

Orkney Islands Council

Scottish Welfare Fund

Community Care Grants – example cases



This guide provides some examples of possible Community Care Grant applications and whether the applicant may be eligible to receive a grant award or not. It does not cover all types of scenarios but should give you an example of the types of grants that people apply for and the type of decision that may be made.

Please note that even if your circumstances may be the same as one of the examples it does not mean that the decision will be the same, as you may have slightly different needs or be considered as a different priority. It is aimed as a guide only.

A Community Care Grant may be awarded

To help people establish themselves in the community following a period of care where circumstances indicate that there is an identifiable risk of the person not being able to live independently without this help.

- The person must have been in accommodation for 3 months or more where they received significant and substantial care, supervision or protection. For example hospital, care homes, hostels, prison or supported accommodation.
- Example cases can be found at Annex 1 to this document.
- To help people remain in the community rather than going into care where circumstances indicate that there is an identifiable risk of the person not being able to live independently without this help.
- People most at risk of going into care may be those having difficulty dealing with life in the community, for example: dealing with personal and domestic tasks, needing basic household items, repairs to maintain or improve a home or help someone to move to provide care for someone.
- Example cases can be found at Annex 2 to this document.

To help people set up home in the community, as part of a resettlement programme, following an unsettled way of life.

- This may include a young person who is leaving residential accommodation or someone who has a history of repeat homelessness.
- Example cases can be found at Annex 3 to this document.

To help families facing exceptional pressures and who lack the resources to meet irregular costs to provide a safe and secure environment for their family.

- Exceptional pressures may include: a breakdown of relationships (perhaps domestic violence); to meet the needs of a chronically ill child or disability in the family; there is a serious problem with accommodation resulting in a move. The priority is the children.

- Example cases can be found at Annex 4 to this document.

To help people to care for a prisoner or young offender on release on temporary licence.

- The grant is for the person caring for the prisoner to help them adjust to life outside prison.
- Example cases can be found at Annex 5 to this document.

Excluded items

A range of items are excluded from payment of a grant - these are shown at Annex 6 to this document.

Where to get more information

You can get more information from the Council's Enterprise & Sustainable Regeneration Service – Benefits Team, Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1JS.

Telephone: 01856873535 extension 2116.

Email: swf@orkney.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.orkney.gov.uk/>

June 2023.

Annex 1

Community Care Grant – to help people establish themselves in the community following a period of care where circumstances indicate that there is an identifiable risk of the person not being able to live independently without this help.

- The person must have been in accommodation for 3 months or more where they received significant and substantial care, supervision or protection. For example hospital, care homes, hostels, prison or supported accommodation.

Example 1 - James is being released from prison in Aberdeen but intends to return to Orkney following his release. He received income-based Jobseekers Allowance before going into Prison and is expected to receive it again on his release. He applies to Aberdeen City Council for a Community Care Grant.

- Is he eligible to apply? – No, his application to Aberdeen City Council will be refused as the address that he intends to live in is not in Aberdeen.
- Is he eligible to apply? – Yes, if he applies to Orkney Islands Council as this is the address that he intends to live in. Although not yet in receipt of a qualifying benefit he is considered as likely to receive it on leaving the prison.
- Does he qualify? – Yes, he will be leaving accommodation in which he received significant care, supervision or protection – a prison – and is establishing himself in the local community. However, the application will depend on what help he is asking for – more questions need to be asked.

Example 2 - Alexandra applied for a Community Care Grant after spending a year in prison and being re-housed by the Council. She was awarded a Community Care Grant 3 weeks ago which included both items and money to buy curtains for her bedroom. These were considered to be a high priority item as she suffers from anxiety and nightmares after an assault which took place in prison. However, she did not spend the money on curtains but on other soft furnishings for her flat – having miscalculated the cost. She re-applies for a Grant.

- Is she eligible to apply? – No, as it is a repeat application within 28 days of an award for the same item having been made and there has been no relevant change of circumstances. However, she could reapply after 28 days have elapsed from the date of her first application.

Example 3 - Murray is a recovering alcoholic and drug addict who is about to move in with his sister and needs to furnish a room in her house to be his bedroom. He has been in rehabilitation for 6 months and was subject to continual supervision whilst there. He receives income-based Jobseekers Allowance and applies for a Community Care Grant for a bed and other furniture for his bedroom.

- Is he eligible to apply? – Yes, he receives income-based Jobseekers Allowance.

