

What is the discretionary Social Fund?

The Social Fund scheme provides grants and interest free loans to help people on low income with costs that are difficult to meet from regular income.

- People on Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance or State Pensions credit can be considered for a community care grant.
- People who have been on Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance for twenty-six weeks can apply for a budgeting loan.
- People who are without sufficient resources to meet their immediate short term needs can apply for a crisis loan.

What is the role of the Office of the Social Fund Commissioner?

The Office of the Social Fund Commissioner (OSFC) is an independent statutory body based in Belfast. Its role is to carry out independent reviews of discretionary Social Fund decisions. The Social Fund Inspector who carries out the independent review will make his own decision based on all the circumstances of the case.

Facts and figures

The OSFC:

- Change approximately half of the Social Fund decisions we review.
- Make a decision on routine Social Fund cases within 12 working days.
- Deal with urgent crisis loans within 24 hours or less.

Where to find out more

All our publications are free of charge. You can download the publications and find out more about the OSFC by visiting our web-site at: www.osfcni.org.uk

How you contact the OSFC

 By telephone on **028 90 247202**, freephone **0808 1270417**, textphone **028 90 897540**, freephone textphone **0808 1270418**, by fax on **028 90 230921**

 We are able to take calls in languages other than English, using Language Line

 By e-mail at sfc@osfcni.org.uk

 In writing to:

FREEPOST OSFC, 24-26 Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GF

Osfc

**OFFICE OF THE SOCIAL FUND
COMMISSIONER
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**