

# Emergency Assistance Grant

citizens  
advice



2020

# Who we are

## Our aims

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face.
- To improve policies and practices that affect people's lives.

## Our principles

The Citizens Advice service provides free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination both outside our service and within our own workforce.

**The Citizens Advice service helps people to resolve their problems in areas such as:** Benefits, Debts, Employment, Housing, Consumer, Family Law, Civil Rights, Discrimination, Gender Violence & Abuse, Travel, Health, Education and more. Our service can be accessed via telephone and email. Our face-to-face and Outreach services are currently suspended.

We're based in Kingsley House and have been working from our office throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Citizens Advice has existed for the past 81 years and is well known with high brand recognition amongst the public and is a nationally accredited and audited organisation.

# Our Current Services

**Citizens Advice Medway is currently running a number of services over the telephone. Our main services are:**

## **Help to Claim**

- A project set up to help people claim Universal Credit, manage their claims or resolve issues relating to their claims. We can also do “benefit checks” to determine which benefits a person may be entitled to.

## **Money Advice Service**

- A project set up to help those manage their debts. This can include negotiating on someone’s behalf with a creditor, doing budgets (income & expenditure) and credit checks or will

## **LAA Housing**

- A project set up to help those with housing issues that fall under the scope of Legal Aid. This could be eviction from a rented property, challenging a homelessness decision or dealing with a disrepair issue.

# AVENUES OF SUPPORT TO CONSIDER FIRST

The council has other avenues through which it can support residents with financial difficulties in a range of circumstances. These include:

- Providing help with housing costs through Discretionary Housing Payment
- Providing care leavers with help with setting up home costs and other items through the Care Leavers Grant administered by the Children and Adults Directorate
- Referring rough sleepers to the Housing Department
- Welfare Benefits Advice and assistance with making applications
- Adult Social Care assistance to adults with disabilities, older people and carers
- Emergency support under the National Assistance Act for people who are destitute.

# Grant Guidance for Assistance

**The Scheme applies to the following people and MUST be related to COVID-19:**

- Low income families/individuals who are struggling to afford food and other essential items.
- Individuals and families already on low income who have suffered a COVID related change of circumstances.
- People fleeing Domestic Violence.
- People leaving care or prison .
- People returning to the community from residential care / hospital care.
- Supporting vulnerable people to remain living independently.
- Homeless people or people moving out of temporary accommodation.
- Applicants with no recourse to public funds.

# Eligibility

## Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must qualify in accordance with the Eligibility Criteria and awards granted must be in accordance with the Allowable Awards.

<b>Eligibility</b>
Must be aged 16 or over
Able to demonstrate they have been a permanent resident in Medway
Are in receipt of benefits: for example Universal Credit
Are leaving care in the next 6 weeks and have a referral from a professional support worker (social worker, probation officer – must have a transition plan for the second).
Have demonstrated they are without immediate resource to meet the basic needs of themselves and/or of their dependents
Are not eligible for Advance of benefit payment or budgeting loan from DWP that could meet their need
Have not received DWP Community Care Grants, Crisis Loans or an LWP award within the last 12 months (unless there are exceptional circumstances)
In exceptional circumstances the applicant can receive an award if they or an immediate family member has received 2 awards within a 12-month rolling period.
Applicants with no recourse to public funds, regardless of immigration status, in genuine need

# WHAT IS A CRISIS?

A COVID related crisis could be:

- No access to essential items (food, heating and clothing)
- Families/vulnerable people unable to afford essential household items (washing machine, beds, etc)
- Domestic abuse, neglect and harm
- A flood, fire and gas explosion
- Low income poverty (families/people who cannot pay for food or gas/electric)



# WHAT IS NOT A CRISIS?

## What does not count as a crisis:

- Minor mishaps or damage/failure of a household item (only in exceptional circumstances)
- Lost or spent money
- Unable to access savings or capital

# The Application Process

We're now going to use the link below to take you through the application form.

We deal with the client/applicant rather than third parties unless there is a specific reason (e.g.: a family member who is a carer for the client has applied on behalf of someone).

