



Bristol City Council

Discretionary Giving Scheme (December 2022)

1.0 Background

The Council has a 'discretionary giving' scheme in order that it can enable citizens or businesses, who may be prepared to donate money to help low-income households with the increased cost of living.

People wishing to donate any amount, can do so by contributing to the council's Local Crisis Prevention Fund webpage, which helps people who can't afford the basics like food, gas, electricity or household goods.

[Donate to the Local Crisis Prevention Fund: Discretionary Giving \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/discretionary-giving)

2.0 Policy objectives

The Council will use these donations to consider making an award to citizens who fulfil the qualifying criteria as highlighted in this policy.

Any application will be treated its merits and seek to:

- Alleviate immediate poverty and hardship
- Assist those leaving care, prison, young offender institutions or similar
- Encourage and assist citizens to help themselves with regards to financial issues
- Support people in their transition through benefits or back to work
- Support victims of domestic abuse who are trying to move to a place of safety
- Support the vulnerable and elderly to remain within their community

This list is not exhaustive and not in order of priority.

3.0 Principles of the scheme

The principles are that any donation will be granted via an award, that:

- Is accessible to all citizens in financial crisis, with no other means of support
- Has a fair and streamlined assessment and decision making process
- Is delivered on a grant-based system and will not require successful applicants to repay any award made to them

4.0 Funding

Donations from individuals and/or businesses will be ring fenced for the purposes listed previously. Any monies donated will be spent within the financial year.

5.0 Considerations for an award

- The scheme is purely discretionary. Citizens do not have a statutory right to an award
- No cash awards will be made from it
- Additional amounts that can be paid out by the Council in any financial year will be determined by the donations amounts received

Monthly budget monitoring will be carried out to ensure funds are reasonably and fairly allocated.

6.0 Claiming a grant from donations

The Council currently accepts LCPF applications online and by phone. Additional information and evidence from the citizen may also be required. This will be requested in writing, electronically or verbally. The claimant will be required to provide any information promptly.

7.0 Awards

There will be no minimum amount for an award following donations, as each case will be assessed based on the citizen's circumstances and needs and also on other funding directed to LCPF.

8.0 Award method from donations

Emergency Payments are currently made in the form of digital supermarket vouchers. Household Goods awards will be made via provision of new or reconditioned goods. No cash payments will be made.

The delivery and instalment of goods is provided free of charge to the claimant and inclusive of the grant that LCPF provide.

10.0 Monitoring of donations/spend

Each year the LPF team will:

- Evaluate a number of donations/awards received per month and how many additional awards this has led to
- Evaluate whether decisions are being made with equity and fairness across diverse citizen groups
- Review the application process to ensure it enables decision makers to be consistent and gather appropriate information
- Facilitate and review stakeholder feedback of grant giving and decision-making
- Make recommendations to sustain and improve the quality of donations and decision-making.

11.0 Publicity

The Council has a responsibility to ensure it does not limit the legal discretions it may apply and is committed to applying the policy fairly and consistently. It will take steps to maximise take up to make sure that the funds are targeted towards those who are most in need.

12.0 Misuse, Money Laundering and Fraud

Bristol City Council is committed to the identification and prevention of fraud in all its forms. Where it is alleged or considered that a donation or award may have been made fraudulently, the matter will be investigated and if fraud is found to have occurred, action will be taken including criminal proceedings, where relevant.

13.0 Refunds or mispostings of grants

The council will make every effort to minimise the need to refund or correct any misposting of donation. Where an error has been identified by the council or notified by the person that an error has occurred, the council will investigate and if appropriate such monies will either be reallocated or refunded to originator.

14.0 Policy review

The policy will be reviewed annually and in light of any changes, trends or other factors that impact on the effectiveness of it.

15.0 Complaints

The council's complaints procedure will apply in the event of any complaints received about this policy.