

# Discretionary Fund Policy and Procedure Derbyshire County Council - Adult Social Care and Health

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**1. Introduction.**

- 1.1. The purpose of this document is to detail the policy and procedures of the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund (DDF).
- 1.2. The DDF was established in April 2013 following the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) decision to abolish community care grants and some aspects of crisis loans. The DWP continue to administer budgeting loans and short-term benefit advances.
- 1.3. The DDF has been designed to help residents of Derbyshire with urgent needs which they are unable to meet from their regular income. It is made up of three different provisions, which are discretionary payments, and are paid from the budget allocated by Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

**2. Principles.**

- 2.1 The overarching principles of the DDF are as follows and are to be met wherever possible and practicable:
  - working to effectively signpost to preventative and wider provision to better assist the applicant and avoid repeated use,
  - understanding the landscape of relevant complementary and alternative provision,
  - not taking over the role of other agencies/departments (e.g. DWP),
  - recognising the impact of financial challenges on those who are vulnerable,
  - taking into account the risks to the health and safety of those involved,
  - in all cases the age, health, financial, and personal circumstances of applicants will be considered.
- 2.2 Payments and access to the fund are discretionary, and along with the budgetary position, the history and current circumstances of an applicant and their family will be considered when decisions are made.
- 2.3 This policy sets out the payments, criteria for support, and the mechanisms that will be used to prioritise awards if service demand is high and might exceed the available

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budget. However, the funds available to the DDF are limited, and if the full amount of budget allocated for the financial year is exhausted before the end of the financial year the Council may have to stop making awards for the remainder of that financial year.

### 3. Data processing.

- 3.1 Derbyshire Discretionary Fund is part of Derbyshire County Council Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH), and Council employees will share information for the purpose of verifying the circumstances of an application and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of individuals.
- 3.2 Discretionary fund staff may also share information with district and borough council officers, other agencies and the DWP, in order to assess applications and prevent fraud.
- 3.3 Data collected as part of an application to the fund, and as part of the assessment of an application, is kept for purposes of audit, financial records, and a record of an individual's application history, in line with ASCH Records Retention Schedule [Adult social care and health retention schedule - Our Derbyshire](#)

More information about the Council's responsibilities regarding data protection can be found on the Council website.

### 4. Scope.

- 4.1 The DDF will provide three forms of grant payments, Crisis Payments (CPs); Re-settlement Grants (RSGs); and Essential Items Grants (EIGs).
- 4.2 The scope of Crisis Payment is to assist individuals and their household when a sudden event or change of circumstances has led to a lack of resource to provide food, energy, and emergency clothing, which poses an immediate and substantial risk to the health and safety of the household.
- 4.3 The scope of a Re-settlement Grant is to support an individual or family to set up home and/or establish a settled way of life following a period without a settled way of life. For example, this could be because of moving from a refuge, or returning home from a care setting, or leaving supported accommodation, or having been homeless.
- 4.4 The scope of an Essential Item Grant is to assist a household under pressure that is unable to provide themselves with basic household items. The pressure could be as a result of a number of factors, including:
  - Moving property due to pressure – eg separation, eviction, over-crowding, moving closer to family for support.
  - Moving property for financial reasons – eg downsizing or moving due to the

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bedroom tax / benefit cap.

- Financial pressure means the household cannot replace essential items – eg household is in receipt of means tested benefits and without scope for accessing Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) budgeting loans or budgeting advances.

An award of an Essential Items Grant could support the prevention of homelessness by alleviating some of the pressure on the household.

- 4.5 On occasion the DDF may offer additional forms of grant payments on behalf of the Council in response to specific crises or emergencies. For example, hardship payments for flooding.

## 5. Crisis Payments.

- 5.1 Crisis Payments (CPs) are to assist individuals and their household when a sudden event or change of circumstances has led to a lack of resource to provide food, energy, and emergency clothing, which poses an immediate and substantial risk to the health and safety of the household.

Other needs may be assessed through the RSG or EIG processes or signposted to other broader support agencies and organisations.

- 5.2 Decisions for Crisis Payments will consider:
- **food:** a fixed amount to alleviate the short-term need for basic grocery items for the individual and/or their household.
  - **energy:** a fixed amount to alleviate the short-term need for utility costs for an individual and/or their household.
  - **emergency clothing:** a fixed amount to provide basic items in the case of a disaster or crisis that has destroyed clothing or prevented access to clothing.

