

Crisis Fund

Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants previously administered by the DWP were replaced by local welfare schemes designed and administered by local councils from 1 April 2013.

Barnet Council has designed its own local scheme called the Crisis Fund. It is designed to:

- provide help to vulnerable people to live independently in the community, following a stay in institutional care (e.g. hospital or prison)
- ease exceptional pressure (e.g. related to domestic violence).
- meet immediate short term needs in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster
- avoid serious damage or risk to health and safety.

What is different about the new scheme?

The key differences between the DWP schemes and Barnet's Crisis Fund are:

- Customers must be resident or have a local connection to Barnet.
- It is a discretionary scheme and the council decides who is eligible and the value of awards
- Funding is limited, so awards may be limited due to the availability
- customers can normally receive a maximum of one award every six months.
- awards from the Crisis Fund will generally be made by pre-paid credit card for specific items rather than in cash or by cheque
- awards will not be repayable as they are grants and not loans.

Who can apply?

To be eligible the customer must:

- be aged 16 or over
- have been a resident in Barnet for at least six weeks, or if they are moving into Barnet from an institution such as a hospital, care home or prison, they must have a local connection such as family or support services that they receive in the area.
- be in receipt of a qualifying benefit - Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Guaranteed Pension Credit and passport related Universal Credit (or likely to be in receipt of these benefits on release from an institution)
- not be excluded from receiving public funds due to their immigration status
- not have received more than one award in the last six months
- be making a claim not completely covered by insurance

How to apply

Claims can only be made by telephoning 0208 359 4242 between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday

In cases where there is an urgent need and threat to the health and safety of the customer we will try and make a decision within two working hours. We will let customers know our decision by text or email. A prepaid card or voucher will be sent to the customer within 24 working hours for urgent cases and within three days for other cases.

For cases where there is no immediate decisions will be made within a week and prepaid cards will be sent to the customer within three days of the decision.

More information

Following an award, customers may be visited by a council officer and/or be asked to provide receipts.

If customers are unhappy with the council's decision they can ask for a review by telephone within 14 days of the decision.

Customers should continue to contact their local Job Centre Plus for budgeting loans or if they experiencing difficulty whilst awaiting their first payment of a state benefit.

You can get further details about the Crisis Fund on the council's website

www.barnet.gov.uk/crisisfund