

# **Resident Support Scheme Fund Practice Guidance for Children's Services**



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## Introduction

1. From 1 April 2013, the government is abolishing Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans (living expenses). Islington Council in partnership with Cripplegate Foundation is setting up a new Resident Support Scheme (RSS) to offer assistance to residents facing exceptional difficulty. Islington's Resident Support Scheme will offer temporary financial support to residents facing severe difficulties as a result of government cuts to welfare benefits. The support will help them to improve their situation, for example by moving into employment, working with a professional on a plan to reduce debt, or ensure children's needs are met. Full details of the scheme are set out in the *Resident Support Scheme for the London Borough of Islington* (appendix A to the Executive report, 07.02.2013 – see link below):
2. <http://democracy.islington.gov.uk/reports/65cc00e2853b4258967e1bb2192362df/report.aspx>

## Eligibility in Children's Services

3. The RSS funding allocated to children's services is **only** to be accessed following an assessment which may be a CAF, a Single Assessment or Asset which identifies that the funding criteria are met. Families must **meet the criteria for a service** from targeted or specialist services, or family support from a Children's Centre or Families First.
4. The fund is to be used as a **last resort** in supporting a family to **reduce risk** and bring about **sustained change and improved outcomes as part of a plan**.
5. Before considering the RSS, the assessment should sign post those in need of financial support to the DWP for a:
  - Budgeting Loan/Advance (covers essentials such as rent, furniture, clothes or hire purchase debt, minimum claim £100 and must be getting income related benefits for at least 26 weeks).
  - Short Term Advance (covers a period of financial need when new claim to benefit made or change in circumstance affects benefit)
6. The Resident Support Scheme is for vulnerable residents **who are at risk of poorer outcomes** if they do not access the fund, rather than that simply in need. Following assessment, residents may be able to get support if they are:

- Ordinarily Resident in Islington or housed by Islington in another borough
- In receipt of the following benefits:
- Job Seekers' Allowance;
- Income Support;
- Pension Credit
- Incapacity Benefit or Employment Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (once commenced)
- Able to provide their National Insurance Number
- Have Immigration Status – open to residents who have recourse to public funds

**AND**

7. One or more of the following risks are identified:
  - Risk of homelessness
  - Family stability is at risk
  - Health and independent living is at risk
  - Temporary support is needed to start or stay in employment
8. The assessment must evidence the needs to be met and how the funding from the RSS will reduce risk and bring about change to improve the outcomes for their children.
9. A plan will be put in place following the assessment and this will specify how the funding will be spent and the desired outcomes.
10. Where the criteria are met and there is an exceptional event which would cause a risk to health in a crisis, a grocery voucher, or fuel reconnection may be provided.
11. The RSS should not be accessed for families receiving a statutory social work service and eligible for a Section 17 payment the relevant manager will make the decision.
12. Where assessment shows that a charitable application may be successful this route should be pursued in advance of RSS.
13. The lead professional will be responsible for checking that the family are eligible for funding, completing the RSS online form and for securing authorisation from their manager before submitting the application.
14. A copy of the form will be uploaded to the ICS system, but where other systems are used, e.g. e-CAF, UMIS and FRS. A case note should be created noting the rationale and outcome, i.e. payment or non-payment.

15. The RSS team will normally make the payment on the authorisation of the manager.
16. The payment will not usually exceed the costs in the Appendix A, however, where our assessment indicates a higher amount is appropriate the scheme allows discretion to make awards outside the eligibility criteria – see paragraph 16.3 of the source document.
17. The RSS cannot cover:
  - Clothing unless fleeing disaster / domestic violence
  - Minor structural repairs
  - Furniture and household (for those in private rented furnished accommodation)
  - Specialist disability equipment
  - Debts (apart from Council Tax)
  - Funeral expenses.

## Housing Related Payments

18. Where the benefit conditions are satisfied as above, application may be made to the fund for support for housing related costs e.g. rent deposit, household items
19. Where families are penalised due to under occupation or the general benefit cap and there are exceptional circumstances requiring additional financial support application may be made to the fund.