Consideration of ‘**a lack of resource**’ will include:

- all income and capital available to the applicant/family.
- any other sources of support available to the household.
- the nature, extent, and urgency of the need.

Consideration of ‘**an immediate and substantial risk to the health and safety of the household**’ will include:

- having regard to the vulnerability of the applicant and their dependents - for example the applicants age, responsibility for the care of children, and any disability or ill health
- applicants may also be vulnerable due to their circumstances such as being a care leaver, their housing/homelessness situation, experiencing domestic abuse, caring responsibilities, or recent release from prison.

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Consideration of ‘**sudden event or change of circumstances**’ will include:

- the needs arising from such an event or change,
- the significant loss, damage, or destruction,
- any extreme weather,
- the substantial and immediate effect of resolving or improving the applicant’s circumstances.

5.3 Crisis Payments decisions will be made within one to three working days, where possible.

5.4 The value of a Crisis Payment for food and energy will be set at a maximum limit. The rate will be reviewed annually.

From 1st October 2024 these are:

- Applicant - £65
- Each affected member of the applicant’s family - £15

5.5 The value of a Crisis Payment for emergency clothing (if eligible) will be £100 per person.

5.6 Crisis Payment awards will be limited to two in any twelve-month period (rolling year) unless new circumstances arise because of a disaster.

5.7 A Crisis Payment application may be treated as a Re-settlement Grant (RSG) or Essential Item Grant (EIG) application if found upon assessment to be the most appropriate application given the circumstances of the applicant, providing they meet the criteria.

In these instances an RSG or EIG will be subject to the relevant RSG and EIG procedures and time limits.

## 6. Crisis Payment application process.

6.1 Applicants, or third parties/agencies, can make an application for a Crisis Payment either:

- via the application line on 01629 533399; or
- via the Council’s online platform (under development).

The DDF team need to be satisfied that the third party/agency has the applicant’s permission to make contact on their behalf.

6.2 If a resident who contacts the application line has already had the maximum number of Crisis Payment awards possible in a rolling twelve month period, the application line staff will advise them of this and close the application.

6.3 The applicant’s personal information, details of their circumstances, and the support they are requesting will be taken by the customer care assistants / gathered by the online

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form. This information will be passed, via the internal process using the case management system, to the DDF assessment team.

- 6.4 The DDF team will always have full regard to the DDF principles ([see section 2 Principles.](#)) and other complementary and alternative provisions before making any payments from the DDF budget.
- 6.5 The priority in dealing with Crisis Payment applications will be determined with reference to the circumstances of the applicant’s need and historical records.
- 6.6 After receiving an application for a Crisis Payment, the case assessor will contact the applicant to discuss their application by telephone, unless there is an accessibility reason to contact them by another method.

This discussion will include establishing information in relation to the circumstances giving rise to the application and any vulnerabilities of the applicant and members of their household.

- 6.7 From April 2025, the decision on whether to award a CP will be considered with reference to the budgetary tier in which the fund is operating ([see section16 Tiered framework from April 2025.](#)).
- 6.8 There are two possible outcomes:

**Crisis Payment awarded - involves the following actions:**

- a. The case assessor will contact the applicant to relay the decision and confirm payment arrangements before making a payment for food, energy, or emergency clothing,
- b. The amount determined will cover a seven-day period, and a repeat award for the same items will not be made within that time period.
- c. The barcode/voucher will be valid for one month, and if not cashed within this time it will be cancelled.

**Crisis Payment declined - involves the following actions:**

- a. The case assessor will contact the applicant to relay the decision and offer advice on the review process.
- b. If the applicant is declined due to already having the maximum number of Crisis Payment awards possible, this contact may be by text message, unless there is an accessibility reason why this would be inappropriate.
- c. The application will then be closed.

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## 7. Crisis Payment review process.

