



4 May 2020

Covid-19 Emergency Living Fund set up to help people in financial hardship

The county council has extended its existing Welfare Support Scheme to create a new Emergency Living Fund to help people who are in financial hardship because of the coronavirus.

The council has also increased the funding that is available to support people through the covid-19 pandemic by almost 40 percent, and has also changed the criteria so more people will be able to apply.

The Welfare Support Scheme already provides practical support to those in financial hardship for things like food deliveries, rent, gas and electricity top-ups, and essential household items such as furniture and white goods.

The new fund will offer more help, and now covers the replacement of white goods that have broken down, supermarket vouchers and cash when necessary.

You can apply for help if:

- You are a Gloucestershire resident over the age of 16 and you are classed as being in a vulnerable group, for example, you have a history of mental illness or you need support to avoid uncontrollable debt; and
- You are either on a low income or receive benefits; or you are on a low income or are newly unemployed and you are waiting for a benefit claim.

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, leader of Gloucestershire County Council, said: "In times of crisis, it is often the most disadvantaged people who are worst affected. We are putting in place an additional safety net for our most vulnerable residents who have been affected by covid-19 to support them through this difficult time."

The Covid-19 Emergency Living Fund launched on Monday 4 May and applications for help will be reviewed within 24 hours, with people who are approved for support getting the help they need another 24 hours after that.*

In addition to this, another specialist support scheme for vulnerable children and families has also been extended. Previously only social workers could refer children and families for support but this has also been changed so now any professional can refer them for help.

For more information on who can receive support and how to apply or refer someone, visit www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-emergency-living-fund

*For white goods, the timescale is up to 10 days and is subject to suppliers' availability.



ENDS

Notes to editors

The value of the contract has increased by £200,000 from £520,000 in 2019/20 to £720,000 in 2020/21.

Vulnerable groups who are eligible:

- At risk of entering institutionalised care
- At risk of significant harm or exploitation
- Avoid an uncontrollable debt
- Care leavers 16 to 18 years (up to 25 years old if in education)
- Ex-offenders/leaving YOI
- Resettlement from custody for young people
- Leaving Accommodation Based Support services
- Leaving residential care
- Fleeing domestic abuse
- Escaping hate crime/harassment
- Person with terminal illness
- Child in Need in the home
- Child has child protection plan
- History of homelessness
- Runaways
- Sleeping rough for long period
- Living in poor accommodation including living in temporary accommodation
- Families where parent is misusing alcohol/drugs or has mental health crisis
- Pregnant women
- Assessed by GCC as being eligible for support from Health and Social care
- Telecare user
- Person with chronic illness
- History of Mental illness / self-harming
- History of substance or alcohol misuse and actively seeking rehabilitation
- **Additional factors that leave people/families more vulnerable as a result of Covid-19 due to inability to leave the home or disabilities already listed.**

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