## Under Occupation - Islington Foster Carers (Bedroom Tax)

20. Where an Islington resident is an approved carer for Islington, in receipt of housing benefit and requires more than one bedroom for foster children, they will qualify for top up payments from the RSS. The Supervising Social Worker will make application to the fund as detailed below.
21. Where the carer does not live within the borough of Islington, the Supervising Social Worker will assist the carer in making an application to the borough in which they live for a housing related subsidy.

## Practice Examples

22. Access to Services - Where a family is referred to specialist or targeted service with a request for funding, unless they meet the criteria for assessment for service provision, they will be directed to the DWP for a budgeting loan or advance payment see point 4 or to a referral organisation e.g. CAB, Customer Claims team in housing benefit, Contact Islington.
23. Targeted Services – A single parent with postnatal depression struggling to cope with twins - practical support with a washing machine to ease the burden and cost of launderette use. Or risk to children's schooling, for example, family placed out of borough struggling with travel card costs to get child to school in Islington.

24. Leaving Care – young parent whose white goods have worn out and needs replacement fridge and washing machine to care appropriately for the children and get to her work place.
25. Specialist Services – family fleeing domestic violence need furnishing for temporary accommodation.
26. Targeted Services - A family at risk of eviction in relation to anti-social behaviour/offending and debt. Funding to remain in borough for a set period on condition that they engaged with family services and improve outcomes in relation to absconding/offending.
27. Targeted Services Parent whose tenancy is at risk due to benefit cap, is ready to work but childcare costs unaffordable. Employment will mean family is exempt from benefit cap.
28. Specialist - Young person released from custody. Unable to return to family home, may benefit from package to enable them to live independently in the community.
29. Targeted – family fleeing gang related violence need furnishing for temporary accommodation

## Allocation of Funds

Children's services have a notional budget which is allocated in the following way, each service head is responsible for maintaining oversight of spend during the year and of notifying the Director TSCFT of any over or underspend on a quarterly basis. The budget will be profiled on a quarterly basis:

|                                  |         |                       |
|----------------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Children's Social Care (CIN/CLA) | 80,000  | Joy Nield/ Mel Davies |
| Independent Futures              | 20,000  | Joy Nield             |
| TYS-YOS                          | 20,000  | Tony Nagle            |
| Disabled Children Team           | 20,000  | Phil Watson           |
| Children's Centres               | 60,000  | Penny Kenway          |
| Families First                   | 100,000 | Ruth Beecher          |

## Procedure

1. An assessment identifies that a family are at risk because of unmet need related to severe difficulties arising from welfare benefit cuts or any other cause and that provision of short term funding as part of plan would result in reduction of risk and sustainable change for the family.
2. Signpost family to any other support, e.g. income maximisation team, credit union, CAB, adult and community learning (for training etc).

3. Lead professional to check support is not already provided by other funds.
4. Complete online recommendation form. As part of assessment, NI number to be obtained by lead professional to enable RSS team to verify benefit status and previous payments to family once application submitted.
5. Family agree to working with plan which should be SMART.
6. RSS payment system will flag any previous payments in last 12 months when application in progress online. Note that repeat payments only agreed in exceptional circumstances. Obtain declaration and consent from service user.
7. Obtain authorisation of spend from designated manager
8. RSS application completed online and submitted to RSS Team.
9. Team agrees funding and makes payment or organises services in kind.  
Payment methods include:
  - a. Payment card
  - b. Payment to supplier through BACS
  - c. Payment direct to landlord
  - d. Grocery vouchers
    - i. Single person £20
    - ii. Couple £40
    - iii. Family £60
    - iv. Family with 4 or more dependent children £80
  - e. Fuel payments – through SHINE
  - f. Clothing vouchers.
10. In an emergency, the RSS team will aim to respond to applications within 48 hours.
11. Lead professional uploads copy of RSS form to ICS or records rationale for funding in case note on relevant case management system.