- 7.1 Applicants who have been declined a Crisis Payment can request a review of the decision via the application line.
- 7.2 The review process is a one stage process, and the review request should be made within three working days of the applicant receiving the decision.
- 7.3 If a third party/agency requests a review the DDF team will have to be satisfied that they have the applicant's permission to make contact on their behalf.
- 7.4 A review request will be allocated to a case assessor, or more senior team member, within the DDF team who did not make the original decision which is the subject of the review.
- 7.5 The review request will be subject to the same procedures as new applications.
- 7.6 The decision made will be final.
- 7.7 A review request for a Crisis Payment may be treated as a new application if it is determined it would be more appropriate, providing the applicant meets the criteria. Each new application will be subject to the relevant timescales for decision making.

## 8. Re-settlement Grants.

- 8.1 Re-settlement Grants (RSGs) are to support an individual or family to set up home and/or establish a settled way of life following a period without a settled way of life. For example, this could be because of moving from a refuge, or returning home from a care setting, or leaving supported accommodation, or having been homeless.  
  
Other needs may be assessed through the CP or EIG processes or signposted to other broader support agencies and organisations.
- 8.2 A Re-settlement Grant application will be made by a support worker who is supporting the individual or the household.
- 8.3 To be eligible to receive an RSG, the individual, or partner, must be in receipt of a relevant benefit ([see section 17 General conditions.](#)) or be likely to qualify for such a benefit when establishing themselves in the community in the circumstances giving rise to the application, or have been on such a benefit within the last three months before making the application and the reason they are no longer on the benefit is that they have started in employment.

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8.4 RSG applications will be considered with reference to the individual’s capital ([see section 17 General conditions.](#)) For any awards made where the applicant has more than £1,000 (per family), the amount awarded will be calculated to take any excess capital into account prior to payment.

In circumstances where it is difficult for an individual’s capital to be verified, for example because providing copies of bank statements is not possible, the support worker will be able to provide verbal information to the case assessor.

8.5 RSG applications will be assessed within five working days of the necessary information to support the application being provided to the DDF.

8.6 RSG assessments will consider requests for the following items:

Primary Items	Secondary Items
Bed and bedding	Second hand sofa
Electric or gas cooker	Curtains for living room and bedroom
Fridge freezer	Washing machine
Kitchen Equipment Pack	
Clothing (one off spare set)	
Removal costs	
Washing machine (if disabled/long term health condition or child/children under 18 in the household)	
Social care specified need (with DDF Team Manager approval)	

8.7 From April 2025, the availability of primary and secondary items will be considered with reference to the budgetary tier in which the fund is operating ([see section 16 Tiered framework from April 2025.](#))

8.8 An award of an RSG is limited to one award within a twelve-month period (rolling year).

8.9 Applications will not be considered for the same item within a twelve-month period (rolling year) of a previous application for the same item, whether successful or not, unless there has been a significant change of circumstances for the individual / household or there are extenuating circumstances as to why an application has not previously been progressed.

8.10 An RSG application may be treated as a Crisis Payment (CP) or Essential Item Grant (EIG) application if found upon assessment to be the most appropriate application given the circumstances of the applicant, providing they meet the criteria.



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In these instances an CP or EIG will be subject to the relevant CP and EIG procedures and time limits.

## 9. Re-settlement Grant application process.

- 9.1 Support workers can make an application for a Re-settlement Grant either:
- via the application line on 01629 533399; or
  - via the Council’s online platform (under development).
- The DDF team need to be satisfied that the third party/agency has the applicant’s permission to make contact on their behalf.
- 9.2 The individual’s personal information, details of their circumstances, the support being requested, and the contact details of the support worker supporting the application, will be taken by the customer care assistants / gathered by the online form. This information will be passed, via the internal process using the case management system, to the DDF assessment team.
- 9.3 The DDF team will always have full regard to the DDF principles ([section 2 Principles.](#)) and other complementary and alternative provisions before making any payments from the DDF budget.
- 9.4 The priority in dealing with RSG applications will be determined with reference to the circumstances of the individual’s need.
- 9.5 After receiving an application for an RSG, the case assessor will contact the support worker to discuss the application by telephone and/or email.
- This discussion will include establishing information in relation to the circumstances giving rise to the application and any vulnerabilities of the individual and members of their household.
- 9.6 Information may also be requested to support the application, for example, quotes for the items they are requesting, supporting letters or evidence. It is the support worker’s and/or individual’s responsibility to gather the information when requested.
- 9.7 From April 2025, the decision on whether to award an RSG will be considered with reference to the budgetary tier in which the fund is operating ([see section 16 Tiered framework from April 2025.](#)).
- 9.8 There are two possible outcomes:

### **RSG awarded – involves the following actions:**

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- a. The case assessor will contact the support worker to make an offer of award by email and confirm the payment terms. If the individual has also requested a copy of the award letter this will be issued to them too.
- b. If confirmation of acceptance of the offer is received within 28 days, the award will be transacted. The DDF team will contact the support worker / individual to explain how this award will be fulfilled / delivery of items.
- c. If confirmation of acceptance of the offer is not received the application will be closed, and no further action will be taken.

