

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 000818
Date 25 January 2017

Local Welfare Assistance Scheme

Request:

I am seeking information about your council's local welfare assistance scheme for provision of essential help for local people when they are in financial hardship.

Could you send me details of:

- 1) All assistance that people can access through your council's local welfare assistance scheme (ie if people receive cash, or if they are provided directly with pre-paid cards, or white goods and furniture, etc)?

We can confirm that the department holds information that you have asked for in relation to the above. However, the information is exempt under section 21 of the FOI Act because it is reasonably accessible to you, and I am pleased to inform you that you can access it on our website via the following link:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/5512/Local-Welfare-Assistance>

Section 21(1) of the Freedom of Information Act exempts disclosure of information that is reasonably accessible by other means, and the terms of the exemption mean that we do not have to consider whether or not it would be in the public interest for you to have the information.

You can find out more about Section 21 by reading the extract from the Act, available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/21>

Please indicate whether your scheme is a grant or loan scheme, or a combination. [A loan scheme run by Wolverhampton City Credit Union.](#)

If your scheme is a loan scheme, please send a link to application and repayment information. <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/5512/Local-Welfare-Assistance>

Could you also indicate:

How many loans have been paid out this year? [1,099 in 2016](#)

The median amount of loans? [Information not held](#)

The number of loan recipients who have defaulted on loan repayments? [124 loans in credit control since 1/7/2014; 288 loans written off since 1/7/2014.](#)

- 2) The number of applicants to your scheme(s) since April 2016? [Information not held](#)
- 3) Information regarding the cost of LWA so far this financial year (2016-2017) at your council. Are there adequate funds to continue provision until the end of April 2017? [Total amount paid by Credit Union in 2016 = £219,189.19. Grant paid to Credit Union since 1/7/2014 covering a 5 year plan to regenerate resources.](#)
- 4) Eligibility criteria (or links to eligibility criteria and the means for application) if the criteria have changed since April 2016?
<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/5512/Local-Welfare-Assistance>
- 5) The three most common reasons that people applied for local welfare assistance in 2016?
 1. [Benefit sanction;](#)
 2. [Essential Household items;](#)
 3. [Changes to benefits \(ESA to JSA or UC\)](#)
- 6) Are people whose benefits have been stopped or sanctioned through DWP sanctions processes excluded from LWA applications? [No](#)
- 7) Does your council plan to stop, scale back or outsource local welfare provision in the 2017-2018 year? [No plans at this point in time](#)

If your council does plan to cut or stop provision, can you list any alternate local services or officers at the council that people can approach for help in hardship? [N/A](#)