Unfortunately we cannot keep referring professionals up to date on an ongoing basis about every case given the sheer volume of applications we receive each day and for confidentiality reasons.

[https://www.medwayadvice.org.uk/page-local\\_welfare\\_provision.html](https://www.medwayadvice.org.uk/page-local_welfare_provision.html)

# NOT FORGOTTEN



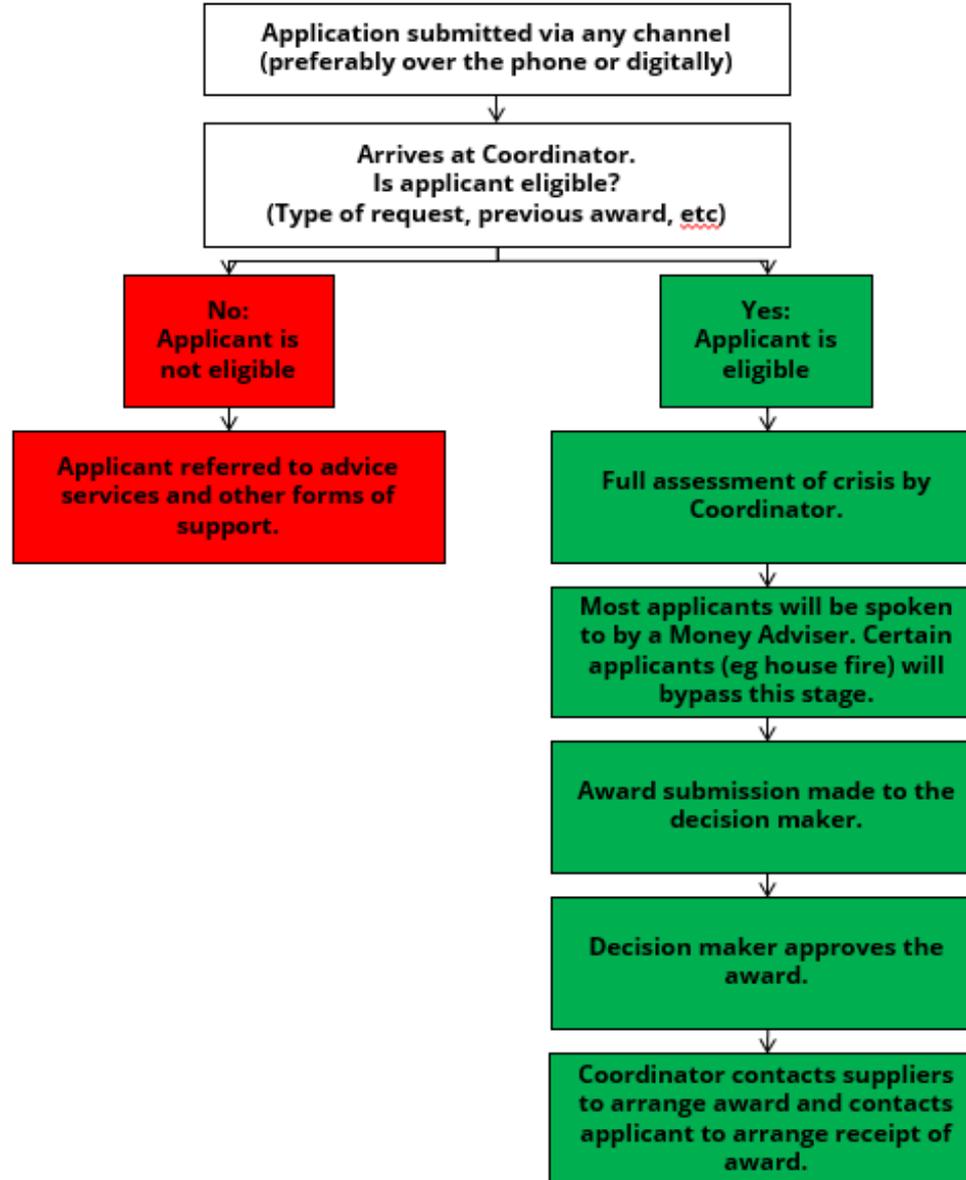
# What checks we make

We conduct full and thorough fraud checks. Please check with your client before you submit an application on their behalf as double applications can trigger our fraud systems and delay the process.