**RSG declined – involved the following actions:**

- a. The case assessor will contact the support worker to relay this decision and offer advice on the review process - this will normally be done by telephone or email. If the individual has also requested this information will be issued to them too.
- b. The application will then be closed.

**10. Re-settlement Grant review process.**

- 10.1 An individual who has been declined an RSG, or their support worker, can request a review of the decision via the application line.
- 10.2 The review process is a one stage process, and the review request should be made within one calendar month of the date of the decision on the original application.
- 10.3 If a support worker requests a review, the DDF team will need to be satisfied that they have the individual’s permission to make contact on their behalf.
- 10.4 A review request will be allocated to a case assessor, or more senior member of staff, within the DDF team who did not make the original request which is the subject of the review.
- 10.5 The review request will be subject to the same procedures as a new application.
- 10.6 A review request will be triaged within five working days to determine the urgency.
- 10.7 The decision made will be final.
- 10.8 A review request for an RSG may be treated as a new application if it is determined it would be more appropriate, providing the applicant meets the criteria. Each new application will be subject to the relevant timescales for decision making.

**11. Essential Items Grants.**

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- 11.1 Essential Items Grants (EIGs) are to assist a household under pressure that is unable to provide themselves with basic household items. The pressure could be as a result of a number of factors, including:
- Moving property due to pressure – eg separation, eviction, over-crowding, moving closer to family for support,
  - Moving property for financial reasons – eg downsizing or moving due to the bedroom tax / benefit cap,
  - Financial pressure means the household cannot replace essential items – eg household is in receipt of means tested benefits and without scope for accessing Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) budgeting loans or budgeting advances.

An award of an Essential Items Grant could support the prevention of homelessness by alleviating some of the pressure on the household.

- 11.2 Other needs may be assessed through the CP or RSG processes or signposted to other broader support agencies and organisations.
- 11.3 To be eligible to receive an EIG, the applicant, or partner, must be in receipt of a relevant benefit ([see section 17 General conditions.](#)) or be likely to qualify for such a benefit when establishing themselves in the community in the circumstances giving rise to the application, or have been on such a benefit within the last three months before making the application and the reason they are no longer on the benefit is that they have started in employment.
- 11.4 EIG applications will be considered with reference to the applicant’s capital ([see section 17 General conditions.](#)). For any awards made where the applicant has more than £1,000 (per family), the amount awarded will be calculated to take any excess capital into account prior to payment.
- 11.5 The assessment on an EIG application will begin within ten working days of the necessary information to support the application being provided to the DDF.
- 11.6 EIG assessments will consider requests for the following items:

<b>Primary Items</b>	<b>Secondary Items</b>
Bed and bedding	Second hand sofa
Electric or gas cooker	Curtains for living room and bedroom
Fridge freezer	Washing machine
Washing machine (if disabled/long term health condition or child/children under 18 in the household)	

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- 11.7 From April 2025, the availability of primary and secondary items will be considered with reference to the budgetary tier in which the fund is operating ([see section 16 Tiered framework from April 2025.](#)).
- 11.8 An award of an EIG is limited to one award within a twelve-month period (rolling year).
- 11.9 Applications will not be considered for the same item within a twelve-month period (rolling year) of a previous application for the same item, whether successful or not, unless there has been a significant change of circumstances for the individual / household or there are extenuating circumstances as to why an application has not previously been progressed.
- 11.10 An EIG application may be treated as a Crisis Payment (CP) or Re-settlement Grant (RSG) application if found upon assessment to be the most appropriate application given the circumstances of the applicant, providing they meet the criteria.

In these instances an CP or RSG will be subject to the relevant CP and RSG procedures and time limits.

