

Freedom of information request – Local Welfare Schemes

Background

On 1st April 2013, DWP devolved an amount of funding previously used in respect of Social Fund provision for Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants to upper tier local authorities in England. The total funding allocation to each local authority comprised a 'programme budget' and an amount for administration. In December 2012, the allocations were notified to Local Authority Chief Executives in a letter from the Department for Work and Pensions ('DWP') Minister, Steve Webb. This letter indicated that local authorities were expected to put in place some form of 'local welfare scheme' (although there was no statutory requirement to do so). This Freedom of Information request relates to the use of those funds. There is a statutory deadline of 20 working days from the date of this request for you to respond. Responses should be e-mailed to damon.gibbons@responsible-credit.org.uk

Information requested

From all local authorities

Name of local authority

Leicester city Council

How much was the total funding allocation made by DWP to your local authority in April 2013?

£1.94m

How much of this was programme funding? £1,606,825.

How much of the total was allocated in respect of administration? £340K

Has your local authority established a 'local welfare scheme' with this funding?

Yes

If yes, where can details of the scheme be found (e.g. link to Council website)?

Leicester City Council Web site – www.leicester.gov.uk/CSG

If no, what did your local authority do with the funding that was allocated to it (please account for 100 per cent of the allocation)?

From local authorities that established a local welfare scheme:

What proportion of the total funding allocation was spent on the local welfare scheme in the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014?

The whole grant has been spent, either in direct response to applications or on direct services providing support to those in crisis. The Council has increased the amount available with additional monies, e.g. for council tax support”

If less than 100 per cent of the total funding allocation was spent on the local welfare scheme over the period, how does your local authority plan to use the underspend?

N/A

How many applications were made to the scheme over the same period?

2613

What proportion of applicants received assistance from the scheme over the period?

56%

Do you monitor the characteristics and stated needs of applicants (e.g. household composition, reason for application)?

Yes

If so, please provide us with the monitoring data that you hold for the scheme for the period to 31st March 2014.

GENDER			Applications			Awarded		
			CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK	CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK
	TOTAL CLAIMS SUBMITTED	2613	FEMALE	653	653	1	421	276
	NUMBER AWARDED	1463	MALE	740	565	1	452	314

AGE			Applications			Awarded		
			CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK	CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK
	TOTAL CLAIMS SUBMITTED	2613	W/A	1374	1167		858	569
	NUMBER AWARDED	1463	PEN	17	49	0	14	21
			BLANK			6		1

DISABILITY			Applications			Awarded		
			CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK	CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK
	TOTAL CLAIMS SUBMITTED	2613	YES	444	439		260	208
	NUMBER AWARDED	1463	NO	949	779		613	382
			BLANK			2		

TENURE			Applications			Awarded		
			CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK	CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK
	TOTAL CLAIMS SUBMITTED	2613	Council	676	681	1	417	342
	NUMBER AWARDED	1463	Friends	11	5	1	7	1
			Hostel	73	17		54	11
			Owner Occupier	36	13		19	0
			Private rented	495	333		315	145
			Relatives	14	6		6	2
			Social Landlord	87	152		54	81
			(blank)	1	11		1	8
			Grand Total	1393	1218	2	873	590

ETHNICITY			Applications			Awarded		
			CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK	CRISES	SUPPORT	BLANK
	TOTAL CLAIMS SUBMITTED	2613						
	NUMBER AWARDED	1463						
		Asian (background not given)	37	43		21	23	
		Asian British (background not given)	9	20		3	9	
		Asian British of Bangladeshi Origin	1	2		0	0	
		Asian British of Indian Origin	33	44	1	12	19	
		Asian British of Other Asian Background	11	8		3	3	
		Asian British of Pakistani Origin	5	14		2	3	
		Asian of Bangladeshi Origin	1	4		1	1	
		Asian of Indian Origin	14	39		9	21	
		Asian of Other Asian Background	9	15		6	7	
		Asian of Pakistani Origin	3	8		2	6	
		Black (background not given)	3	6		1	3	
		Black British (background not given)	11	15		3	7	
		Black British of African Origin	13	10		6	6	
		Black British of Caribbean Origin	23	29		16	12	
		Black British of Other Black Background	3	5		2	4	
		Black of African Origin	38	77		24	34	
		Black of Caribbean Origin	15	9		8	5	
		Black of Other Black Background	2	0		2	0	
		Chinese (background not given)	0	1		0	0	
		Chinese of Chinese Origin	2	2		2	1	
		Ethnicity not given	12	19		5	12	
		Mixed (Background not given)	7	4		6	1	
		Mixed of other mixed background	6	4		4	1	
		Mixed of White and Asian Origin	2	9		1	5	
		Mixed of White and Black African Origin	10	9		5	5	
		Mixed of White and Black Caribbean Orig	51	34		41	17	
		Other	72	69		45	36	
		White (background not given)	173	132		121	55	
		White British (background not given)	743	516	1	474	259	
		White British of Irish Origin	4	8		4	5	
		White British of Other White Background	28	16		15	10	
		White of Irish Origin	6	10		4	6	
		White of Other White Background	46	37		25	14	
		X						
		(blank)	0	0	0	0	0	
		Grand Total	1393	1218	2	873	590	0

