



Welfare Reform & Bournemouth

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- Replacement for Council Tax Benefit
- Cost to Council of keeping proposed Government scheme - £2.2m
- Pensioners and vulnerable groups protected – 11,000
- Everyone has to pay 20% - 8,000
- Remaining 80% means tested for support
- Hardship Fund set up - £250k 2013/14
- 1st April 2013

Benefit Cap

- Restrict household benefit income to £350 p/w for single people & £500 p/w for single parents or couples
- Households will not be capped if they receive certain benefits:
 - Eg Working Tax Credit
 - Disability Living Allowance
- Housing Benefit will be the only benefit initially affected by the cap
- From 1 September 2013
- 135 cases in Bournemouth

Social Housing Under Occupation

- Applies to working age, social housing sector tenants – 1st April 2013
- Based on number of bedrooms needed for household
- Under-occupying by 1 bedroom – 14% p/w reduction in housing benefit
- Under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms – 25% p/w reduction in housing benefit
- 336 Council & 253 H. A. Tenants

Others

- Universal Credit
- Personal Independence Payments
- Increase in Discretionary Housing Payment Fund
- Other local changes to Council Tax exemptions
- Crisis Loans & Community Care Grants from DWP abolished – responsibility for local provision devolved to local councils



The Local Welfare Assistance Fund

Local Welfare Assistance Fund

- DWP have issued a limited grant for the next 2 years - £500k increased to £750k for 2013/14 plus £250k hardship fund
- Fund may be able to help if residents face:
 - exceptional financial difficulty
 - disaster, crisis *or* emergency
 - homelessness, or the threat of homelessness
 - difficulty in meeting immediate needs
 - a serious risk to the health and wellbeing of resident or dependent family
- Applications can be made from 1st April 2013 at www.bournemouth.gov.uk/welfare

The criteria for financial help

- Local connection with Bournemouth (i.e. live in Bournemouth permanently or have a close family member that lives in Bournemouth)
- aged 16 or over
- on a low income (as set out by the Government)
- don't have savings of more than £500 or access to any other forms of assistance

Types of support available

- Emergency help with food
- Emergency help with light and heat
- Fleeing from domestic violence
- Council Tax
- Rent deposit
- Rent in advance
- Leaving prison
- Returning to live in the community after being in care or in hospital
- Wanting to stay in own home rather than go into care
- Help to purchase fridge, cooker, washing machine
- Help to purchase nappies
- Emergency travel eg travel to a relatives funeral

What happens after application?

- The application will be assessed for urgency and need of the situation and applicant advised by text message, email or letter
- Dorset Reclaim & foodbanks referral – invoiced from suppliers monthly
- Family Fund
 - pre-paid cards for white goods and clothing
 - code for PayPoint to receive cash for fresh food items or electricity/gas top ups
- If unsuccessful, we will advise of other agencies who may be able to provide support

Next Steps

- Review demand and need of Bournemouth
- Identify clusters demographically or by need and identify themes / commonality
- Review process / fund / eligibility and amount of money granted – refine where necessary
- Work with 3rd sector agencies – partnership working
- Review other forms of funding within the Council for commonality – pull together for more holistic view of residents in extreme crisis and strengthen preventative work
- Implement 1st April 2014