

INFORMATION PACK

Purpose

Crisis Changing Lives helps homeless people achieve their educational and career goals by awarding grants of up to £2,500 to pay for course fees, work clothes and tools, or to help set up a business.

Please contact us with any further queries through the Crisis switchboard on 0844 251 0111 or by emailing changing.lives@crisis.org.uk.

Inside this pack

- Eligibility criteria
- The application forms: which one to use
- Where to get an application form
- When applications can be made
- What needs to be submitted with the application
- Organisation and support worker information
- Quotations
- The decision process
- Once the decisions have been made
- Successful applicants
- What the grant can be used for
- Data handling and protection

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must be:

- 18 or over
- Recently homeless (e.g. slept rough, lived in a hostel/refuge, 'sofa surfed' etc. in the last 5 years)
- Eligible to work in UK
- Working with a support worker for 6 months
- Free from alcohol or drug misuse for 6 months

Evidence of homelessness

Proof must be submitted to prove the candidate has experienced homelessness within the last 5 years of making an application. This can be written documentation from a local authority or housing association, hostel or agency working with homeless people.

Support

The candidate will normally be accessing support from a homeless agency, mental health agency, probation service or similar organisation working with the individual to help with pursuit of vocational goals. All candidates must have known their support agency or probation officer for at least 6 months prior to applying.

The application forms: which one to use

There are three types of grants available:

- Education
- Self-employment
- Into Employment

Which one to use:

An 'Education' Applicant: is taking part in a course or training within the next 12 months and is applying to Changing Lives for funding for course fees and/ or tools, equipment or materials needed to do the course.

A 'Self-employment' Applicant: is looking to move into self employment within the next 12 months and who is applying to Changing Lives for funding for tools, equipment or practical costs to start up the business or become self employed.

An 'Into Employment' Applicant: has been offered a position or is actively searching for paid employment within the next 12 months and who is applying to Changing Lives for funding for tools, equipment or materials needed for a particular job.

Where to get an application form

Application forms, can be downloaded from the Crisis website at www.crisis.org.uk/changinglives. Alternatively, please telephone Changing Lives through the Crisis switchboard on 0844 251 0111 and ask to receive one by post or by email.

When applications can be made

Applications are accepted throughout the year apart from during the summer period (please see website). Further information can be found on the Crisis website (www.crisis.org.uk/changinglives) or by contacting the Changing Lives team.

What needs to be submitted with the application

For an application to be assessed applicants must include the following information:

- a) An application form
- b) A support statement with support worker contact details
- c) Two quotations for all items applied for
- d) Proof of eligibility to work in the UK
- e) 'Education' applicants only: A copy of the course prospectus, contact details for the course tutor and a letter from the college confirming eligibility / suitability for enrolment on the course.
- f) 'Self-employment' applicants only: Evidence of small business training must be provided.
- g) 'Into Employment' applicants only: Include evidence of relevant jobs in your area or offer of employment.

Support organisations and support workers

The organisation

All organisations who wish to support their client need to be offering support, advice and guidance in helping the candidate to identify their vocational goal and take the steps necessary to work towards achieving this goal. They should have been working with their client for at least 6 months in this capacity.

Such an organisation could be:

- a hostel which is engaging with the candidate and seeking to find permanent accommodation for them
- a homeless sector organisation which is working to secure more permanent accommodation for the candidate or which provides them with supported housing
- a rehab organisation which is working with the candidate to maintain sobriety and can provide written evidence of past homelessness
- a mental health agency who is working with the candidate to address mental health needs and can provide written evidence of past homelessness
- a probation service or similar organisation currently working with the candidate and can provide written evidence of past homelessness (NB: all prison sentences must be spent.)
- a business advice centre who is working regularly with the candidate and can provide written evidence of past homelessness
- an employment service working with homeless and vulnerable people and who can provide written evidence of past homelessness.

If an agency has not known a candidate for 6 months they can approach a previous agency who has worked with the candidate and make an application together. Both agencies should provide two support statements about the candidate covering all required areas (see last page of application form). The agency currently working with the candidate would fill out the support section of the application form.

The support worker

The support worker can be any person who is working with the applicant on a regular basis to assist progression. The support worker should be working for a recognised organisation that is working towards improving the lives of our client group. This organisation must be happy to take on board grant funds if the application is successful and provide us with a copy of their annual accounts before any grant money is sent out. The applicant should have known the support worker for at least 6 months prior to application.

