

## Local Welfare Assistance Scheme in Suffolk (LWAS) Guidance

### 1. Context

This document sets out guidance on how Gateway Partners are able to assist people who are seeking help as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic or the response to it.

The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS) in Suffolk is a local response to those who have found themselves in financial hardship as a **DIRECT** result of the Covid-19 pandemic or the response to it.

We encourage Gateway Partners to ensure that other sources of assistance are considered before an application to LWAS is submitted (other sources of support are contained within this document).

The types of support available from LWAS include household items (furniture and white goods), fuel vouchers, supermarket vouchers and cash payments.

### 2. Process re identifying eligible individuals/households in most need

Gateway Partners are:

- a) Encouraged to signpost all people who are provided with items/vouchers to participate in budget planning advice sessions. For recommended providers see [Appendix 3](#)
- b) Must evaluate each applicant's circumstances to ensure that those most in need are helped. This should be undertaken **using the eligibility criteria** set out below:
- c) Must clearly explain how the request for support is as a DIRECT result of the Covid 19 pandemic or the response to it.

### 3. Eligibility

To be considered for LWAS in Suffolk a person should be:

- Aged 16 or over **and**
- A permanent resident in Suffolk (or in exceptional cases can establish that they will be resident in Suffolk within 28 days, such as people leaving a hostel or prison that is outside of the county) **and**
- In need of immediate urgent support **and/or**
- In need of essential basic household items such as furniture, white goods, supermarket vouchers or cash payments to enable them to set up or maintain their home **and**
- They have no other means of meeting the need(s) presented **and**
- They currently have less than £1,000 available balance/funds **and**
- **Either** they have applied for benefits/Covid related grants but are - a) awaiting payment or b) still have insufficient funds **or** they are not eligible for benefits or Covid 19 related grants **and**
- They do not have anyone else living within the household who could pay for the item.

### 4. How to apply for essential items of furniture, white goods, fuel vouchers, supermarket vouchers, and cash contributions towards utility costs

Once you have identified that an individual/household is eligible to be referred into LWAS, please complete the [online](#) application form.

It may be necessary to ask for other proof of a person's situation in some individual cases. Details of this should be recorded on the application form.

Please note LWAS is not intended as long-term support. Multiple applications will be flagged, and further contact made with the referrer to better understand the circumstances and whether other longer-term solutions can be found. Each referral will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

#### a) Household items and white goods

A list of basic essential items can be found at [Appendix 2](#). Where items are identified as being essential to the applicant (and/or their family), but do not appear on the list of basic essential items, you will need to give full reason on the application form.

For instance, if a single person is requesting a double bed, they would need to provide a reason for this.

#### b) Supermarket vouchers

Supermarket vouchers, or e-gift cards can be requested as part of the application. Vouchers may only be redeemed in store and not online. Specified supermarkets are: Asda, Aldi, Morrisons, Tesco and Sainsbury's. Please select which is most suitable for your client on the

application form. The value of the voucher will be dictated by the number of people in the household. Vouchers will be allocated at the rate of £25 per household member, up to a maximum of £100 for households of four people or more.

Vouchers will either be emailed to the client directly, to you if it needs to be printed, or sent in the post direct to the client if neither of the two previous options are possible.

### c) Fuel Vouchers

Some Gateway Partners have a supply of Fuel vouchers to distribute locally. If you are not one of these Gateway Partners, please apply via LWAS in the usual way.

*Information for gateway partners that have been issued with their own supply:*

Fuel vouchers may only be issued once you have checked the applicant's eligibility against the criteria, and you are satisfied they meet this. There is no need to wait for a decision from the LWAS team, but an application form **must** be completed in every case where fuel vouchers are issued, and the fuel voucher number(s) must be referenced on the application form.

### d) Cash contributions

For those who are struggling with utility costs/bills the LWAS can provide a cash payment towards their gas, electric, and water utility bills (intended to support both those on a pre-payment meter and those who have a direct debit) and other fuel costs such as oil, wood or coal. Internet and phone bills are not classified as utility costs under this scheme.

Cash payments will be made directly into the individuals' bank accounts and will be automatically calculated based on the number of individuals in a household. Payments will be made at the rate of £25 per household member, up to a maximum of £100 for households of four people or more.

## 5. Processing applications

Applications must be made online [via the online LWAS application form](#).

All applications will be assessed within 5 working days and you will receive an email confirming the decision. If further information is required and it has not been possible to contact the referrer the timeframe may be extended. If the application is successful, the LWAS team will notify an identified household item provider with the details of the applicant and the item(s) the applicant has requested, for them to arrange delivery directly with the applicant by telephone.

Our providers use a mix of donated, used, and new items depending on availability and what the item is. Cookers or washing machines will include installation.

