



Northamptonshire County Council - Sustaining Independent Living Scheme (SIL)

Eligibility Guidance

1. Introduction

Following the Government's abolition of crisis loans and community care grants the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have from 1st April 2013 transferred funding to Northamptonshire County Council to establish local arrangements in the county.

The DWP should be contacted for DWP benefit information and enquiries

www.gov.uk

Northamptonshire County Council is not providing a system of cash loans or grants. We are developing new arrangements taking account of local knowledge and local services as well as making sure support is properly targeted to those most in need. Please consider other sources of help before making a request for help from the SIL scheme

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/helpandindependence

The aim of the SIL scheme is to help vulnerable people to remain in or to return to the community and sustain independent living and to help in situations of exceptional pressure, when they have been unable to get help from any other sources.

It is expected that making an application for SIL should be considered when agencies are making overall assessments of needs. We ask that applications are completed with the support of agencies that are working with, helping or advising applicants, this could be a District or Borough Council, housing association, children's centre, social care or health organisation.

This is a discretionary scheme. Decisions about the requests for support will be based on the application and description of need and the budgetary position in relation to the SIL scheme.

The support available through SIL will not be cash or loans. See below for the range of support that can be applied for but typically it will be goods to set up a household or specific items that are needed to sustain independent living.

Depending on the support agreed, the Council will make purchases for applicants and these may be recycled items.

The eligibility may be revised when further information becomes available to enable targeting of resources to those in greatest need.



The new scheme and the processing of applications will take time as experienced is gained.

The scheme is discretionary. In order to meet needs in a flexible way, help may be given if felt applicable even if not included in guidance.

It will normally only be possible to have an application approved once in twelve month period.

2. Eligibility

The help from the SIL scheme may be available to you and is aimed at providing:

- ***Help for people leaving institutional or residential care to establish themselves in the community***
- People leaving a residential institution, where they have been receiving care or supervision often 24 hrs a day for more than three months. This can include homes, hostels, Prisons and youth custody centres and hospitals
- ***Help for people being settled in a home after an unsettled way of life – this may be part of a planned resettlement or moving on programme following a period without a settled way of life.***
- To help people to live as independently a life as possible in the community. Statutory support may already be in place; for example young people aged 16 or more leaving local authority care should be in receipt of a leaving care grant. It may be necessary to discuss applications with the relevant housing authority.
- ***Help for people to stay in the community and prevent a move into residential, institutional care or hospital***
- Items and services that will help an applicant or member of his/her family remain in the community rather than enter institutional or residential care. If the threat of care is immediate or imminent and/or there is a direct link between the threat of care and the need in question
- ***Help to ease families under exceptional pressures***
- All families especially those on low income face pressure at various times – this is not in itself enough to make an award. However SIL could be used to ease exceptional pressures on a family – i.e. circumstances which put a family under greater pressure than might normally be associated with low income. There is a flexible definition of family – for example it can include: couples, including those with children; people caring for children; pregnant women over 24 weeks and it may include siblings as family.

The applicant must be aged 16 or over.

The applicant must be in receipt of (or likely to receive in the next 6 weeks) one or more of the following benefits:



- Income support
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Employment and support allowance
- Any type of pension credit.

We will require copies of evidence of benefit status. The benefits requirements will change as Universal Credit is introduced from October 2013.

The applicant must be resident (or plan to be so on leaving an institutional setting) in Northamptonshire. Out of county applicants need to give good reasons for applying in county

It will normally only be possible to have an application approved once in a twelve month period.

Requests must be supported by a recognised agency worker. This is to try to ensure that this support is targeted to those in greatest need. If the applicant is currently in receipt of support from Northamptonshire County Council (a care manager or social worker) then please contact them in the first instance.

3. Who will be awarded help from the Sustaining Independent Living Scheme (SIL)

The resources available to meet the needs are limited and the council has to use discretion to try to help those who need it most and who are unable to find other help.