## Appendix A

**Essential Household Items and Packages (NB: these guide prices can be increased at the discretion of the RSS senior management).**

**Essential Household Items** (R indicates possibility of refurbished option)

| Category | Essential Household Items                       |   | Estimated Cost | Comment                         |
|----------|---|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Bedroom  | Single bed not incl. mattress (incl. all types) | R | £130           | Delivery with mattress          |
|          | Double bed not incl. mattress (incl. all types) | R | £140           | Delivery with mattress          |
|          | Bunk beds incl. mattress                        |   | £200           | Incl. delivery                  |
|          | Single mattress                                 |   | £110           | Incl. delivery or with frame    |
|          | Double mattress                                 |   | £150           | Incl. delivery or with frame    |
|          | Bedding single sheet (2 of)                     |   | £8             |                                 |
|          | Bedding double sheet (2 of)                     |   | £10            |                                 |
|          | Pillow - 2 (1 of)                               |   | £5             |                                 |
|          | Duvet Set - Single (2 of)                       |   | £12            |                                 |
|          | Duvet Set - Double (2 of)                       |   | £20            |                                 |
|          | Duvet - Single (1 of)                           |   | £10            |                                 |
|          | Duvet - Double (1 of)                           |   | £14            |                                 |
|          | Bedside table                                   | R | £35            | Incl. delivery                  |
|          | Chest of drawers - 3 Drawers                    | R | £55            | Incl. delivery                  |
|          | Single wardrobe                                 | R | £80            | Incl. delivery                  |
|          | Double wardrobe                                 | R | £130           | Incl. delivery                  |
| Kitchen  | Cooker electric - freestanding                  | R | £280           | Incl. delivery and installation |
|          | Cooker gas freestanding                         | R | £270           | Incl. delivery and installation |
|          | Dishwasher (full size)                          | R | £230           | Incl. delivery and installation |

|            |                                     |   |      |                                   |
|------------|-------------------------------------|---|------|-----------------------------------|
|            | Freezer (uprightcounter)            | R | £150 | Incl. delivery                    |
|            | Fridge– under counter               | R | £130 | Incl. delivery                    |
|            | Fridgefreezer                       | R | £190 | Incl. delivery                    |
|            | Tumble dryer                        | R | £135 | Incl. delivery                    |
|            | Washer dryer                        |   | £380 | Incl. deliveryand<br>installation |
|            | Washingmachine                      | R | £220 | Incl. deliveryand<br>installation |
|            | Microwave(standard)                 |   | £50  | Incl.delivery                     |
|            | Kettles                             | R | £7   |                                   |
|            | Toaster (2slice)                    | R | £9   |                                   |
|            | Vacuumcleaner                       | R | £40  | Incl. delivery                    |
|            | Kitchenknives and tool set(4 piece) |   | £8   |                                   |
|            | KitchenUtensils set(8piece)         |   | £11  |                                   |
|            | 3 Piecesaucepanset                  |   | £15  |                                   |
|            | 5 Piecesaucepanset                  |   | £21  |                                   |
|            | 12 piececrockeryst set              |   | £12  |                                   |
|            | 16 Piececrockeryst set              |   | £20  |                                   |
|            | 12 piececutleryset                  |   | £8   |                                   |
|            | 24 Piececutleryset                  |   | £16  |                                   |
|            | Kitchenwaste Bin                    |   | £11  |                                   |
|            | Floor mopandbucket                  |   | £15  |                                   |
|            | Ironingtable                        |   | £16  |                                   |
|            | Electrical Iron                     | R | £9   |                                   |
|            | Kitchen/DiningTableand2chairs       | R | £90  | Incl delivery                     |
|            | Kitchen/DiningTable and4chairs      | R | £130 | Incldelivery                      |
| LivingRoom | Sideboardunit                       | R | £70  | Incldelivery                      |
|            | Easychair                           | R | £110 | Incldelivery                      |
|            | Sofa –2seater                       | R | £160 | Incldelivery                      |
|            | Sofa –3seater                       | R | £210 | Incldelivery                      |