## **12. Essential Items Grant application process.**

- 12.1 Applicants, or third parties/agencies, can make an application for an Essential Items Grant either:
- via the application line on 01629 533399; or
  - via the Council's online platform (under development).
- The DDF team need to be satisfied that the third party/agency has the applicant's permission to make contact on their behalf.
- 12.2 The individual's personal information, details of their circumstances, and the support they are requesting, will be taken by the customer care assistants / gathered by the online form. This information will be passed, via the internal process using the case management system, to the DDF assessment team.
- 12.3 The DDF team will always have full regard to the DDF principles ([see section 2 Principles.](#)) and other complementary and alternative provisions before making any payments from the DDF budget.
- 12.4 The priority in dealing with EIG applications will be determined with reference to the circumstances of the individual's need.
- 12.5 After receiving an application for an EIG, the case assessor will contact the applicant, and

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if appropriate the support worker, to discuss the application by telephone and/or email.

This discussion will include establishing information in relation to the circumstances giving rise to the application and any vulnerabilities of the individual and members of their household. If the application is based or partially based on financial pressures this will be explored with the applicant.

12.6 Information may also be requested to support the application, for example, quotes for the items they are requesting, supporting letters or evidence. It is the support worker's and/or individual's responsibility to gather the information when requested.

12.7 From April 2025, the decision on whether to award an EIG will be considered with reference to the budgetary tier in which the fund is operating ([see section 16 Tiered framework from April 2025.](#))

12.8 There are two possible outcomes:

**EIG awarded – involves the following actions:**

- a. The case assessor will contact the applicant (and where appropriate the support worker) to make an offer of award and confirm the payment terms.
- b. If confirmation of acceptance of the offer is received within 28 days, the award will be transacted. The DDF team will contact the applicant / support worker to explain how this award will be fulfilled / delivery of items.
- c. If confirmation of acceptance of the offer is not received the application will be closed, and no further action will be taken.

**RSG declined – involved the following actions:**

- a. The case assessor will contact the applicant to relay this decision and offer advice on the review process - this will normally be done by telephone or email.
- b. The application will then be closed.

**13. Essential Items Grant review process.**

13.1 An individual who has been declined an EIG, or their support worker, can request a review of the decision via the application line.

13.2 The review process is a one stage process, and the review request should be made within one calendar month of the date of the decision on the original application.

13.3 If a support worker requests a review, the DDF team will need to be satisfied that they have the individual's permission to make contact on their behalf.

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- 13.4 A review request will be allocated to a case assessor, or more senior member of staff, within the DDF team who did not make the original request which is the subject of the review.
- 13.5 The review request will be subject to the same procedures as a new application.
- 13.6 A review request will be triaged within five working days to determine the urgency.
- 13.7 The decision made will be final.
- 13.8 A review request for an EIG may be treated as a new application if it is determined it would be more appropriate, providing the applicant meets the criteria. Each new application will be subject to the relevant timescales for decisionmaking.

#### **14. Payments.**

14.1 The DDF has a range of methods to make awards to applicants:

- **A prepayment card**

The award is delivered by the Family Fund Trust and accompanying documentation will set out the items awarded and details of where the applicant can redeem the card.

- **Direct supply of an item**

An item will be ordered through the Family Fund Trust and delivery arranged through their agreed supplier.

- **A voucher to be cashed at a Post Office**

A barcode/voucher is issued to the applicant to take into the Post Office to get their award.

- **By BACS payments direct to an agreed supplier**

Direct payment to supplier based on a pre-agreed invoice.

14.2 Awards from the DDF will promote the supply of goods and/or services through the Trusted Trader scheme, and through local furniture re-use projects where possible and appropriate.

14.3 For any payments cashed it may be necessary for the applicant to take a form of identification with them for verification which could include:

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passport  
 driving licence  
 birth certificate  
 marriage certificate  
 recent letter from a utility company  
 current bank/credit card statement  
 recent letter from DWP

This list is not exhaustive, and the case assessor will advise the applicant at the time of the decision.