- Does he qualify? – Yes, the application may be considered as has spent a period of time in care (rehabilitation) in which he received "substantial care, supervision or protection" and was there for more than 3 months.
- Assessment of Priority - Medium priority, the nature of the need is less immediate as he is living with his sister but there could be moderate adverse consequences if the item was not provided.

Example 4 - Andrew has been in prison for two years and is due to be released in 6 weeks, when it is expected he will be getting income-based Jobseekers Allowance. Social Services have found an unfurnished flat for him in Orkney. He has family in Orkney but they are no longer in contact with him. The flat has a cooker, but no fridge, washing machine, furniture, carpets or curtains.

- Is he eligible to apply? – Yes, although not yet in receipt of a qualifying benefit is considered as likely to receive it on leaving the prison.
- Does he qualify? – Yes, the application may be considered as he has been in prison for more than 3 months and needs help to establish himself in the community. He is leaving accommodation in which he received "substantial care, supervision or protection".
- Assessment of Priority – High priority for essential goods such as the cooker and fridge as there he may be highly vulnerable and there may be significant adverse effects if the grant is not provided. Low priority for goods such as the washing machine, furniture, carpets or curtains as the need may not be time critical and have a minor effect on improving health or wellbeing.

Example 5 - Liz, aged 58, is leaving residential care having suffered from mental health problems. She has applied for Income Support which she is likely to receive. She has spent a considerable period in institutional care and had lost her previous tenancy along with most of her possessions. She has made substantial progress and in conjunction with an intensive structured support programme being put in place has been awarded an unfurnished tenancy. She is scheduled to leave her care in 4 weeks and has applied for a Community Care Grant. A mental health charity has helped her with a range of basic items, including a bed, a cooker, a fridge freezer, a washing machine and some seating. She is applying for bedroom and living room carpets, a television, television aerial, plates, pans, slow cooker, microwave, vacuum cleaner, bedroom heater, kitchen blind, cutlery, bath mat, 2 curtain rails, 2 rugs, living room curtains, bedroom curtains, winter coat, winter boots and other clothing. She has shoes and a couple of changes of clothing, but has no coat. With help from her support worker she sourced these prices from Argos and from charity shops.

- Is she eligible? – Yes, although not yet in receipt of Income Support, she is leaving residential accommodation and is expected to qualify. As she is in care she is allowed to apply up to 8 weeks before she moves.
- Does she qualify? – Yes, she is moving out of accommodation where she has received significant and substantial care and is establishing herself back in the community. There is a risk that she may not be able to live independently without the grant.

- Assessment of Priority – High Priority for the carpets, a start-up pack which includes pots, pans, plates, cutlery and a kettle, the curtains and curtain rails along with a winter coat. Following further investigation with her support it was decided that the microwave would also be high priority as the applicant was familiar with and would use it for most of the food that they would prepare. A high priority award would have a sustained effect on resolving the wellbeing of the applicant. Low priority - the winter boots and the remaining items as they would only have a minor effect on improving wellbeing of applicant.

Annex 2

Community Care Grant – to help people remain in the community rather than going into care where circumstances indicate there is an identifiable risk of the person not being able to live independently without this help.

- People most at risk of going into care may be those having difficulty dealing with life in the community, for example: dealing with personal and domestic tasks, needing basic household items, repairs to maintain or improve a home or help someone to move to provide care for someone.

Example 1 - Amanda is getting Pension Credit - Savings Credit and has applied for a Community Care Grant for a new washing machine and has savings of £1400.

- Is she eligible to apply? – No, her application will be refused as her savings are above the capital limit of £1,200 for an applicant of pension age.
- Would she have qualified if her savings had been below £1,200? – more information would be required to see if there was a risk that she would not be able to live independently and go into care if a washing machine was not provided.

Example 2 - Anne is moving to care for her parents who are aged over 80 and live in Orkney. They do not get any qualifying benefits and Anne is concerned that they are not coping very well at home as they are both disabled. Her father has fallen several times and her mother has dementia. Anne wants to move to a property nearer to them so that she can take care of them. At present she lives in Inverness and can only see them once a month or so. Anne gets Pension Credit and applies to Orkney Islands Council for a Community Care Grant for removal expenses.

- Is she eligible to apply? – Yes, it is Anne who is the applicant and she gets Pension Credit.
- Does she qualify? – Yes, the Application would be considered as she is moving to look after someone who needs care and may not be able to live independently without her help.
- Assessment of Priority – Medium priority as her parents are moderately vulnerable having managed until now. However, the grant would have a noticeable effect in improving her parents' wellbeing and preventing them from going into care.
- Signposting - Discretionary Housing Payments could also help with removal costs if the Scottish Welfare Funding is limited. Could also advise on seeking benefit information on Attendance Allowance for her parents and potentially Carer Addition for each of them looking after each other.

