

# **Scottish Welfare Fund**

## **Family Reunion Crisis Grant**

**May 2018**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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# SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND

## Family Reunion Crisis Grant

### STANDALONE GUIDANCE FOR USE BY LOCAL AUTHORITY STAFF AND SUPPORT WORKERS AT BRITISH RED CROSS

#### **Purpose**

1. This note provides information about the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) for local authority staff and support workers working with refugee families arriving in Scotland under family reunion rules to settle with their family member already resident in the local authority area. It sets out the arrangements for processing applications for assistance and the information needed to process these applications. This note should be read in conjunction with the Statutory Scottish Welfare Fund Guidance 2018.

This arrangement will commence on 14 May 2018.

2. This standalone guidance should be used in conjunction with SWF Statutory Guidance – February 2018 (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/02/5191>)

#### **Families arriving to be with their families under the Family Reunion Rules**

3. The Scottish Government has committed to establishing a process for the delivery of Family Reunion Crisis Grants for refugee families, who settle in Scotland under family reunion rules. This will support the integration of refugee families arriving in Scotland under family reunion rules, who would otherwise be destitute. It will provide them with the financial support they need to meet their basic needs during their first days in Scotland, before they are able to access welfare benefits.

4. The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) will be the legislative and delivery mechanism for Family Reunion Crisis Grants, as refugee families arriving in Scotland for family reunion are already entitled to crisis grants through the SWF following their arrival.

5. Under the Family Reunion Crisis Grant process, sponsors (i.e. the member of the family already in Scotland) will be able to make an application for a crisis grant before family members arrive in Scotland for family reunion, with the same eligibility criteria as currently for SWF. If approved, grants will be paid to the sponsor prior to the arrival of the family members in Scotland.

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6. The Scottish Government has agreed with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) for local authorities in partnership with British Red Cross to receive and process Crisis Grant and Community Care Grant applications in advance of the family members' arrival in the local authority area. These arrangements will prevent destitution on arrival in Scotland and ease the process of settling in a new country. The family's Sponsor will receive support from the British Red Cross to make the application. Glasgow is currently the only dispersal area for asylum seekers in Scotland, so is expected to receive the majority of applications for Family Reunion Crisis Grants at this time.

7. The Scottish Government has committed to funding both the programme and administration costs to ensure the effective delivery of this policy. Local authorities will be reimbursed for each award paid.

## **Application process**

8. The applicant will be the family member already resident in Scotland and will be known as the 'Sponsor' for the family travelling to Scotland under the family reunion rules.

9. The applicant will be referred to as the 'Sponsor' in the correspondence or evidence provided in support of the application.

10 SWF applications in respect of Family Reunion Crisis Grants will be made **in advance of the family members' arrival in Scotland.**

11. Once it is known that the family has been granted permission to travel, the sponsor will meet or speak with the British Red Cross at a prearranged date and time, to complete the online SWF application form. (This will usually be around the time an application will be made for a Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) joint claim in preparation for the family's arrival in Scotland).

12. The sponsor (as the applicant) may apply for assistance with living costs (Crisis Grant) and other essential items if required (Community Care Grant) to enable the family to settle into the community **on arrival**, for example beds, bedding. When making such an application, the sponsor should use their current address, even if it is not the address where the family will live following arrival.

13. When completing the online application the applicant/British Red Cross should ensure that they **select 'Family Reunion' on the drop down menu for the reason for the application.** This will ensure that the application is clearly identified and the correct data is collected for statistical purposes. Where this option is not available, the British Red Cross should contact the relevant local authority.

14. **A named contact** (the British Red Cross support worker) should be provided on the application. Any enquiries for the British Red Cross about Family Reunion Crisis Grants should be sent to [FRCG@redcross.org.uk](mailto:FRCG@redcross.org.uk).

## **Establishing eligibility**

15. Applicants should be aged 16 years or more and live in the local authority area in which the application is being made and meet the following initial eligibility checks set out in **SWF Guidance 5.4 Stage 1** copied below for information:

- Verify identity and establish that the home address, or the address the applicant's family intend to live at, is in the local authority.
- Check whether the applicant is on a low income or does not have access to their money.
- Check that the applicant or their partner does not have savings or capital that excludes them from being awarded a grant (only relevant to Community Care Grant).
- Check that the applicant or their partner does not have savings or capital or some other source of help that they could use instead (only relevant to Crisis Grant applications).
- Check that the applicant is not being considered for a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Hardship Payment, has an application pending for a Short Term Benefit Advance (STBA) (only relevant to Crisis Grant applications) or is eligible for a Universal Credit (UC) advance.
- Check that the application is not excluded because the application history precludes a repeat application, including in another local authority area – this includes checking that there has not been a change in circumstances since the last application.
- Check that the application is not excluded for any other reason.

