



Lairg Helping Hand Fund: Guidance Notes

Aim of Lairg Helping Hand Fund

The aim of the Lairg Helping Hand Fund is to provide one off financial assistance to households in Lairg and District Community Council living in fuel poverty. Grant awards of up to £250 will be awarded to households who require financial assistance with heating costs.

Community Council Area

To be eligible for a grant, individuals must reside in the Lairg and District Community Council area.

What can be Funded?

- Grants of up to £250 will be awarded to households towards heating/energy costs. Electric, Oil, LPG Gas, Calor Gas Bottles, Coal, Wood, and other fuel types will also be considered.
- White goods with a minimum energy efficiency A rating will be funded up to the cost of £250. The Helping Hand Fund will supply replacements for broken appliances or old appliances with an energy efficiency rating of B or below. Old or broken appliances will be removed from your home when the replacement item is delivered.
- Heating System Repairs (up to the cost of £250) will also be considered for funding.

Eligibility

To be eligible for a grant the applicant should be in receipt of one or more of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Income Support, Child Tax Credit, Pension Credit, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Based Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction. In some cases, applicants who are in extreme financial hardship but not in receipt of any of the above will also be considered on an individual basis e.g. situations where there are financial pressures due to unavoidable travel costs, high rent costs or change of personal circumstance.

Please note that applicants with savings of over £2000 are not eligible.

Eligibility Verification

LDCI are working in partnership with East and Central Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau (ECSCAB). All potential clients will be referred to ECSCAB for a holistic assessment. ECSCAB will request up to date evidence of documents related to personal circumstances e.g. bank statements and relevant benefits evidence. LDCI will make final decision based on non-biased advice from ECSCAB. Please note that LDCI require the applicant to complete this assessment to be considered for financial support.

To verify that an individual is eligible for the LDCI Helping Hand Fund, the following documentation will be requested by ECSCAB:

1. Copy of benefit award letter(s).
2. Consecutive bank statements from all client accounts for the last 3 months.
3. Two recent fuel bills i.e. for all fuel types, including electric, heating fuel (e.g. electric, oil, coal, LPG) and any additional fuels (e.g. for open fires, stoves, cooking). Applicants should put a note on the application form if they have prepayment meters.

Information relating to any health issues or vulnerabilities that impact on the individual's heating or electricity requirements should be noted in the application form e.g. the need for refrigeration facilities for medicines.

ECSCAB will support the client to submit related documents, all documents should relate to the current time and the last three months. Original documents are not accepted, these will be returned to the individual. LDCI can signpost to a photocopying service if required.

Lairg Helping Hand Fund Communications and Process

Clients will only receive communication from Lairg and District Community Initiatives and East and Central Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau throughout the process.

Please note table below as a guide to the process of The Helping Hand Fund.

Stage 1	Client Initial Enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Client contacts Lairg and District Community Initiatives (LDCI) to enquire about the Helping Hand Fund. - With permission from the client, LDCI will refer client to East and Central Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau (ECSCAB) for a holistic assessment.
Stage 2	ECSCAB Holistic Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECSCAB undertake a holistic client assessment on behalf of LDCI. - ECSCAB will request evidence from the client and deem if the client meets the LDCI fund criteria. - If eligible, ECSCAB will support the client to complete a client request form and pass to LDCI. - ECSCAB will offer further support to any clients that may need it.
Stage 3	Arranging Logistics for Client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If eligible, LDCI will process client request and arrange logistics for Grant Award and fuel delivery. - The client will receive an official Grant Award from LDCI stating amount of award and logistical notes. - Please note that no finance is transferred to the client.
Stage 4	Continued Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDCI will support and signpost the client to any further required services.

Grant Award

If the application is successful, LDCI will notify the claimant and make arrangements for the payment and delivery of fuel. Awards will be arranged on a case by case basis and may require the individual to authorise access to electricity accounts or prepayment meters. LDCI will make payment for all items so no funds will go directly to the individual.

Funding is limited so Lairg and District Community Initiatives cannot guarantee that all requests will be successful.

Contact Details

For more information call Kirstin (Lairg and District Community Initiatives) on **07961 372 427** or email: **projectofficer@lairginitiatives.co.uk**.

General Data Protection Regulation

In respect of General Data Protection Regulation, please be aware that Lairg And District Community Initiatives, East and Central Sutherland Citizens Advice Bureau and Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust will process client data in a confidential and secure manner. As a collective group, all involved organisations will:

- Retain a copy of client personal details and any other case related documentation until the end of the Lairg Helping Hand Fund project and obliged to keep details for five years (electronic formats) using anonymised information in relevant summaries, reports and statistics.
- Contact client directly to complete holistic assessment, notify client of the application outcome and to arrange logistics of the fuel.
- Comply to organisational privacy policies. Please see (online) Privacy Notices and Data Protection Policies from all organisations involved in the management and processing of Lairg Helping Hand Fund. Paper format copies are available on request.
 - Lairg and District Community Initiatives | www.lairginitiative.co.uk/privacy-policy.html
 - East and Central Sutherland Citizen Advice Bureau | www.ecscab.org.uk/privacy-policy
 - Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust | www.kyleofsutherlanddevelopmenttrust.org/privacy-statement

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