## 15. Transition to new approach in October 2024

- 15.1 Following cabinet approval in July 2024, the changes to the DDF policy will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 onwards.
- 15.2 Transitional arrangements will ensure that applications for Emergency Cash payments and Exceptional Pressure Grants made before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 will be assessed under the policy provisions in place when the application was made.
- 15.3 In relation to the ‘maximum awards’ provision for Crisis payments (from and including 1.10.2024) and Emergency Cash Payments (prior to 1.10.2024), the following will apply:
- Crisis Payment awards will be limited to two in any twelve-month period (rolling year) unless new circumstances arise because of a disaster, and
  - Emergency Cash Payment and Crisis Payment awards combined will be limited to three in any twelve-month period (rolling year) unless new circumstances arise because of a disaster.
- 15.4 In relation to the Re-settlement Grant and Essential Items Grant limits of one award within a twelve-month period (rolling year) these will commence with the new provisions and not take previous awards of Exceptional Pressure Grants into account, other than for the existing provision that:  
 “applications will not be considered for the same item within a twelve-month period (rolling year) of a previous application for the same item, whether successful or not, unless there has been a significant change of circumstances for the individual / household or there are extenuating circumstances as to why an application has not previously been progressed.”

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## 16. Tiered framework from April 2025.

- 16.1 From April 2025 a tiered framework will be applied when considering if an award can be made. This framework will consider both the vulnerability of the applicant and their household, and also the circumstances that have given rise to the application.
- 16.2 For the period October 2024 – March 2025 this framework will be tested in the background but not used as a method to determine any awards. More information will be added here in advance of April 2025.

## 17. General conditions.

### 17.1 Age

Applicants must be over 16 years.

### 17.2 Residency.

Applicants must have been resident in Derbyshire for at least the past three months, with some exceptions. This could include for example, those released from prison or young offenders' institution who have a previous connection with Derbyshire prior to that time away, or leaving care or hospital setting, or those who are fleeing domestic abuse.

### 17.3 Capital – Re-settlement Grant and Essential Item Grants.

For an RSG or EIG, any awards made where the applicant has savings or capital of more than £1,000 (per household), the amount awarded will be calculated to take any excess capital into account prior to payment.

Capital includes money held as savings or investments and any cash.

### 17.4 Repeat awards.

Crisis Payments - will be limited to two in any twelve-month period (rolling year) unless new circumstances arise because of a disaster.

Re-settlement Grants - are limited to one award within a twelve-month period (rolling year). Applications will not be considered for the same item within a twelve-month period (rolling year) of a previous application for the same item, whether successful or not, unless there has been a significant change of circumstances for the individual / household or there are extenuating circumstances as to why an application has not previously been progressed.

Essential Item Grants - are limited to one award within a twelve-month period (rolling

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year). Applications will not be considered for the same item within a twelve-month period (rolling year) of a previous application for the same item, whether successful or not, unless there has been a significant change of circumstances for the individual / household or there are extenuating circumstances as to why an application has not previously been progressed.

#### 17.5 Expired awards

If an award which has been made, but not cashed or activated, expires there is no automatic replacement process. Any subsequent award would be made based on a new application and assessment of the circumstances that apply when the new application was made.

#### 17.6 Relevant benefits – Re-settlement Grant and Essential Item Grant

For the purposes of an RSG and EIG, these are:

- income support
- income based job seekers allowance
- new style job seekers allowance (where the household income is the same amount as that for income-based job seekers allowance)
- income related employment & support allowance
- new style or contributory based employment & support allowance (where the household income is the same amount as that for income related employment & support allowance)
- pension credit
- universal credit where the applicant:
  - is a single person with earnings of less than £393 per month in any of the preceding 3 months; or
  - is a couple with earnings of less than £618 per month in any of the preceding 3 months; or
  - is a single person or couple with limited capacity for work or work related activity, with earnings of less than £795 per month in any of the preceding 3 months; or
  - is a single person or couple with either a carer's element to their UC or in receipt of carer's allowance, with earnings of less than £795 per month in any of the preceding 3 months.

These figures will be reviewed annually.

#### 17.7 Income from other sources which is ignored

Income made available to the applicant by another source for a specific purpose, for example, a DWP maternity grant or a grant from a charitable organisation, will not be regarded as income or capital to be taken into account by the DDF, unless the application

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is for the same item or purpose as the grant has been made for.

#### 17.8 Joint applications

A couple applying to the DDF will be treated as a “joint application” and any award made will count towards both individuals’ application histories. In assessing whether an applicant is a member of a couple, the fund will take into account information provided by DWP and other agencies where applicable.