What was the average value of the help requested from the scheme over the period for each household type (single, single parent, couple, couple with children) applying to the scheme.

This information is not collated.

If you do not monitor on that basis, what was the average amount of award for each type of assistance provided by the scheme (e.g. crisis payment; community care award)?

Crisis – Average = £64.94

Support Average = £515.17

What proportion of the total number of beneficiaries from the scheme received

(i) a loan; There is no loan provision under the scheme

(ii) a cash payment; There is no cash provision under the scheme

(iii) some form of in-kind assistance 873 received vouchers for food/utilities/clothing, and would usually have received an initial emergency food parcel too.

(iv), or other help (please specify the types of other help provided)

590 received either new/recycled furniture & white goods.

What was the average value of cash payments (excluding loans) made to beneficiaries of the scheme over the period (please provide a breakdown by household type and the reason for the application if you monitor on this basis)?

No cash payments made

What were the most common needs met through the making of cash payments?

N/A

What was the average value of in-kind expenditure (e.g. direct purchase of domestic appliances) over the period (please provide a breakdown by household type and the reason for the application if you monitor on this basis)?

Average value for support (usually for domestic items) £515.17.

What were the most common needs met through in-kind assistance?

Beds, sofas, chairs, wardrobes, table& chairs, cooker, washing machine

How are awards of in-kind assistance fulfilled (e.g. through partnerships with local furniture recycling projects or national partners, please state which partners are used)

Partnership working with a local charity for new items and our waste management team for recycled goods

Was any of the total funding allocation provided to support food banks?

Yes

If so, what proportion of the total funding allocation was used in this way?

Under 5%

How many applicants to the scheme were provided with other forms of local authority discretionary assistance over the period (e.g. Discretionary Housing Payments or Section 17 payments)? Please provide details of the additional discretionary payments made to beneficiaries of the local welfare scheme over the period (e.g. type of payment, and amount expended).

The DHP had a separate application process; no records have been kept as to those claimants who have been advised to claim the other discretionary payment as well, or instead of.

Do you have a referral process in place to help applicants to local welfare schemes access other forms of assistance, including in respect of addressing their 'underlying needs' (e.g. from charitable trusts, debt advice agencies, credit unions, etc.)?

Yes

If yes, how many such referrals were made in the period to 31st March 2014?

No records have been kept

Do you monitor the outcomes of these referrals?

No

If so, please provide details of these outcomes for the period to 31st March 2014.

If assistance included the making of loans: NA

How were these provided (e.g. through a credit union)?

What was the (i) average amount of loan provided; (ii) maximum amount of loan provided; (iii) average APR cost; and (iv) average term of the loans (in weeks).

Do you monitor the outcomes from these loans (in terms of repayments made, bad debts etc.)?

If so, please provide details of all outcomes being monitored for the period to 31st March 2014.

People refused assistance

How many applications were refused over the period to 31st March 2014?

1055 . This number relates to those who made an application which was turned down. No records have been kept as to those who were screened out prior to making an application. [From the above table, 2613 – 1463 = 1150?]

Does your scheme require applicants to have a local connection?

Yes

If yes, what are the requirements in this respect,

- be a resident of Leicester or be able to demonstrate a link to the City

and how many people were refused help on the basis of failing to satisfy these?

