

Emergency Assistance Scheme Policy

1 April 2024

**Updated by Exchequer
Services 1 December 2023**

1 April 2024

1 March 2023

1 October 2022

12 September 2022

1 June 2021

1 December 2020

1 April 2020

1 April 2013

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
1	Introduction	3
2	Guiding Principles of the Scheme	3
3	Main Eligibility Criteria	3
4	Other Eligibility Criteria and Considerations	4
5	Application Process	5
6	Verification of Applications	5
7	Delivery of Scheme	5
8	Review Process	6

1. Introduction

The London Borough of Havering (LBH) has developed an Emergency Assistance Scheme (EAS) in partnership with the local community, the voluntary sector and internal departments of the Council.

The EAS Scheme is a **discretionary** scheme enabled under powers contained within the Local Government Act 2000 and has been in place since 1 April 2013. This scheme was developed to reduce the impact of the abolition of the Department of Work and Pension's (DWP) community care grants and crisis loans.

This Scheme is available to help vulnerable and low income households and individuals such as care leavers in situations of emergency financial need. Consideration will be given to families with children, people with disabilities and people over 65 who have an emergency need.

Assistance can include support with food, energy and household bills (including drinking, washing, cooking, central heating, and sanitary purposes) and sewerage, or other essentials such as sanitary products, warm clothing, soap, blankets; boiler service/repair; purchase of equipment including fridges, freezers and ovens. In emergency circumstances, cash payments are available.

2. Guiding Principles of the Scheme

The local Emergency Assistance Scheme is guided by the following principles:

1. Providing genuine support to the most financially vulnerable people in Havering, without stimulating or encouraging inappropriate demand.
2. Reflecting the needs of the local community and building upon existing provision, both statutory and voluntary.
3. Supporting the preventative agenda and encouraging positive long-term habits and decision-making.

4. The scheme is available to financially assist residents in an emergency situation and does not replace any welfare benefit scheme.

The full details of the delivery of the scheme can be found in Section 6, **Delivery of the Scheme**.

3. Main Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible to apply for emergency assistance:

1. Aged 18 or over (applicants aged 16 to 17 may be eligible for direct support)

2. Living in Havering at the time of application

3. In receipt of qualifying benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income-Based Jobseekers' Allowance
- Income-Based Employment and Support Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Support
- Severe Disablement Allowance

Or

If the applicant is not in receipt of a welfare benefit they may still be eligible to apply for EAS if they are on a low income. As a guide, low income will be £673 per week for a family with children or £442 per week for an individual living alone or couple with no children residing them.

4. Other Eligibility Criteria and Considerations

1. Individuals may be excluded from the scheme in the following situation:

- Individuals in hospital & care homes unless they are about to be discharged within 2 weeks of the time of application.
- Prisoners

- Individuals not living in the borough

2. Individuals may not receive emergency assistance who seek support to pay for any item mentioned below. This is because there is funding available for these items through other organizations or the item is not considered essential. This list is not exhaustive:

- Travel to & from school
- School meals
- Court costs/legal proceedings
- Respite or domiciliary care
- Repair to a council property
- Repair to privately rented property
- Medical costs
- Mobility needs
- Money to fund investments
- Any appliance or service not deemed essential
- Money for holidays
- Costs associated with parking or running of a motor vehicle.

3. The person or household applying for assistance must not have any savings that can be relied on to meet the need they have applied for.

4. Single households or families with or without dependent children requiring assistance with food and energy bills can receive direct support of up to three £100.00 cash payments in a 6 month rolling period in emergency circumstances until 30 September 2024 when the scheme is subject to review. Only one application can be made in any two month period and any more than 3 payments is require to undertake a benefit assessment.

5. All applicants must be willing to engage with appropriate support from advice agencies if necessary, to address any on-going financial capability and personal budgeting issues and sign a relevant consent form.

6. We would consider higher payments for exceptional cases for those that do not have enough money to meet basic needs or those individuals that require preventive measures for example Leaving Care and those transition from street homeless to accommodation. These cases will be considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Council

5. Application Process

1. People will be able to apply online at [LBH Emergency Assistance Scheme - Introduction - Section 1 - Havering Online Forms \(achieveservice.com\)](#)

2. The Havering Refugee & Crisis Response Team (HRCR Team) will contact applicants by email within 72 hours to pursue their application.

6. Verification of Applications

1. The benefits status of applicants for the Emergency Assistance Scheme will be verified with the DWP.

2. Where a welfare benefit is not in payment, the applicant will be required to provide evidence of their income to ensure they meet the requirements of the scheme.

3. The Council will process applicant details quickly and securely to verify the accuracy of the information included on the application form.

4. Havering Council will use any additional information within its control to verify applications and protect the public purpose.

7. Delivery of the Scheme

1. Needs such as food or energy bill payment requirements will be met through the provision of £100 payments for individuals and couples with or without dependent children residing at home. Payments will be made direct to their bank account.

To protect against fraud and protect the public purse, once a claim is ready for payment, it will be paid via BACs to the applicant's bank account only.

For exceptional cases for those, full assessment will be carried out on individuals and decisions will be made by a panel made up of Senior Managers.

2. Havering Refugee Crisis Response team members will assess applications based on the eligibility criteria and the specific circumstances of the household and will inform applicants of the outcome within 48 hours of completing the application process, or as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter. Evidence may be required to support the application where a welfare benefit is not in payment.

3. If the applicant is below the age of 16 years and is applying for a need which is excluded from the Emergency Assistance Scheme as it can be met through alternative provision, or if they have already accessed the maximum support available from the Emergency Assistance Scheme, HRCR Team members will signpost them to the

appropriate service area or escalate to the Client Monitoring Officer.

4. If an applicant is eligible for support from the Emergency Assistance Scheme and is presenting a need for furniture or white goods, proof of the required item must be supplied by the applicant. Once approved a one time only payment of up to £100 can be made directly to the applicant's bank account. Proof of purchase will subsequently need to be supplied in order to remain eligible for future support. Applications will be recorded and monitored by Havering Council.

8 Review Process

1. If an applicant wishes to request a review of a decision made by Havering Council they will be able to contact the Havering Refugee & Crisis Response Team directly to discuss the decision. The HRRCR Team will then review their decision in line with their procedures. If The HRRCR Team is not able to respond satisfactorily, then the applicant will be able to contact the Council within 28 days of the team's review of their decision.

2. The Council will follow its corporate complaints procedure when dealing with decision reviews from residents. The responsibility for overseeing this process lies with the Council's Client Monitoring Officer.