Example 3 - Charles and Joanna look after Joanna's father, with whom they share their home. Her father is aged over 80 and has been diagnosed with dementia and is now regularly incontinent at night. The incontinence started about five weeks ago. Charles and Joanna get income-based Jobseekers Allowance and their washing machine has just broken down and now beyond repair. They have applied for a Community Care Grant for a new washing machine.

- Are they eligible – Yes, Charles and Joanna receive income-based Jobseekers Allowance and it is them who are applying for the assistance.
- Do they qualify? – Yes, the application would be considered they have caring responsibilities and provision of the washing machine is central to the couple's ability to care for her father. It would help Joanna's father to remain in the community rather than entering accommodation to receive care.
- Assessment of Priority – High priority as the need for the washing machine is immediate and her father is highly vulnerable, the grant having significant adverse consequences if not provided.

Example 4 - Patrick, aged 69, lives alone in a one-bedroom flat and receives Pension Credit. As the result of childhood polio, he has only limited use of his left arm (he is right handed). He is a smoker, and tends to get quite bad bronchitis in winter, getting coughs which persist for 4 or 5 weeks at a time. He has been on pension credit for several years, and hasn't been able to put money away to replace the carpets in his flat, which are worn and dirty. He applies for a Community Care Grant for replacements.

- Is he eligible to apply? – Yes, as he receives Pension Credit.
- Does he qualify? – No, although his health is impaired in winter, there is no evidence to suggest that he is at risk of being admitted to care because of his coughs, nor is this the case because of his arm.
- Signposting – referral to Department for Work and Pensions to claim a budgeting loan instead.

Example 5 - Victor owns his own home and gets income-related Employment Support Allowance. He applies for a Community Care Grant to have a ramp constructed up to his front door - as there are two small steps to the door and he cannot get his wheelchair over them. He has to get someone to help him in and out, or use the back door, which involves propelling himself up quite a steep slope when he is letting himself in, which he finds this difficult. A builder has quoted him £200 for the work. He has already applied to Orkney Islands Council for help, as they previously made some adaptations to his house for him (grab rails in his toilet, a walk-in shower etc) but he has been told that the budget is under pressure and it's not likely that he will get any help until next year some time.

- Is he eligible to apply? – Yes, as he gets income-based Employment and Support Allowance.
- Does he qualify? – Yes, as there is an identifiable risk that he may not be able to live independently without this help. However, if the Council already has a statutory duty to meet this need this duty a Community Care Grant could not be awarded.

- Assessment of Priority – High priority, if the Council do not have a statutory duty to carry out the work. Although he has managed until now the grant would have a significant and immediate sustained effect on his wellbeing and there may be significant adverse consequences if refused.
- Signposting - Social Work to assess? Entitlement to disability benefits could also be explored.

Example 6 - Mr and Mrs Gray are 79 and 84 years old respectively. They both receive Pension Credit. They have very little spare income each week after paying their rent and bills and they have no savings. Their home has a carpet in the lounge but the rest of the property has no floor coverings. Mrs Gray is in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease and has mobility problems. She needs walking sticks or a frame to walk. Mr Gray does his best to look after his wife at home. He is applying for £600 to carpet an area of 20 square metres as their current living room carpet is worn, wrinkled and has holes in it. He describes the carpet as dangerous - his wife has stumbled numerous times but fell over last week and hurt herself. Underneath the carpets are uneven floorboards, which would be as dangerous as the carpet.

- Are they eligible? – Yes, they receive Pension Credit.
- Do they qualify? – Yes, the application would be considered as they need help to improve their home by replacing the carpet. As Mrs Gray has mobility problems and Alzheimer's there is a risk to her health and potential ability to remain living independently if the carpet is not replaced and she falls.
- Assessment of Priority – High priority as Mrs G is vulnerable and the replacement of the carpet would have a significant impact on preventing serious risk or serious damage to her health or safety of Mrs G.

Annex 3

Community Care Grant – to help people set up home in the community, as part of a planned resettlement programme, following an unsettled way of life.

- This may include a young person who is leaving residential accommodation or someone who has a history of repeat homelessness.

Example 1 - Suzanne has been homeless for 3 years after becoming dependent on alcohol. She has slept on friends' sofas and has lost contact with her family. She has been receiving help from Social Services and now claims income related Employment and Support Allowance. She has now been abstinent from alcohol for 5 months and has been offered a tenancy by the Council. The property contains a cooker, but nothing else. She has applied for a Community Care Grant for carpets, curtains, fridge, washing machine and some furniture.