Applicants have to show that receiving this help is the only way that they or their family can be helped to remain or establish themselves in the community and ease exceptional pressures.

4. Alternative sources of support

When deciding an application for help we will want to know whether the applicant or their household have any other possible sources of help to cover the costs. For example; insurance policies, savings, other income, family and friends.

We will expect that the applicant has explored benefits that they are entitled to.

We want applicants to know about other sources of support and we will endeavour to ensure that these are considered.

5. Type of Assistance

The level and type of SIL assistance will be discretionary and limited. Some requests for assistance will require evidence of actions taken to gain support elsewhere. All requests from an individual should come through a referring agency or organisation.



Assistance from the SIL will often include refurbished or secondhand goods e.g. furniture from local charity organisations, and reconditioned white goods. Once an application has been submitted we cannot add items to the list.

Examples of items / services that may be eligible

- Clothing and footwear
- Essential furniture eg, sofa, table & chairs, wardrobe, chest of drawers
- White goods e.g. fridge, electric cooker, washing machine (Connection charges are the responsibility of the customer)

Excluded items

Help will not be given for items / services in respect of:

- Cash vouchers, debt or loans
- A need which occurs outside the United Kingdom or Northamptonshire
- An educational or training need including clothing and tools
- Travelling expenses, where other provisions are available
- Household equipment (Bedding, Kettles, Irons, Curtains. Carpets/Flooring etc)
- Connection charges/reconnection
- School meals taken during non-school holidays by children who are entitled to free school meals
- Expenses in connection with court (legal) proceedings such as legal fees, court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses
- Removal or storage charges if you are being re-housed following a compulsory purchase order, a redevelopment or closing order, a compulsory exchange of tenancies, or under a housing authority's statutory duty to the homeless
- The cost of domestic assistance and respite care
- Any repair to property owned by public sector housing bodies including housing associations, housing co-operatives and housing trusts
- Expenses which Health and Social Care Authorities have a statutory duty to meet
- Housing repairs and improvement (including cost of materials and labour) that aren't directly linked to an urgent care or crisis need.
- Medical, surgical, optical, or dental item or service
- Housing costs in respect of: Council tax, Mortgage payments, Rent, Rent arrears, Utility payments, water rates, Sewerage rates, service charges, maintenance charges, collective community charges
- Maternity expenses covered by a Sure Start Maternity Grant
- Purchase, installation, rental and call charges for a telephone
- A television, radio, a TV licence, aerial or rental charges for a television or radio
- Vehicle costs



- Entertainment goods such as TVs, computers, music systems, internet, satellite repairs
- Cigarettes, illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Any expenses which the local authority has a statutory duty to meet.

6. Process Time

We aim to acknowledge SIL application's within two days. Applications will be approved and declined with a returning letter/e mail to the supporting agency who will be responsible for informing their client. We will then source and delivery items on receipt of the customer signed Declaration. Due to the nature of our suppliers certain items such as white goods may take slightly longer than others to be sourced. But we aim to deliver all goods within fourteen days where possible.

We encourage clients to proactively visit re-use and turnaround suppliers, a list of these suppliers can be found on our website.

7. An important Notice to Agents - Legislation Affecting Gas Cookers.

On the 1st January 2008 the regulations for gas cookers installed in flats and buildings with multi occupancy dwellings within have changed.

From this date all gas cookers must have a Flame Supervision Device (FSD) fitted to each burner – this is a safety device that will cut off the gas supply if the flame goes out.

- Due to this legislation the SIL process will only supply electric cookers to clients living in flats.

8. Equalities Duty

The new SIL scheme will affect people across the protected characteristics we will review the impact of the changes arising from the implementation of the SIL and possible options to reduce adverse impacts on particular 'protected characteristics' as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

9. How to apply

Applications should be made online from our website.

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/helpandindependence

10. Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the service you receive or would like to query or appeal any of the information or decisions provided, please send E mails to the Socialfundchanges.gov.uk Inbox and your complaint will be dealt with by our team.