If you are in doubt as to whether your organisation can become a support partner please call the Changing Lives team to discuss.

Supporting statements

This must be provided for all applications. Support workers must comment on all identified areas below:

History

- How long have you known/been working with the applicant and in what capacity?
- How did the applicant become homeless?
- What process led to finding present accommodation?
- Has the applicant any history of drugs, alcohol or substance misuse?
If so, how have these been overcome?
- How has the applicant dealt with any mental health issues?

Social contacts

- What contacts with friends and family are now in place?
- How has this changed over time?
- What new interests/hobbies has the candidate undertaken?

Vocational guidance

- To what extent has the applicant received vocational guidance from you or others?
- How has the applicant worked through the process of deciding on a vocational or career goal?
- How has the applicant demonstrated self-motivation for this?

Moving forward

- What evidence is there to show the applicant has used self-initiative to move forward in his/her life and in relation to achieving his/her goal?
- How do you think a Crisis Changing Lives grant would complement the efforts of the applicant to move forward and further take control of his/her life?

If support workers do not comment on all areas, Crisis Changing Lives will not be able to gain a full picture of the applicant. This will put the application at a disadvantage.

All support statements must be on the headed paper of the Support worker's organisation and must be signed and dated by the support worker who has written the statement. The statement must be the original signed document and not a photocopy or fax.

Quotations

If the applicant is applying for any tools, equipment or materials, then two quotations must be included for each item applied for. Crisis does not require quotations for any courses being applied for (we do however need a prospectus detailing the cost of each course).

Quotations can be obtained by:

- Asking shops or suppliers for a personalised quotation on headed paper
- Printing information / price lists from websites or online shops
- Obtaining printed price lists e.g. catalogues or promotional brochures

All quotations should identify the name, address and telephone number of the supplier. Each quotation for an item must be for the same kind of item, allowing comparisons of like for like.

VAT

Please ensure all Value Added Tax (VAT) is calculated into items applied for if appropriate – the Changing Lives team will not add this in for you.

The decision process

All complete applications are passed on to the grant panel, who then make the final decision.

All applications go through a rigorous assessment to assess their suitability for a grant. It may be necessary to contact Support workers, applicants, course tutors (for 'Education' applicants), business advisors (for 'Self Employment' applicants) or past employers (for 'Self Employment' applicants) for further information during assessment.

How long does it take to make the decision?

Decisions will be made approximately 3-6 weeks after a complete application is received. It will take longer for the grant cheque to be raised and posted to you.

How are applications judged?

Applications will be judged on how well the applicant:

- Shows focus on their vocational/ career goal
- Has planned achievable short term objectives towards a specific goal
- Has used self-initiative to seek advice, services and training
- Shows motivation in pursuing their goal and objectives
- Is already taking responsibility for moving forward in his/her life

Necessity of items applied for

The panel also takes into account the necessity of items for applicants to achieve their vocational/ career goal. Applicants will not receive funding for any items that are not necessary for the goal identified.

The quality of supporting statements

The more information Crisis has about an applicant, the more informed the grant decision will be. Short references that leave out information requested will have a negative impact on the application.

Once the final decisions have been made

Successful applicants

Crisis will notify support workers and clients by post or email. This letter will also advise if Crisis needs to see the financial accounts of the organisation. The amount of money awarded may not be equal to all the money applied for, nor provide funding for all items requested. Transfer of funds can take up to 3 weeks after an application is accepted.

Unsuccessful applicants

Crisis will notify the applicant's support worker in writing during the week after the decisions are made. This letter will lay out all the reasons for the decision and where possible will offer suggestions for improvement. We expect the support worker to notify the applicant. Applicants are free to reapply later that year after a specific date stated in the letter.

Successful applicants: what happens next?

Spending the money

Money awarded by Crisis may only be spent on the items specified in the award letter. Copies of this letter are sent to the Support worker, the Support worker's manager and the grant recipient.

Changing what the money is spent on

If grant recipients wish to alter Crisis's specification, then they must contact the Changing Lives team and get approval for any changes. If Crisis receives receipts for any items which do not correspond to those specified in the award letter, then Crisis reserves the right to request any grant money spent on unspecified items be returned.

