

# Factsheet

## 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 or State Pensions credit can be considered for a community care grant.
- People who have been on Income Support or income-based Jobseekers 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 Independent Review Service?

The Independent Review Service (IRS) is an independent statutory body based in Birmingham. 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 IRS:

- Change over half of the Social Fund decisions we review.
- Make a decision on routine Social Fund cases within 12 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 Independent Review Service by visiting our web site at:

[www.irs-review.org.uk](http://www.irs-review.org.uk)

## How you contact the IRS



By telephone on **0800 096 1926**, by fax on **0121 606 2201**



By textphone on **0800 096 1929**



By e-mail at **em@irs-review.org.uk**



In writing to **The Business Team**

at **4th Floor, Centre City Podium, 5 Hill Street, Birmingham B5 4UB**

# Independent Review Service

for the Social Fund



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

**irs**

Independent Review Service  
for the Social Fund