## **Considering whether applicants circumstances meet the requirement for an award**

16. Although the applicant may already be in receipt of benefits, it is important to remember that the benefits paid will be solely for the applicant at that time, with benefit payments for the family being paid after their arrival.

17. In many cases, there will be more than one family member arriving to join the applicant. Consideration should also be given to the fact that the family members may have no other means of support and may be destitute and at risk of homelessness on arrival in Scotland without the applicant receiving a SWF award.

18. The key test of eligibility for a Crisis Grant (CG) is the severity of the applicant's situation and the likely impact on them and their family.

19. The key test of eligibility for a Community Care Grant (CCG) is retaining or establishing a settled way of life in the community.

20. The applicant will be either setting up or attempting to maintain an established home in the community. It is possible that the applicant's circumstances will satisfy more than one of the qualifying conditions for a CCG.

## **Evidence in support of application**

21. The applicant (Sponsor) and/or British Red Cross will provide a letter from the Home Office confirming the issue of a travel visa, valid for a period of 30 days, permitting the family members to travel to the UK to reunite with the Sponsor (see Annex A).

22. It should be noted that there may be a delay in the applicant actually receiving this letter due to the process involved. It is, therefore, important to act quickly on receipt of the application, as the sponsor will only have a short period in which to prepare for the family's arrival.

23. The applicant may also provide travel tickets and dates of travel for the family members travelling. It is possible that the British Red Cross will also provide the travel costs for the family.

24. The evidence provided in support of the application will be sent by email immediately to the local authority SWF team. In the case of Glasgow City Council, the SWF team email address is: [SWFManagerMailbox@fs.glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:SWFManagerMailbox@fs.glasgow.gov.uk). Delays in sending the evidence will result in delays in processing the application and in turn a delay in payment or award of any goods which will have a negative impact on the applicant and their family.

25. The decision maker will make a decision based on the evidence provided in accordance with the SWF Guidance, however the decision maker will also have discretion to make a decision out with the guidance. In doing so the decision maker should ensure that the reasons and justifications for the decision are clearly recorded.

26. SWF awards should meet the needs of the applicant and their family.

27. Local authorities retain discretion in determining awards.

28. It will be appropriate in some circumstances to pay above or below the level that would normally have been payable

29. If an applicant on Universal Credit applies for a Family Reunion Crisis Grant for living costs, and it is known that their next payment date is more than two weeks away, a decision maker can make an award to cover a period longer in duration, for example, four weeks. **Paragraph 7.9 of the SWF statutory guidance refers.**

## **Notifying the decision**

30. As detailed in SWF Statutory Guidance–February 2018 (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/02/5191>) all applicants should receive an official decision and that should be in writing, unless the applicant requests otherwise.

31. A decision letter will be issued to the applicant and copied to the British Red Cross (BRC) via email at the same time.

## **Payment of Crisis Grant**

32. A Crisis Grant payment will be made to the applicant's bank account on the day before the family's arrival. The British Red Cross will explain the purpose for which the funds may be used to the applicant. If the applicant does not have a bank account, another payment method, such as Paypoint, should be used.

33. Where the applicant reports any changes in circumstances, British Red Cross should contact the local authority immediately to discuss whether the payment should be issued and any next steps.

34. For a Community Care Grant, where an application has been made in advance of the family's arrival, an '*in-principle*' decision should be given and arrangements made for the applicant to contact the local authority when the date the family are arriving is confirmed.

35. Arrangements should be made with the goods supplier for the delivery of goods awarded to the family for their arrival.

36. A decision maker may contact the applicant for more information, check with third parties (**subject to the applicant's agreement**) such as landlords. When this type of contact takes place, it should be recorded.

37. The Sponsor and family members may already be receiving integration support including welfare and other advice from British Red Cross, and this is likely to continue until the family has accessed all key benefits and services. However, local authorities can also ensure that they build and maintain relationships with a range of local partners, including NHS, third sector, advice agencies and money advice agencies including credit unions if required. This will ensure, where appropriate, people accessing the SWF can be signposted to other services which could address their wider needs. This approach may help reduce future demand for the SWF and help local authorities manage their fund more effectively.

## **Data sharing**

38. Personal information about individuals should be held in confidence and in accordance with local data protection policy and practice. Information provided in connection with an applicant should not be passed on without consent.

39. Local authorities should consider the legalities and practicalities of using data they already hold on applicants to streamline the application and verification process.

## **Review process**

40. The existing review process for SWF as detailed in the SWF Statutory Guidance February 2018 should be followed (<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/02/5191>)

## **Management information**

41. Local authorities are required to record the total number of

- CG & CCG applications
- CG & CCG awarded
- Total spend on a monthly basis.