Returning money

If grant recipients do not wish to continue with their plans, then Support workers should return all remaining money to Crisis. If all the money is returned, then grant recipients will be entitled to reapply in the future. If only some of the money is returned then Crisis will not accept another application.

Alteration of goal and objectives

The grant recipient is awarded support on the grounds that she/he has formulated personal vocational/ career goals, and grants are made for winners to move towards this goal. If the grant recipient changes their employment goal, then the grant becomes invalid and all remaining money must be returned to Crisis.

Change in circumstances

In some instances circumstances may change and the grant recipient can no longer pursue the chosen goal. In this case the individual circumstances will be reviewed by Crisis and a decision made as to whether the grant can support this change of goal.

Time allowed for spending the money

All money must be spent within 6 months of receipt of the grant cheque. After this deadline all unused money or money not accounted for with receipts must be returned in full to Crisis with a written explanation as to why it was not used. We advise all purchases be made as soon as possible.

Moving house

Grant recipients must keep Crisis updated when they change their address. This is part of the agreement signed in the application form.

Monitoring process

The monitoring process takes the form of two questionnaires; one sent at 6 months and one sent at 12 months. They should be completed by the grant recipient and returned to Crisis in the pre-paid envelopes provided. In the event that Crisis does not receive a completed questionnaire back from the grant recipient, the Support Worker will be contacted to gain this information. Permission for this was gained when the grant recipient signed the disclosure in the application pack.

What the grant can, and cannot, be used for

Applicants can apply for up to £2,500. The money awarded is a grant and does not have to be paid back.

Ultimate decisions will be made based on an assessment of need. Please contact us for guidance on what may or may not be accepted. If you have any doubts over any items please contact the team before making an application.

What the grant can fund

- Accredited courses that are linked directly to an applicant's employment goal
- Tools and equipment for courses that are linked directly to an applicant's employment goal
- Tools and equipment to use in a job linked directly to an applicant's employment goal
- Tools and equipment and practical costs to become self-employed

What the grant cannot fund

General items:

- Most second hand goods (contact changing.lives@crisis.org.uk for more info)
- Travel or transport allowances or costs
- Rent or upkeep
- Food or drink
- Utility costs (including phone, gas, electricity, internet costs etc)
- Repayment of debts (including any items or courses that the applicant is applying for which have already been paid for)

- Research
- Courses outside the UK
- Course fees that can be obtained for free
- Non work-related clothing
- Publishing cost for articles, books, reports etc
- Subscriptions to journals
- Bachelor-level course fees (e.g. BA, BSc)
- Academic postgraduate course fees (e.g. M.A., PhD)
- Fees not associated with training, education or employment
- Courses that do not offer a recognised or accredited qualification, or which are not offered by bona fide course providers
- Items deemed legally unacceptable
- Furniture and household equipment
- Replacement of official documents

Specific items:

- Non-specialist driving licences
- Aeroplane tickets or travel vouchers
- Alcohol (sale of, advertisement of or training in sale of)
- Animals, animal parts, living creatures and other wildlife products or by-products
- Lock picking devices or their use/associated training
- Tobacco and tobacco products

NB: The panel's decision to award computer equipment and computer software is usually based on the length of course, number of hours per week, and the level of course (computers are very rarely awarded to applicants studying at less than BA or equivalent BTEC/HND qualifications).

Data handling and protection

Data protection

Crisis is registered under the Data Protection Registration Scheme (Z6551446). Crisis Changing Lives complies with all requirements for holding sensitive information in both written and electronic form. Crisis Changing Lives complies with the principal requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (the "Act").

Processing personal data

Personal and sensitive personal data taken from the Crisis Changing Lives application form or other forms, support statement/s, partnership agreement or collected via telephone or through face-to-face conversation is held manually and electronically.

It is processed in a fair and lawful way and has been gathered from the individual source and/or the individual's support worker, former support worker or key worker or sponsoring organisation.

Further information

If you have any questions about any part of this information pack, please don't hesitate to call the Crisis Changing Lives team through the switchboard on 0844 251 0111 or at changing.lives@crisis.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you. Good luck with your application.

Additional support from **Linklaters**

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Crisis UK (trading as Crisis).
Registered Charity Numbers:
E&W1082947, SC040094
Company Number: 4024938.

Homelessness ends here