## Key steps

- Check eligibility – only refer those facing financial hardship due to impact of COVID 19
- Complete and submit the application form, making sure that the applicant is aware their information will be shared with the LWAS team and household item delivery providers
- Refer to LD Rope Trust or other charitable provision for additional items such as carpets, clothes etc. (see [Appendix 1](#))
- Make applicant aware that applications are processed within 5 working days and in the order received by the LWAS team.

## Appendices:

1. [List of other charitable provision for additional items](#)
2. [List of essential items; for single person without children, and families with children](#)
3. [Financial and budgeting support provision](#)

### Appendix 1

Other charitable provision for additional items (such as carpets, clothes etc.)

- 1) **DWP budgeting loans**  
These are what remains of the statutory DWP Social Fund scheme and are interest free loans of between £100 and £812 available to some people receiving certain means tested benefits. They are repayable from those benefits normally within two years.
- 2) **LD Rope Third Charitable Settlement**  
Covers East Suffolk (including Ipswich and Lowestoft). Referrals from agencies working with individuals. Funds available for help with accommodation, appliances, furnishing, clothing, equipment, education items etc
- 3) **John Dorkin Charity**  
Specific area of East Ipswich. Criteria being those "who are in conditions of need, hardship and distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities, calculated to reduce the need, hardship and distress of such persons". Essential household items, education items etc
- 4) **Brame's Relief In Need Charity**  
Specific to Ipswich. Gives donations to help people in need.
- 5) **The Straitened Circumstances (1961) Fund** (via Ogilvie Trust – Woodbridge)  
It may give grants for beds and bedding, cookers, refrigerators, freezers, washing machines and clothing. The primary aim is to assist those with a household member suffering from incontinence or other medical condition; grants for household items may be awarded where there is a genuine need. Most awards are between £100 and £200. Applications must be made through a social worker, community nurse or similar professional agency and payment is made direct to that agency.
- 6) **Daundy Trust**  
Specific area of Ipswich. Small monetary gifts within the parish of St Matthew, Triangle and All Saints. The prevention or relief of poverty – children, young people or the elderly.
- 7) **Smith and Pinching Trust**  
The objectives of the charity are to relieve cases of need, hardship or distress and to further the education of the general public by way of grants to individuals and organisations in any part of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Hertfordshire.
- 8) **Glasspool Trust**  
We are one of the few national charities making grants to individuals which has no restrictions on the type of beneficiary we can support. We provide timely, small, one-off grants to individuals and families, including appliances, clothing, household items, flooring, educational computer equipment/TV licence. Equipment and adaptations applications will still be considered but within the budgetary constraints identified above. We invite applications from referral agencies on behalf of individuals.
- 9) **East Suffolk Council hardship fund**  
Responding to hardship needs of identified individuals and families. Not currently publicising the availability of this grant. Identified items are purchased for those in need.

#### 10) **British Red Cross**

The British Red Cross are providing financial support to help the most vulnerable financially impacted by the covid-19 crisis. The British Red Cross Hardship Fund provides short term financial help for individuals who can't afford essentials such as food and toiletries, somewhere safe to sleep, and access to a telephone and the internet. Money will be delivered on a pre-paid card by either a one-off payment of £120 or a three-month grant of £360 which will be paid in three monthly instalments of £120. Families with children or other dependants can receive up to three grants, for a total of £1,080 over the three months. Those in need will be registered for assistance by the Red Cross's network of Referral Partner organisations which include Local Authorities, charities, and other groups working with vulnerable people. <https://hardshipfund.redcross.org.uk/>

## Appendix 2

### List of essential household items/white goods

- Cooker (may be table-top cooker where appropriate)
- Microwave
- Fridge
- Fridge freezer
- Washing machine
- Armchair
- Sofa
- Table & Chairs
- Chest of drawers
- Single Bedframe
- Single Mattress
- Double Bed Base – (Not usually awarded for use by one individual. Consideration will be given where satisfactory reason for this is provided on the application form)
- Double Mattress – (Not usually awarded for use by one individual. Consideration will be given where satisfactory reason for this is provided on the application form)
- Crockery, Cutlery, Pots & pans, kitchen utensils
- Cot

### The types of items that are not provided by the LWAS include:

- TV
- Hi-fi/stereo
- Computer
- Internet connection
- Bicycle
- Carpets
- Clothes, shoes, toys
- Vacuum cleaners
- Wardrobe

## Appendix 3

### Financial and budgeting support provision

In addition to any budgeting advice that you provide, you may also choose to refer to the [Suffolk Advice and Support Service](#) 0800 068 3131.

Christians Against Poverty Suffolk Coastal Debt Centre can also provide financial and budgeting support provision. Further information can be found at [capdebthelp.org](http://capdebthelp.org) Clients can self-refer by calling 0800 328 0006 where they can speak to the CAP Headquarters in Bradford. The 'Set up Team' will then book an appointment with the client with one of the local CAP Debt Centres in their area.