

## Essential Living Fund

Southend on Sea Borough Council have taken over responsibility for part of the Social Fund scheme which used to be administered by the Department for Work and Pensions. The Council can decide claims for

- Community Care Grants
- Crisis Loans for General Living Expenses

The new scheme is called the Essential living Fund or ELF. The ELF team at Southend on Sea Borough Council are responsible for the administration of applications for all of Essex.

### What is the Essential Living Fund?

The ELF scheme is designed to ease exceptional pressure on people and their families. In particular to help:

- people to set up in the community after a stay in an institution, care home or hostel where care was received.
- people to set up in the community after a stay in prison or a youth offenders institution.
- young people leaving local authority care to set up in the community.
- people stay in the community instead of having to go into a care home or institution to receive care.
- people set up a home as part of a planned and assisted resettlement programme following an unsettled way of life, for example recovering alcoholic, drug addicts or previously homeless.
- people who have to care for a prisoner or a young offender released on a temporary license.
- people to ease financial short term difficulties due to an emergency within the household.

### How does the scheme work?

The ELF scheme is operated as a grant system and is open for anyone to claim. In order to establish whether you are eligible for the award you will need to complete the online application form. This form will ask questions about your income, earnings and savings. You will also be required to provide proof of your financial situation.

The scheme will be able to cover applications for the following:

- Furniture - such as a bed, settee, armchair, wardrobe, table
- Furnishings - such as carpets, curtains, bedding
- White goods - such as cookers, fridge, washing machines
- Household equipment - such as cooking utensils, small electrical appliances
- Fuel connection (or Re-Connection) charges
- Clothing and footwear
- General Living Expenses - these are day to day living expenses such as groceries, nappies, toiletries, cleaning/hygiene products, money for pay as you go fuel meters

If awarded the grant will not be paid via cash or direct in to a bank account. Instead it will be paid by the

- Use of food vouchers or supermarket vouchers
- Use of AllPay cards
- Provision of recycled furniture from reputable charity
- Provision of white goods from a reputable local dealer

## How to apply for an ELF grant

**For General Living Expenses (meaning groceries, nappies, toiletries, hygiene products and fuel) apply by Phoning the ELF team on:**

0300 7900124 (this number is charged at local rates from any number including mobiles)  
Opening hours: 8.45 to 5.15. The call will take up to 40 minutes to complete.

**For furniture/white goods/clothing and footwear/household equipment by using this online application form which can be accessed from this web page:**

[http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200132/claiming\\_benefits/1462/extra\\_financial\\_help/3](http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200132/claiming_benefits/1462/extra_financial_help/3)

## What Happens next

### General Living Expenses Applications

These applications will be treated as priority, with vouchers/food vouchers/fuel top ups (made via All Pay) processed within same working day as the application where possible.

**NOTE:** Depending on the time of day you call you may not be able to collect the voucher or All Pay card on the same working day.

You will be informed at the end of the phone call whether your claim has been successful and be given a unique reference number as well as other information you will require in order to receive the food voucher or supermarket voucher.

All vouchers and All Pay cards will be picked up from a branch of the Citizens Advice Bureau before 3pm. You will be informed of the pick up point in the phone call. There will be a procedure to follow in each Bureau.

### All Other Applications

Applications for furniture, household furnishings, white goods, clothing and footwear will be notified via letter, sent to the address of the applicant. The letter will have further information on how to get the requested items and what you need to take with you to receive your requested items