- Is she eligible to apply? – Yes, she gets income related Employment and Support Allowance.
- Does she qualify? – Yes, the application will be considered as she needs help to set up home in the community as part of a planned resettlement program following an unsettled way of life (being homeless). Social Services are also helping with a number of relevant skills - budgeting etc. that amount to a planned program.

- Assessment of Priority – High priority for some essential furniture. As a recovering alcoholic as might be considered as highly vulnerable and by not providing a grant there may be significant adverse consequences. There may be a medium priority for providing the remaining items as the award of a grant may have a noticeable but not immediate effect.

Example 2 - Maureen moved out of her parents' home two years ago after an argument and moved into a furnished flat. She fell into arrears with her rent and was evicted a month ago. She now receives income-based Jobseekers Allowance. She moved in with a friend on the understanding that this would be a temporary arrangement. After 2 weeks she moved into a hostel for single women. A local housing association has offered her a single bedroom unfurnished flat. She has applied for a Community Care Grant to furnish it.

- Is she eligible? – Yes, she gets Income-based Jobseekers Allowance.
- Does she qualify? – No, it is not considered that she has had an unsettled way of life. She stayed for 2 years in her furnished flat, and the periods of time between leaving one home and finding another have been relatively short. No award is made. She could be signposted to a local furniture project.

Annex 4

Community Care Grant – to help families facing exceptional pressures and who lack the resources to meet irregular costs to provide a safe and secure environment for their children.

- Exceptional pressures may include: a breakdown of relationships (perhaps domestic violence); to meet the needs of a chronically ill child or disability in the family; there is a serious problem with accommodation resulting in a move. The priority is the children.

Example 1 - Hannah is a lone parent and gets Income Support. She has applied for a Community Care Grant to buy a washing machine as she has four children. The youngest is not yet dry at night and another has asthma, which has worsened recently. Due to the bed wetting of one child and the need to keep dust mite activity down for the child with asthma, Hannah has to regularly strip and change the bedding. She has never owned a washing machine and has been using the launderette at least four times each week to keep up with the extra laundry. She also has asthma, sciatica and has recently been diagnosed with depression and anxiety. She is finding it increasingly difficult to face the trips to the launderette.

- Is she eligible? – Yes, she receives Income Support.
- Does she qualify? – Yes, the application would be considered as she needs a new washing machine, which is an irregular cost that she can't afford and there are exceptional pressures to meet the needs of her children.
- Assessment of Priority - High priority as an award for the washing machine would have a substantial and immediate effect in resolving or improving the health and wellbeing of the family. This has become urgent recently, since her son's condition has worsened and so has her own depression. Her laundry has to be done even on days when she is not feeling well and is not a task which can be postponed.

Refusal might mean that the washing doesn't get done and that the two children have to sleep on soiled sheets, with a risk of deterioration in the one child's asthma and possibly the whole family's health eventually.

Example 2 - Olivia's mother has thrown her out of the family home because she is pregnant. Her baby is due in 4 weeks. She has spent five months staying with friends and relatives, and has now moved to a Council property. She is sleeping on a mattress on the floor, sitting on a bean bag, and relying on takeaway food. This is a particular problem because she has been diabetic since infancy. She relies on insulin, which has to be kept refrigerated. A neighbour is allowing her to store insulin in her fridge, but Olivia is worried in case her insulin is not available when she needs it. She has asked for a grant to help furnish her new home. She has asked for curtains for the living room, bedroom and kitchen, a cooker, settee and a fridge. Olivia is 19, and has no contact with the baby's father. She is single and claiming Income Support.

- Is she eligible to apply? – Yes, she receives Income Support.
- Does she qualify? – Yes, the application would be considered as she is trying to set up home only four weeks before her baby is due, and after becoming estranged from her family is facing exceptional pressures. Her flat is inadequately furnished for the needs of an expectant mother.
- Assessment of Priority – High priority (with only four weeks before the baby is due) her need for assistance is very pressing. A cooker, cooker, fridge and seating, and bedroom curtains, (as these will block out light and allow her to get some rest) would have a substantial and immediate effect in resolving or improving her health and wellbeing. Low priority for curtains for other rooms, as her flat is not overlooked, and so privacy is not an issue. An award for these would have only a minor effect in resolving or improving Olivia's health and wellbeing
- Signposting- Sure Start Maternity Grant, Child Benefit and Child Tax Credits.

