

April 2024

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 and promote their rights and interests.

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

Our mission is to inspire, involve and empower older people in Scotland, and influence others, so that people enjoy better later lives.

We have three strategic aims:



We help older people to be as well as they can be



We promote a positive view of ageing and later life



We 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.

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

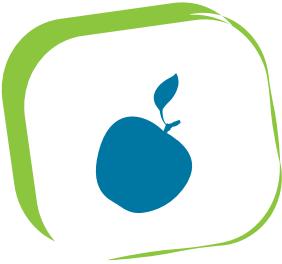
Later life can bring times when you just need someone to talk to. Our **friendship line** is part of our wider helpline and older people can call us for a chat. We're here to listen, provide friendship and offer support.



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 in a difficult situation. You can apply through your local council, usually online on their website, or by telephone. It can provide help in the form of cash, goods, vouchers or travel tickets. There are two types of grant:

- **Crisis Grants** can help in an emergency or a disaster, for example a sudden loss of income, fire or flood. The grant may be given to cover things like food, heating and urgent travel expenses.
- **Community Care Grants** can help people who need support to set up or keep living in a settled home. This could be due to domestic abuse, leaving care or imprisonment, or needing residential care unless support is provided. The grant may be given to cover 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 certain types of costs, such as 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 be treated with dignity and respect.

When you apply, the council may think you could benefit from other types of help or support, 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 your 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 that requires immediate action**. It could be the result of having money stolen, having a sudden drop in income due to redundancy or a change at work, or getting stranded away from home.

A **disaster** is an **event that causes damage to or loss of your possessions or property**. This could include a fire, flood or other unexpected situation.

When you make an application, your council should tell you how long it will take for them to make a decision. They will usually aim to do this within 2 working days, but it may take longer during busy periods.

Community Care Grants

A Community Care Grant may be given to help you live independently if you would otherwise need to move into residential care.

A grant may also be given to help you live 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 to stay in their home.

Grants can be used to help pay for things like furniture, household equipment, travel costs, removal expenses, and installation charges for cookers and washing machines.

The council will try to make a decision about your application within 15 working days, but it may take longer during busy periods.





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.

Most councils accept Scottish Welfare Fund applications online. You may also be able to apply in person, by telephone or by using a paper application form.

If you are unable to make the application yourself, a friend or family member may be able to make the application on your behalf, or you could contact an advice agency such as Citizens Advice Scotland for help.

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

- you and anyone else that lives in your home
- your income, and the income of your partner if you have one
- your savings - if you are below State Pension age and have more than £700, or above State Pension age and have more than £1,200, you are less likely to receive a grant
- 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
- your circumstances, and any health conditions or disabilities that you have
- any evidence that supports your need for a grant, for example information from your doctor, or confirmation of the benefits you receive
- whether you are waiting for a decision about, or payment of, another benefit.



Your application will be assessed based on the level of urgency of your situation, and the risk to you and your independence if the grant is not awarded. The council will also take its budget into consideration; it will sometimes only be able to meet the most urgent of needs.

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 letter should tell you:

- the result of your application
- the reason for their decision
- the date of their decision
- the type of award
- how to challenge the decision if you are unhappy with it
- other possible sources of help



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 letter.

If you need help to request a review, contact an independent advice agency such as a Citizens Advice Bureau.

When the council receives your request, your original application will be assessed again, by a different decision maker.

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.

The council may contact you by telephone or email to give you the result of the appeal, but they should also send you a decision letter by post, explaining the review decision.

Asking for an independent review

If you are unhappy with the council's first tier review decision, you can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for an independent review.

Contact the **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman** on **0800 014 7299**, or visit their website at **<https://swf.spsso.org.uk>**.

Other complaints

To complain about the way you have been treated, or an unreasonable delay, you can use the council's complaints process. This should be available on their website.





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. You can also download or order publications.

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 visit **www.cas.org.uk**.

This information guide has been prepared by Age Scotland and contains general advice only. It should not be relied upon as a basis for any decision or action, nor used as a substitute for professional advice. Neither Age Scotland nor any of its subsidiary companies or charities accepts any liability arising from its use and it is the reader's sole responsibility to ensure any information is up to date and accurate.

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

How you can help

Our vision is a Scotland which is the best place in the world to grow older.

All the information we provide is free and impartial. It helps older people access their rights and entitlements and can be life changing.

We are also a lifeline for older people who are feeling lonely and isolated. You can help us to support older people who need us most.

Together, we can make a difference.



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 **AGESCOTGIVE** to **70085** to donate £5*
- Complete the **donation form** and return by Freepost



Fundraise

Whether it's having a bake sale or running a marathon, 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 us to continue being there for 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

Please donate today



Complete the form and return to RSBS-KEHC-GBBC, Age Scotland, Edinburgh, EH9 1PR

Your details

Title:	Forename:	Surname:
Address:		
	City:	
Postcode:	Date of birth:	

By providing us with your telephone number and email address you are consenting to us contacting you via phone, text and email.

Email:	
Home tel:	Mobile tel:

I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE

£75 £50 £25 Other (£)

I wish to pay by (please tick):

MasterCard Visa CAF

CharityCard Cheque (payable to Age Scotland)

Signature

Name on Card

Card No.

Expiry date Security code

Date

I prefer not to receive a thank you acknowledgement for this donation

I would like information about leaving a gift in my Will

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE MY DONATION WORTH 25% MORE

I want Age Scotland** and its partner charities to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

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I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less income tax and/or capital gains tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Yes, I want Age Scotland** to claim Gift Aid on my donations

I do not wish you to claim Gift Aid on my donations

Date

Keeping in touch

We will stay in contact by post unless you ask us not to. We will never sell your data and we promise to keep your details safe and secure. You can change your mind at any time by emailing us on contact@agescotland.org.uk or calling us on 0333 323 2400.

You can read Age Scotland's privacy policy at [age.scot/privacypolicy](https://www.agescot.org.uk/age.scot/privacypolicy).

**Age Scotland, part of the Age Network, is an independent charity dedicated to improving the later lives of everyone on the ageing journey, within a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in Scotland.
Registration Number: 153343. Charity Number: SC010100. Registered Office: Causewayside House, 160 Causewayside, Edinburgh EH9 1PR.

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 which is the best place in the world to grow older.

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Let's keep in touch

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



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 at [agescot/roundup](https://www.agescotland.org.uk/agescot/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.



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