This information is not collated.

Does your scheme require that people are in receipt of any qualifying benefits in order for them to be eligible for assistance?

Crisis element - No

Support Element - Yes

If yes, what are the requirements in this respect,

To be eligible for a support grant award all of the following conditions must be satisfied. Applicants must:

- be aged 16 or over; and,
- be a resident of Leicester or be able to demonstrate a link to the City; and,
- receiving Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based), Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) or any type of Working Tax or Pension Credit; and,
- be without sufficient resources to meet their immediate short-term needs or those of their family; and,
- not be an excluded person (see 5.3); and,
- has needs which are not covered by a support grant; and,
- not be a person subject to immigration control.

They must also be where applicable:

- leaving accommodation in which they received significant and substantial care and supervision and expect to be discharged within 6 weeks and be expected to receive one of the benefits indicated above; and/or,
- the applicant must be leaving such an establishment, and also be establishing themselves in the community. Both the time spent in the accommodation and the level of individual care and supervision provided will be taken into consideration when making a decision.

and how many people were refused help on the basis of failing to satisfy these?

This information is not collated.

If your scheme provides for help to people on low incomes who are not in receipt of qualifying benefits, how many of these were assisted in the period through to 31st March 2014?

This information is not collated.

Including any residence and qualifying benefits conditions that may apply to your scheme, what were the three most common reasons for refusal of help from your scheme in the period to 31st March 2014?

Did not satisfy the eligibility criteria

Hardship not proven

Had access to alternative funds

What, if any, other forms of support were provided to people refused assistance?

Referral to receive food parcels

Appointments made or signposted to Money Advice

Referral to Social services or other advice /tenancy support services as appropriate

Sign posted to other local charities as appropriate.

Does your scheme provide applicants with a review or appeals process?

Yes, a review process

If yes, how many people requested (i) a review of the initial decision 63

and (ii) how many people appealed against the decision on their application? NA

How many (i) reviews 30 and (ii) appeals NA were subsequently decided in the applicant's favour?

Promotion of, and access to, the scheme

What steps has your local authority taken to promote the scheme?

Meetings/Forums with the city advice providers, various internal and external stakeholders

Posters and leaflets

Website

How much of the total funding allocation has been spent on the marketing of the scheme?

£10,000

In what ways can people apply for help from the scheme (e.g. in person at local authority, in person at local advice agencies; by telephone; on-line)?

The application is made by telephone. The application can be made by an individual or their representative.

Please provide a breakdown of the numbers of people applying through each of the channels that are available in your area

100% , telephone is the only application route

Changes to the scheme

Has the scheme changed at all since its inception (e.g. was eligibility criteria or the maximum size of award amended over the period to 31st March 2014)?

Yes, the scheme has been reviewed on a regular basis.

If so, what changes were made?

Policy changed to support some applicants who have been sanctioned and have no access to other support.

Increase support during school holiday periods, for families with school age children who are usually in receipt of free school meals

Future plans

How are you evaluating the performance and impact of your local welfare scheme?

Feedback, meetings and consultation forums with stakeholder groups.

Weekly Call back to a sample number of successful applicants to assess quality of the emergency food provision.

Have you made any decisions concerning the future of the scheme beyond the end of March 2015?

No , this is currently under discussion.

If so, what decisions have been made in this respect (please provide a link to any Cabinet or Mayoral decisions)?

If a decision has not yet been made, do you have a timescale for doing so? No

What review processes have you put in place to inform this decision?

The scheme has been under review throughout the first year of operation.

The policy has been developed to support vulnerable people, experiencing financial difficulties. The support was for food, goods or services in a crisis situation or where there is exceptional financial pressure on an individual or families.

The Service intended that the policy helped to :

- alleviate poverty;
- support vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life;
- safeguard residents in their own homes;
- help those who are trying to help themselves;
- keep families together;

- support the vulnerable in the local community;
- help people through personal and difficult events.

The policy is intended to complement and support wider council strategies, for example the Leicester Child Poverty Commission and City food plan.

Any future provision will be based on the lessons learnt in year one, stakeholder consultation and engagement and the support wider council strategies.

Do these include consultation with stakeholders and how and when will this be conducted?

These have been ongoing throughout the period and will continue to ensure the provision continues to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in the city