

The Social Fund Scheme Reform from April 2013

From 1st April 2013 Southend on Sea Borough Council will be taking responsibility for part of the Social Fund scheme currently administered by the Department for Work and Pensions.

The elements of the existing social fund scheme are:

- Community Care Grants
- Crisis Loans for Living Expenses

The Council will get a yearly fund based on previous expenditure in the district that was awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions. With this yearly fund a scheme has been devised to help those that are in a financial need of help.

What is the new scheme?

This new scheme will be called the "Essential Living Fund" or ELF. The scheme will be operated as a grant system not a loan as the current crisis loans for general living expenses does.

The prime objectives of the scheme are to:

- Help people establish in the community following a stay in an institution, care home, hostel or similar, in which they received care.
- Help people discharged from prison and youth offender institutions.
- Help young people leaving LA care establish in the community.
- Help people remain in the community rather than enter an institution or care home in which they will receive care.
- Ease exceptional pressures on people or their families.
- Help people set up home in the community, as part of a planned resettlement programme, following an unsettled way of life.
- Help people to care for a prisoner or young offender on release on temporary licence.
- Help people who are unable to meet their immediate short term needs either in an emergency in relation to some expenses or as a consequence of a disaster

The ELF scheme will be able to cover applications for the following:

- Furniture - such as a bed, settee, armchair, wardrobe, table.
- Furnishings - such as carpets, curtains, bedding.
- Household equipment - such as a cooker, fridge, washing machine.
- Fuel connection (or Re-Connection) charges.
- Clothing and footwear
- General Living Expenses - these are day to day living expenses such as groceries, nappies, toiletries, cleaning/hygiene products, money for pay as you go fuel meters.
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The way in which we will provide this help will either be:

- Provision of recycled goods/furniture from reputable charitable businesses
- Provision of white goods from a reputable local business
- Vouchers for supermarkets
- Award of an All Pay card (to be used in selected shops)
- Food Parcels

Applications for furniture, household furnishings, white goods, clothing and footwear will be notified via letter, sent to the address of the applicant. The letter will have further information on how to get the requested items.

Applications for General Living Expenses will be treated as priority. We aim to have the supermarket vouchers/food parcel/fuel top ups (made via All Pay) processed within same working day as the application. All vouchers, All Pay cards and food parcels will be picked up from allocated points around the borough (to be advised)

How to apply for an ELF grant

You can apply for an ELF grant by: internet or phone only.

If you live in any part of Essex please use this online form at www.essex.gov.uk

Phoning the ELF Team on:

0300 7900124 (this number is free from any number including mobiles)

Opening hours: 8.45 to 5.15.

You will be asked questions about your income, earnings and savings. You will also be required to provide proof of your financial situation.

Email address: elfforessex@southend.gov.uk

If awarded the grant will **not be paid via cash or monies direct into a bank account**. Instead it will be paid by goods or vouchers

- Use of food vouchers or supermarket vouchers
- Use of AllPay cards
- Provision of recycled furniture from reputable charity
- Provision of white goods from a reputable local dealer