

The Scottish Welfare Fund

EXTRA MONEY
TO HELP YOU



Who we are

Age Scotland is the national charity for older people. We work to improve the lives of everyone over the age of 50 so that they can love later life.

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people can make the most of later life.

Our three strategic aims are to:



Help older people to be as well as they can be



Promote a positive view of ageing and later life



Tackle loneliness and isolation

How we can help

We know that growing older doesn't come with a manual. Later life can bring changes and opportunities to your life and you may need to know about rights, organisations and services which are unfamiliar to you.

That's why we provide free information and advice to help you on a range of topics including benefits and entitlements, social care, legal issues such as Power of Attorney, housing and much more. All of our guides are available to download for free from our website, or you can contact our helpline team to have copies posted to you for free.

The Age Scotland **helpline** is a free, confidential phone service for older people, their carers and families in Scotland looking for information and advice.

Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.

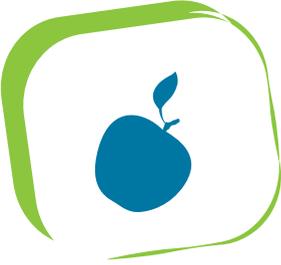
For information, advice and friendship



Call us free on: 0800 12 44 222
(Monday – Friday, 9am - 5pm)



Visit [agescotland.org.uk](https://www.agescotland.org.uk)
to find out more.



What is the Scottish Welfare Fund?

The Scottish Welfare Fund helps people who are on a low income and who are in difficult situations. Cash or goods can be awarded if this will make someone safer or help them to live independently.

The Fund is administered by councils according to Scottish Government regulations. It can provide help as cash, goods, vouchers or travel tickets. There are two types of grant:

- **Crisis Grants** help in an emergency or a disaster, normally for things like food, heating and urgent travel expenses.
- **Community Care Grants** help someone live independently, payments are usually made for things like cookers, beds and removal expenses.

Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants do not have to be repaid.

The Scottish Welfare Fund cannot help with some costs including educational costs, court expenses, funerals costs, debt repayments, and medical needs. Payments for a television or radio are normally excluded, but may be considered if, for example, you need one because of limited mobility or isolation.

Throughout the process of applying to the Scottish Welfare Fund you should expect to be treated with dignity and respect.

When you apply, the council may see from your application that you could benefit from other help and put you in touch with a Citizens Advice Bureau, housing support service, energy advice service, befriending service or a specialist service such as a Carer's Centre.

This leaflet provides general information about the Scottish Welfare Fund. If you need more detailed information call the Age Scotland helpline on **0800 12 44 222**.



Crisis Grants

In an emergency or a disaster, a Crisis Grant can provide a safety net if there is an immediate threat to health or safety. It can cover immediate short-term living expenses, or items you need because of a disaster.

An **emergency** is an **unforeseen circumstance of pressing need which requires immediate action** such as losing money, having money stolen, having had to leave home suddenly or being stranded away from home.

A **disaster** is **an event of great or sudden misfortune, usually causing damage to, destruction of or loss of possessions or property** such as a fire or flood.

A decision about a Crisis Grant application should be made immediately once the council has all the information it needs, and at the latest by the end of the second working day after the application.



Community Care Grants

A Community Care Grant can be made if it will help you live independently and reduce the risk of you needing institutional care such as a care home or hospital.

A grant can also be made to help you to have a more settled way of life, to help families facing exceptional pressure, or to help you in your role as a carer if this helps the person you care for stay in the community.

Grants can provide help with things like furniture, household equipment, travel costs, removal expenses, and installation charges for cookers and washing machines.

A decision about a Community Care Grant application should be made within 15 working days of receiving your application.





Applying to the Scottish Welfare Fund

You need to apply to the council where you live, or where you plan to live if you are moving to a new area.

The way you can apply for help will vary between local councils, but they usually accept applications online, by phone, face-to-face and using paper application forms.

You can apply yourself, or someone else can apply on your behalf if you agree. If you need help to make your claim, you could ask an independent advice agency such as a Citizens Advice Bureau to help you.

In your application, you will need to give the council information about:

- yourself and the people who live with you
- your income and your partner's income
- whether you have savings and can access them; you are less likely to get a Community Care Grant if you have more in savings than £700 if you are below State Pension age or £1200 if you are over State Pension age
- whether you are applying for a Crisis or Community Care Grant
- why you need an award, what you need, and what will happen if you don't get one
- if you have had an award before
- circumstances such as your age, health problems or disability which make you vulnerable
- any evidence which supports your need for a grant. The council can ask you, or others such as your doctor or the Department for Work and Pensions, for further information if it needs to
- whether you are waiting for a decision about, or payment of, another benefit.



