

More people applying to the Scottish Welfare Fund



The number of households applying for welfare assistance has risen by a third in the last year, according to new statistics issued by the Scottish Government.

Scottish Welfare Fund Statistics to 30 September 2014 show that during the most recent quarter (July to September 2014):

- 52,400 applications were made to the Scottish Welfare Fund, an increase of 33 per cent on the same quarter last year;
- 25,800 Crisis Grants were awarded, 32 per cent more than the same quarter last year. These were predominantly for food, heating costs and other living expenses, with an average award value of just over £70;
- 11,200 Community Care Grants were awarded, 51 per cent more than the same quarter last year. These were predominantly for home furnishings and white goods, with an average value of just under £600.

Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice Alex Neil said: “That anyone should be live in poverty in a wealthy country is completely unacceptable and we’ll continue to tackle poverty and inequality to create a more prosperous and fairer society.

“Scottish Welfare Fund grants are a lifeline for people in crisis to buy the everyday items, or cover basic living costs that so many of us take for granted. This is why we are taking steps to establish the Fund in law through the Welfare Funds (Scotland) Bill.

“120,000 households in Scotland, one in twenty, have now been helped by the Scottish Welfare Fund in its first 18 months of

operation. The increase in applications over the last year is due, in part, to work done by local authorities and advice services to raise awareness of the Fund.

“We have allocated £33 million a year to the Scottish Welfare Fund to make sure that we continue to reach out to households in the most deprived areas – around half of awards are made to applicants in the 20 per cent most deprived areas of Scotland. Many families are paying a heavy price for the UK Government’s welfare reforms and this investment will help to mitigate the effects of these cuts on some of our most vulnerable households.”