Third parties such as family members and professionals cannot get involved in the checks and application process unless there is sufficient reason. A decision maker decides what awards are made which may not always be in line with the wishes of the person making the application.

- We may need to see pictures of meters displaying how much credit a client has if seeking support in the form of a gas or electric top-up
- We may need to see proof of address
- We may need to see other proof depending on the crisis (e.g.: hospital discharge papers, proof of domestic abuse, etc.)
- We do have an appeals process. Again, the client must carry that process through rather than someone acting on their behalf unless there is sufficient reason why they can't act for themselves.

## Emergency Assistance Grant Process V2



# COVID-19 Vulnerable Family Initiative

It involves the following:

- 1. FOOD ASSIST-** Essential Food Parcels for vulnerable families across Medway. Along with other residents in need.
- 2. ENERGY ASSIST-** An energy support programme to support vulnerable families top up and afford their energy bills. We will also be encouraging our older residents and those with health conditions to switch their heating on and don't be afraid of the cost in the winter.
- 3. MEDWAY ESSENTIALS -** This will provide families with essential items needed within their homes. There will be a particular focus on families moving from temporary to permanent accommodation.
- 4. BENEFIT ASSIST-** A hotline for vulnerable families who need help with their Universal Credit Claims and change of circumstances.
- 5. EMPLOYMENT ASSIST -** A hotline and personal support service for those who may be at risk or have already been made unemployed. We will also help them “dress to impress” for job interviews and fund clothing.
- 6. HOME ASSIST -** This will provide our vulnerable families immediate housing support from our Legal advisers

The food project itself will be significant , we will be taking ALL the food requests that come into CAB during December and January . This means we will be taking the pressure off of the Foodbank as we are their largest referral agency .

I know that the above initiative will help focus both the EAG spend and Winter Grant spend on those in immediate crisis need.

However, it will need me to provide some resourcing as I already have drivers out every weekend throughout December

# CRISIS GRANT

citizens  
advice Medway

Citizens Advice Medway operates a  
Crisis Grant Scheme on behalf of Medway Council

**Are you struggling with bills or debts?**

**Are you unable to afford essential  
household items or gas/electric top-ups?**

**Are you worried about  
affording food over Christmas?**

The Crisis Grant Scheme has been set up  
to help those in crisis who are suffering  
financial difficulties due to COVID-19.

**TO MAKE AN APPLICATION  
TO THE CRISIS GRANT,  
CALL US ON 01634 383 760  
MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

Visit our website at [www.medwayadvice.org.uk](http://www.medwayadvice.org.uk)  
and click on "Local Welfare Provision".



citizens  
advice

Free, confidential, independent and impartial advice for the whole of Medway.

These are samples of the materials we're publishing on  
Social Media and in print form to advertise the schemes.

## Crisis Grant

Do you need help with bills, debts, essential  
household items, food, etc?

Call us on:

01634 383 760 - Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

Medway  
COUNCIL

citizens  
advice Medway

# How to make an Application to the Emergency Assistance Grant



01634 383 760

- Either the applicant or a third party can ring.



[https://www.medwayadvice.org.uk/page-local\\_welfare\\_provision.html](https://www.medwayadvice.org.uk/page-local_welfare_provision.html)

- Either the applicant or a third party can complete the online application.

When you visit our website ([www.medwayadvice.org.uk](http://www.medwayadvice.org.uk)) you'll see a button on the home page that says "Local Welfare Provision".

# Thank You

**You can contact us if you have further questions or need to direct someone to us for advice:**

**Telephone:**

- **01634 383 760**
- **Open 9am to 5pm – Monday to Friday**

**Email:**

- **[info@medwayadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@medwayadvice.org.uk)**
- **Monitored throughout the day – Monday to Friday**

# Free, confidential advice. Whoever you are.

We help people overcome their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.



[citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)

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