#### 17.9 Non-dependent household members

The income of non-dependent household members (i.e. not the partner or dependent children of the applicant) is usually disregarded in an application to the fund. Examples of this could be older relatives who live with the applicant, or children who are no longer dependant.

### 18. Definitions.

#### 18.1 Available income

Any available money, such as benefits, wages, child maintenance, or money from friends and/or family.

#### 18.2 Individual.

An applicant who has no partner or dependent children within their family.

#### 18.3 Dependent child

An individual aged under 16. A person will also be defined as a child if they are 16 to 19-years old and they are:

- not married nor in a civil partnership nor living with a partner, and
- living with parents or adults who are responsible for that young person, and
- in full-time non-advanced education or in unwaged government training

#### 18.4 Partner.

Person to whom the applicant is married, or in a civil partnership, or living together as if they were married to them.

#### 18.5 Applicant.

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The person making the application for a payment from the DDF.

#### 18.6 Household

The applicant and their partner with or without dependent children.

### 19. Exclusions.

An application for payment may not be considered if any of the following apply:

- 19.1 If the applicant is already receiving or is eligible for support from other areas, for example:
- disabled facilities grant (DFG)
  - section 17 payments of the Children’s Act
  - DWP Hardship Fund
  - DWP Short-term Benefit Advances
  - DWP Funeral or Maternity Payments
  - DWP Budgeting Loans
- 19.2 The household or applicant has an immigration status requiring them to have no recourse to public funds.
- 19.3 If an award would be detrimental to the applicant given information the Council already holds concerning their health and wellbeing.
- 19.4 The household or applicant has exceeded the maximum number of awards permitted under the DDF criteria.
- 19.5 The household or applicant has failed to return their signed offer of award for an RSG or EIG by the date specified in the offer, allowing for the postal process.
- 19.6 Excess capital has reduced the award to a nil amount.
- 19.7 The application is for:
- help to pay off debts or regular bills, for example, council tax or rent arrears.
  - rent, telephone costs, TV licence and/or water charges or any debts to government departments.
  - medical/surgical/optical/dental and/or aural items.
  - school uniform or equipment, and school meals.
  - travel costs.
  - electrical items such as TVs, computers, laptops or similar
  - to replace lost or stolen money.
  - budgeting reasons without engaging in support offered to mitigate this.
  - work related expenses.

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- any needs arising outside of the UK.
- domestic assistance, respite care or a holiday.
- any expenses associated with court including fees and fines.
- any expenses associated with a funeral or cremation.
- items where the household has insurance cover for the item/service they are requesting.
- anything that the local authority has a statutory duty to meet.

- 19.8 Is a retrospective application for an item or service, i.e. where the applicant has already taken on a liability prior to the application being made or whilst it is being processed.
- 19.9 The applicant has, by reason of their behaviour or actions, been subject to the Council's policies and procedures in relation to protection of employees, including the violence at work policy and guidance, and harassment and bullying procedure.
- 19.10 The application has arisen due to criminal or deliberate damage caused by the applicant or their associates.
- 19.11 This list is not exhaustive, and decisions are discretionary, as there will be circumstances when it will be necessary to exclude an applicant's request, when other elements of the criteria are met, in addition to the list above.

## **20. Abuse of the fund including fraud.**

- 20.1 If the council suspects abuse of the DDF, including fraud, has taken place DDF staff will escalate their concerns through an agreed process which could include suspending further access to the fund, involvement of the council's legal services, and possible escalation to the police.

## **21. Complaints.**

- 21.1 Complaints about the operation of the DDF come under the Council's corporate complaints procedure. This is entirely separate from the DDF decision making process as set out in this policy and procedures document.

The corporate complaints procedure can be [accessed](#).

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<b>Author and Version History</b>
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### Change History

Version 1	March 2013	First full version
Version 2	December 2013	Amendments to policy
Version 3	October 2014	Amendments to criteria and updated policy and procedure
Version 4	July 2016	Updated policy and procedure
Version 5	April 2019	Updated procedure
Version 6	November 2021	Updated procedure
Version 7	July 2023	Updated policy
Version 8	October 2024	Revision to policy and procedure

End of Document.