

Additional Information

Other changes to benefits

The replacement of the Social Fund is just one of many changes being made to the benefits system. If you receive any kind of benefit, your income may be affected. The council and other organisations can't stop these changes, but they can help you manage better.

Go to www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights for more information or phone 0191 277 2627 (Monday to Friday, 9:30am to 12noon) for advice on benefits.

Help making ends meet

If you are worried about money (for example, debts, loans, benefits or how to pay your fuel bill) there is help available. There are organisations, working with Newcastle City Council, which can provide this help – and their advice is absolutely free.

Find out more about these at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfarerights



Replacement Social Fund

In April 2013, parts of the Social Fund run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), came to an end. Local authorities, including Newcastle City Council, have set up replacement schemes. This does not replace Budgeting Loans or Short Term Advances for when there is a delay in receiving benefit. These continue to be applied for via the DWP.

Two parts of the Social Fund – Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants – have been replaced. Crisis Loans were intended to cover immediate short-term needs that arise because of a disaster or emergency. Community Care Grants were intended to support vulnerable people to remain in or return to the community.

This leaflet sets out how our replacement schemes – the Crisis Support Scheme and the Supporting Independence Scheme – are run in Newcastle upon Tyne.

Supporting Independence Scheme

Our replacement for the Community Care Grant scheme – known as the Supporting Independence Scheme (SIS) – is available to help you if you are on a low income and are:

- resettling in the community following a stay in an institution
- requiring support to remain in the community rather than enter an institution, or
- setting up home in the community, as part of a planned resettlement programme, following an unsettled way of life
- part of a family requiring help to maintain your independence

Examples of an institution would be somewhere like a supported housing hostel, hospital, a care home or custody.

You can only be considered for the scheme if you currently have or are about to move into your own independent accommodation.

The SIS covers the provision of basic household items that would meet the aims listed above – for example beds, cookers or fridges. A full list of items that are included by the SIS is available at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/sis. If your application is successful the scheme will arrange for you to receive these items or vouchers towards these items, rather than providing cash payments.

The actual value of the SIS depends on your needs and financial situation. As the scheme is intended for people on low incomes, you must receive certain income-based benefits and not have savings of over £500 (or £1,000 if you are aged over 60). A full list of eligibility criteria is available at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/sis.

You are not able to apply directly to the scheme, but will need to apply through a support agency. This is because we know that people are more likely to remain independent if they receive a package that links accommodation, furniture and support to promote independence. Almost all people leaving institutions will have support and for those that don't we will consider your need as part of the provision of housing advice to prevent homelessness. A full list of support agencies is available at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/sis.

Crisis Support Scheme

A replacement Crisis Loan Scheme – to be known as the Crisis Support Scheme (CSS) – will be available to help you if you have suffered a disaster or crisis and there is a risk to your personal health and safety or that of a member of your household.

The CSS is a cashless grant payment and will cover the provision of food, fuel for home heating, clothing, and travel costs in emergency situations.

The actual value of the CSS will depend on your needs and financial situation. The scheme is intended for people who have insufficient income to meet their basic living needs, and are unable to secure funding from any other source. A full list of eligibility criteria is available at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/css.

You can apply directly to the scheme using an online form at www.newcastle.gov.uk/css or phoning 0191 278 7878 and asking for “Crisis Support”.

The council will monitor the scheme, for example, by recording the number and nature of applications, types of awards and outcomes.

Our aim is to support people to prevent repeat crises. To do this we will be linking the CSS to support services in Newcastle and if you make repeat applications to the CSS we would talk to these services about how they could help you to better cope with the causes of crisis.