|          |   |       |                                 |
|----------|---|-------|---------------------------------|
| Bathroom | Laundrybasket                                     | £10   |                                 |
|          | Shower curtains                                   | £5    |                                 |
|          | Towel Set( 2bathand2hand)                         | £9    |                                 |
| General  | Flooring1 (suitablefor kitchen/bathroom)<br>£16qm | calc. | Incldeliveryand<br>installation |
|          | Flooring2 (suitablefor bedroom) £15sqm            | calc. | Incldeliveryand<br>installation |
|          | Flooring3 (suitablefor lounge/hall) £20qm         | calc. | Incldeliveryand<br>installation |
|          | Portable electricheater (convection/fan)          | £40   | Incldelivery                    |
|          | Blinds/Curtains1( curtainsize 1.17x1.37m)         | £25   | Inclfittings/rails              |
|          | Blinds/Curtains2(curtaainsize1.67x1.83m)          | £40   | Inclfittings/rails              |
|          | Blinds/Curtains3(curtaainsize 2.29x2.9m)          | £55   | Inclfittings/rails              |
| Clothing | Clothing1(Babyset–1yr andunder)                   | TBC   |                                 |
|          | Clothing2(Childset –13yrs andunder)               | TBC   |                                 |
|          | Clothing3(Adult set –14yrs and over)              | TBC   |                                 |

**Packages** (R indicates possibility of refurbished option)

**Package 1 – For single resident setting up in unfurnished shared accommodation**

| <b>Essential Household Item</b> |   | <b>Estimated Cost</b> |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Single bed not incl. mattress   | R | £130                  |
| Single mattress                 |   | £110                  |
| Bedding                         |   | £15                   |
| Pillows                         |   | £5                    |
| Duvet – Single (1 of) 13.5 tog  |   | £10                   |
| Wardrobe or chest of drawers    | R | £80                   |
| Vacuum cleaner                  | R | £40                   |
| Kitchen cookware/utensils       |   | £14                   |
| Crockery/cutlery                |   | £12                   |
| Electrical Iron                 | R | £9                    |
| Blinds/Curtains                 |   | £55                   |
| <b>Package Value</b>            |   | <b>£480</b>           |

**Package 2 – For single resident setting up in unfurnished one bedroom accommodation**

| <b>Essential Household Item</b>   |   | <b>Estimated Cost</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Single bed not incl. mattress     | R | £130                  |
| Single mattress                   |   | £110                  |
| Bedding                           |   | £15                   |
| Pillows                           |   | £5                    |
| Duvet – Single (1 of) 13.5 tog    |   | £10                   |
| Wardrobe or chest of drawers      | R | £80                   |
| Cooker electric                   | R | £280                  |
| Fridge                            | R | £130                  |
| Washing machine                   | R | £220                  |
| Kettle                            | R | £7                    |
| Vacuum cleaner                    | R | £40                   |
| Kitchen cookware/utensils         |   | £28                   |
| Crockery/cutlery                  |   | £15                   |
| Electrical Iron                   | R | £9                    |
| Ironing Board                     | R | £16                   |
| Kitchen/Dining Table and 2 chairs | R | £90                   |
| Sofa – 2 seater                   | R | £160                  |
| Flooring                          |   | £500                  |
| Blinds/Curtains                   |   | £80                   |
| <b>Package Value</b>              |   | <b>£1,925</b>         |

**Package3–For family/parentand child setting up in unfurnishedtwo bedroom accommodation**

| <b>EssentialHouseholdItem</b> |   | <b>Estimated Cost</b> |
|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Single bednotincl.mattress    | R | £130                  |
| Single mattress               |   | £110                  |
| Doublebedincludingmattress    | R | £140                  |
| Doublemattress                |   | £150                  |
| Bedding                       |   | £45                   |
| Pillows                       |   | £8                    |
| Duvets                        |   | £24                   |
| Wardrobe/Chest ofdrawers      | R | £100                  |
| Cooker electric               | R | £280                  |
| Fridge                        | R | £130                  |
| Washingmachine                | R | £220                  |
| Kettle                        | R | £7                    |
| Vacuumcleaner                 | R | £40                   |
| Kitchencookware/utensils      |   | £34                   |
| Crockery/cutlery              |   | £17                   |
| Electrical Iron               | R | £9                    |
| IroningTable                  |   | £16                   |
| Kitchen/DiningTableand2chairs | R | £90                   |
| Sofa-3seater                  | R | £210                  |
| Flooring                      |   | £600                  |
| Blinds/Curtains               |   | £80                   |
|                               |   |                       |
| <b>PackageValue</b>           |   | <b>£2,420</b>         |