An additional spread sheet for this purpose will be provided by Scottish Government to all Local Authorities. The recording of application reference numbers of all applications will allow the statistics for these types of applications to be separated from the main quarterly SWF statistics in the official Scottish Government statistics publication. The additional spreadsheet should be completed and submitted at the same time as the SWF Management return.

## **Key actions for local authorities and support workers**

- To use this standalone guidance in conjunction with the SWF Statutory Guidance February 2018.



UK Visas  
& Immigration

UKVI 04

[www.gov.uk/visas-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/visas-immigration)

Name:  
Date of Birth:  
Nationality:

Our Ref:

18 May 2017

**You must present this letter to the Immigration Officer upon arrival in the UK.**

Dear

Your application for a UK visa has been successful. This means that when you arrive in the UK you will have permission to be in the UK (known as Leave to Enter) as FAMILY REUNION - Sponsor: from

What this means for you

Your passport/travel document contains a vignette (visa sticker), which you will use to travel to the UK. The vignette is valid for 30 days. If you do not arrive in the UK within this 30 day period you will need to apply for a vignette transfer, the fee for which can be found at [www.gov.uk/visa-fees](http://www.gov.uk/visa-fees).

What you must do after arrival in the UK

Details of your permission will be on your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP). You must collect your BRP from the following collection point before your vignette expires or within 10 days of arriving in the UK, whichever is the later. If you fail to do so, you may be subject to a financial penalty or a reduction or cancellation of your leave.

If you leave the UK before you collect your BRP you may experience delays at the border upon your return, while further checks are made.

Your collection point is:

Post Office -

When you go to collect your BRP you must bring your passport/travel document containing the vignette. Please also bring this letter as it will help the staff to locate your BRP quickly.

If your collection point is at a Post Office, you can find out more at: [www.postoffice.co.uk](http://www.postoffice.co.uk)

Your BRP will be available for collection from: 01 Jun 2017.

Collecting your BRP at a Post Office if you are aged under 18

UK Visas and Immigration is an operational command of the Home Office





If you are under 18 years old and will be collecting your BRP at a Post Office it is very important that you read page 8 of the guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biometric-residence-permits-overseas-applicant-and-sponsor-information> **before** going to the Post Office.

You must be accompanied by a "Responsible Adult", or you will be turned away by the Post Office staff. Your parent or legal guardian can be your Responsible Adult **but only if they are collecting their own BRP at the same time**. In all other cases the adult who will accompany you must be approved in advance by the Home Office, **even if they are your parent or legal guardian**.

It will take **at least a week** to process a request to approve a Responsible Adult, and we cannot speed it up because that person is about to leave the UK, so apply as early as you can

Further information on permission to enter and stay in the UK

It is very important that you know exactly what permission you have, including any conditions attached to it, and what they mean. This is because if you breach these conditions, you could be committing a criminal offence, your permission could be cancelled and you may be required to leave the UK.

If you have been granted permission as a Tier 2 General, Sports person or Minister of Religion Migrant following an application started on or after 15 June 2016, your National Insurance Number (NINo) will appear in the remarks on the reverse of your biometric residence permit (BRP), so there is no need for you or your employer to make a separate application to the Department for Work and Pensions to obtain one. Further information about the National Insurance Number can be found at: [www.gov.uk/national-insurance](http://www.gov.uk/national-insurance)

From 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016 if you have a police registration condition attached to your permission it will no longer appear on your BRP. **If** you are required to register with the police this will be confirmed on your vignette, which you will need to show when you register with the police. **If** you are required to register you must do so within 7 days of your arrival in the UK. For information on registering with the police please visit: [www.gov.uk/register-with-the-police](http://www.gov.uk/register-with-the-police).

The police registration requirement may appear on your visa as any of the following:

- Pol Reg
- Pol Registration
- Police Registration within 7 days of UK entry
- Police Registration within 7 days of arrival
- Police Registration within 7 days of arrival in the UK

**Please note that this letter is not evidence of permission to enter or stay in the UK or the conditions that could be attached to such permission. This letter is not evidence of any permission you might have to work, a right to rent or to claim public funds in the UK. This letter will not provide any employer with a defence against a civil penalty liability. Your BRP is evidence of your permission and, with the exception of police registration, any conditions attached to it.**

If you have a problem collecting your BRP

Please visit [www.gov.uk/brp](http://www.gov.uk/brp) for more information on the following:

- Your passport is lost or stolen before you collect your BRP
- You want to collect a BRP on behalf of a family member
- You want someone else to collect your BRP on your behalf
- If your collection point is the Post Office and you want to collect your BRP from a different Post Office branch

Yours sincerely,

UK Visas & Immigration  
British Embassy, Amman



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