Your application will be given high, medium or low priority. This will depend on the **nature, extent, severity and urgency** of your need, how vulnerable you are, and what is likely to happen if payment is refused.

The council will look at its budget each month and decide if it can meet high, medium or low priority applications. Sometimes only high priority needs will be met.

Grants can be awarded in cash, goods or cash equivalents such as travel vouchers, high street vouchers or fuel cards.

The council may tell you their decision by phone, text or email and confirm it in writing. Let the council know if they need to communicate with you in a particular way (for example if you have sight or hearing impairment).

The decision should make clear:

- whether the award is a Crisis Grant or a Community Care Grant
- the dates of your application and their decision
- the result of the application, its priority level and the reason for the decision
- if you have been successful what has been awarded
- other possible sources of help
- how you can ask for a review if you disagree with the decision.



Asking for a first tier review if you disagree with the decision

If you disagree with the council's decision you can ask for it to be looked at again, this is called a first tier review. You must ask for a review in writing, normally within 20 working days of the decision. You need to explain why you think the decision is wrong and whether something has changed since you applied. You, or someone you have agreed can act on your behalf, must sign the application.

If you need help to apply for a review, you could ask an independent advice agency such as a Citizens Advice Bureau to help you.

The decision will be looked at again by someone who was not involved in making the original decision.

A Crisis Grant Review must be carried out within two working days.

A Community Care Grant Review must be carried out within fifteen working days.

You may be told of the decision by phone, but this will be followed up with a letter which will explain the review decision.

If you are not happy with the way the council has treated you, rather than the decision you have been given, you could use the council's complaints procedure.



Asking for an independent review

If you are not happy with the outcome of a first tier review you can ask for an independent review. This must be within 20 working days of the first tier review decision letter.

The independent review will be carried out by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. You can find out more about the process by calling the Ombudsman on **0800 014 7299** or by visiting their website **www.spsso.org.uk/scottishwelfarefund**.



Who can help?

Age Scotland Helpline 0800 12 44 222

The Age Scotland helpline provides information, friendship and advice to older people, their relatives and carers.

If you need an interpreter call **0800 12 44 222** and simply state the language you need e.g. Polish or Urdu. Stay on the line for a few minutes and the Age Scotland helpline will do the rest.

You can call us on **0800 12 44 222** for a copy of our publications list or download / order copies from our website at **www.agescotland.org.uk**.

Citizens Advice Bureau

You can call Scotland's **Citizens Advice Helpline** on **0800 028 1456** for advice or for details of your local bureau or see their website **www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/about-us/get-advice-s/**

Disclaimer

While we aim to ensure that the information in this document is factually correct at the time of production, Age Scotland cannot be held liable for any errors or omissions. Please ensure that you have an up to date factsheet and that it clearly applies to your situation.

No leaflet can ever be a complete guide to the law, which also changes from time to time. Legal advice should always be taken if you are in doubt.

Please note that the inclusion of named agencies, companies, products, services or publications in this guide does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Age Scotland.

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland where everyone can love later life.

All the information and advice we provide is free and completely impartial and in helping people access their rights and entitlements, it can be life changing.

We are an ageing population and more people than ever are coming to us for support. You can help us be there for those that need us most.



Make a donation

No matter how small or large, donations make a massive difference and help us continue our important work.

- ▶ Call **03330 15 14 60**
- ▶ Visit **age.scot/donate**
- ▶ Text **LATERLIFE** to **70085** to donate £5.*



Fundraise

Whether it is having a bake sale, running a marathon or knitting small hats for the Big Knit, there are so many ways to raise vital funds to support our work. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/fundraise**.



Leave us a gift in your Will

By choosing to leave us a gift in your Will, you can help Age Scotland to continue being there for vulnerable older people in the years to come. To find out more, call **0333 323 2400** or visit **age.scot/legacy**.

* Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message

Let's keep in touch



Sign up to our newsletter

Our regular newsletters by email contain details of our campaigns, services and how you can support our work.

Sign up today by visiting [**age.scot/roundup**](https://age.scot/roundup)



Follow us on social media

Our social media channels are a great way to keep up to date with our work and issues that affect older people.



[**/agescotland**](https://www.facebook.com/agescotland)



[**@AgeScotland**](https://twitter.com/AgeScotland)



[**@age_scotland**](https://www.instagram.com/age_scotland)



[**/AgeScotland**](https://www.linkedin.com/company/AgeScotland)

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Contact us:

Head office

0333 323 2400

Age Scotland helpline

0800 12 44 222

Email

info@agescotland.org.uk

Visit our website

www.agescotland.org.uk

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