Example 3 - Fran gets Income Support as a lone parent. She left her violent husband with the help of the Police and moved into a refuge with her 3 year old son, where she stayed for six months. She took with her only the clothes she and her son were wearing, with no other items and no money. She has now moved into her own flat. It originally had no furniture, carpets or curtains. She received some financial assistance and counselling from staff in the refuge and this will continue in her new home. A couple of days after moving in she applied for a Community Care Grant for carpets, fridge freezer, washing machine, sofa, wardrobes, child's bed, bedding, iron, Hoover, Television, ironing board, microwave, kitchen utensils, bin, kettle, toaster, mugs, pans and knives. She has already been able to obtain a cooker, glasses, crockery, cutlery and a bed and bedding for herself, which she was sharing with her son.

- Is she eligible? – Yes, she receives Income Support.
- Does she qualify? – Yes, she has faced a breakdown in a violent relationship and has been in a refuge for several months. She lacks the resources to provide for the irregular costs of setting up a new home from scratch. Provision of the household basics will go a long way to easing this move for Fran and her son

- Assessment of Priority – High Priority award for a bed and bedding for Fran's son, seating, carpets for at least the living room and the son's bedroom, kitchen utensils, fridge freezer, and pans. The TV is an excluded item. Low Priority - the other items are less important in helping to ease the particular exceptional pressures the family is facing.

Example 4 - Alan and Lisa have 2 children, aged 5 and 1 and get income-related Jobseekers Allowance. The 5-year-old has asthma and eczema, which appear to be well controlled with medication. They apply for a Community Care Grant for a new bed for themselves and a bed for the baby, who is outgrowing his cot.

- Are they eligible? – Yes, they get income-based Jobseekers Allowance.
- Do they qualify? – No, it is considered that the family is not facing exceptional pressures, just the ordinary ones of having to budget for household items on a low budget. Although the 5-year-old has health problems there is no evidence to suggest that these place exceptional pressure on the family.
- Signposting - to claim a budgeting loan from Department for Work and Pensions.

Annex 5

Community Care Grant - to help people to care for a prisoner or young offender on release on temporary licence.

- The grant is for the person caring for the prisoner to help them adjust to life outside prison.

Example 1 – Josh is released from prison for several days to help him adjust to life outside prison. As he is on home leave he is not entitled to benefits. He goes to stay with his mother who receives Income Support and manages from week to week with no surplus funds. His mother applies for a Community Care Grant for living expenses whilst Josh is home for the few days.

- Is the mother eligible? – Yes, she receives Income Support. It is her who applies, not the son.
- Does she qualify? – Yes, she would be considered for the grant for living expenses as she is facing additional living costs.
- Assessment of priority – High priority as refusal of the grant would have an adverse effect on the release of Josh from prison and would have an immediate effect on the wellbeing of both Josh and his mother.

Annex 6

Exclusions from a Crisis Grant or Community Care Grant.

A person should not get a Crisis Grant or Community Care Grant for any of the following range of excluded needs:

- A need which occurs outside the United Kingdom.
- An educational or training need including: clothing and tools, distinctive school uniform or sports clothes for use at school, equipment to be used at school,

travelling expenses to or from school, school meals taken during 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 the person is being re-housed following a compulsory purchase order, a redevelopment or closing order or a compulsory exchange of tenancies.
- A television or a radio or a licence, aerial or rental costs, costs of purchasing, renting or installing a telephone (unless this is for the purpose of a personal alarm), mobile phones and any call charges.
- Repair to Council property or the property of housing trusts.
- Debts, debt interest, debts to government departments or Council Tax, Scottish Water water and waste charges.
- Any expense which the Council or other organisation has a statutory duty to meet, for example regular costs for care or housing.
- A medical, surgical, optical, aural or dental item or service (note that needs under all of these headings can be provided free of charge by the National Health Service, if they are getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income-related), or Pension Credit). Medical expenses, treatments, items and medications.
- Domestic assistance and respite care.
- Work related expenses.
- Investments.
- Holidays.
- Ongoing needs which are, or are likely to become, a feature of expenditure.
- Travelling expenses, with the exception of one-off expenses relating directly to the qualifying criteria, for example travelling expenses to help someone move to a new home where that move is essential to their re-integration in the community.
- Maternity expenses covered by a Sure Start Maternity Grant – see regulated Social Fund.
- Any costs related to a person's funeral – see regulated Social Fund.
- Expenses to meet the needs of people who have no recourse to public funds.