like debt advice if you apply for a Scottish Welfare Fund grant.**

**False:** You don't have to take any other help if you apply for a grant. But, the Council might talk to you about other services that might be able to help you.

**You can't get more than one award from the Scottish Welfare Fund.**

**False:** There are some rules around repeat applications. For example, you should not ask for the same thing as part of a Community Care Grant or a Crisis Grant in the same month, unless your circumstances have changed. Generally speaking, you will not get more than three Crisis Grants in any one year.

**You'll be sent to a foodbank if you apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund.**

**Possibly:** For some Councils, the local foodbank is a part of the way they offer help through the Scottish Welfare Fund. For others, they may suggest you go to the local foodbank, if they cannot help you through the Scottish Welfare Fund.

**Where can I find out more?**

You can find out more from your local Council or from the Scottish Government's website at:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/scottishwelfarefund](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/scottishwelfarefund)

The guidance for decision makers on the Scottish Welfare Fund is available at: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/welfarereform/scottishwelfarefund/scottishwelfarefundguidance](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/welfarereform/scottishwelfarefund/scottishwelfarefundguidance)

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