



# Change into Action Funding Guidelines

## Background

Change into Action has been created by a consortium of local and regional government, public and voluntary sector organisations, operating as part of the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) Homelessness Taskforce.

Change into Action has three objectives:

- Providing the public with information about homelessness.
- Providing the public a way to give money to support people who are or have been rough sleeping.
- Enabling the public to identify and locate people sleeping rough so that they can be connected to local support services.

The Homelessness Taskforce through the WMCA will support Local Authorities to set up local processes and adapt the Change into Action website for their area. The WMCA will provide and manage the Change into Action framework. The responsibility and oversight of the process for managing, prioritising, distributing and reporting on use of the funds raised sits with the individual Local Authorities who will report to the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce on progress.

It is vital that in raising funds there is a clear and transparent process for managing, prioritising, distributing, and reporting on the use of the donations received.

This document sets out how this process will operate in Birmingham. It is the responsibility of all partners who wish to access funds raised through Change into Action to have read and understood these guidelines before any applications are made to the fund.

Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) will act as the fund holder and the Change into Action Birmingham Funding Panel will be responsible for approving applications to the fund, facilitated by the WMCA.





## 1. Conditions of Use

Applications will only be considered from approved Change into Action delivery partners that are working in Birmingham with people who are rough sleeping, have slept rough recently or who are at imminent risk of rough sleeping.

Applications must show how the funding requested will support individuals rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping to move off the streets and re-build their lives.

Decisions on funding will be at the sole discretion of the Change into Action Birmingham Funding Panel. Where necessary, the Panel may request further information from the delivery partner in order to progress and process a funding application.

The following conditions apply to the use of the Change into Action Birmingham fund:

- No service user will be asked to repay any amount of the Change into Action fund.
- The fund must never be used as a loan fund.
- Cash payments and bank transfers should NOT be made directly to beneficiaries of the fund.
- Repeat applications may be considered, on a case-by-case basis, where it can be evidenced that further funding will continue to prevent homelessness or rough sleeping from occurring or will ensure ongoing support for a period of time.
- Applications which propose provision of services/support already in place will not be funded.

## 2. Thresholds and Guide to Funding Available

All applications for funding will be referred to the Change into Action Birmingham Funding Panel for a decision. As an indication we work to a guide of £450 maximum towards the furnishing of a 1-bedroom flat. The maximum amount of funding that can be requested through a single application is £1,000.

Applications for amounts above £1,000 and for repeat applications for the same applicant (even if it is a different delivery partner making the application) will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The exceptional circumstances will need to be evidenced as part of the application process.



### 3. Change into Action Key Definitions

#### Rough Sleeper/Rough Sleeping

For the purposes of clarity, Change into Action seeks to define the term 'rough sleeper/rough sleeping' below using the Government's 2010 definition:

*People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or "bashes").*

For applications to support those who have been recently rough sleeping or are at imminent risk of rough sleeping; we ask for applications to provide information on the nature of the rough sleeping and/or risk and/or details about the date and duration of recent periods of rough sleeping. We have placed no set limit upon a period or set of circumstances that this may include.

The decision to award funding will be solely at the discretion of the Change into Action Birmingham Funding Panel after thoroughly assessing the application.

### 4. Change into Action Funding Principles

- I. All means of alternative funding should be explored first. Applications should only be made where funding could not be accessed elsewhere, and where the applicant could not reasonably be expected to afford the items themselves, providing evidence where appropriate when making an application for Change into Action funding.
- II. The fund must not be used to replace statutory benefits, government awarded grants or any other payments to which the applicant has entitlement.
- III. Change into Action funding will only be granted if there will be a demonstrable positive impact upon the life of people rough sleeping or at risk, helping them to transition from the streets into sustained accommodation.
- IV. The expenditure of Change into Action funding must be reasonable and necessary.
- V. Change into Action funding applications and grants will bear public scrutiny, creating an ethos where involvement, accountability and transparency are welcomed and where challenge is viewed as a crucial and constructive measure of improving outcomes.

## 5. What can the Change into Action Birmingham Fund be used for?

This will be dependent on each applicant's needs and their individual case. Examples of uses that may be considered appropriate are listed below. Please note, this list is not exhaustive:

- The first £10 on the electricity meter
- Basic kitchen items when moving into independent accommodation
- A bedding set for a new flat
- The fee to join an art class that builds confidence and self-esteem
- The first month's gym membership as part of a new life away from the street
- New clothes that fit and express value
- A rent deposit for a private flat
- A travel card for a month to get to appointments

Change into Action strongly encourages a conversation with the individual about what would make a difference in their lives. We welcome applications that will provide tailored support to individuals to move away from the streets for good.

## 6. Fund Administration

Donations to Change into Action Birmingham are made using the JustGiving donation platform via a link on the Change into Action Birmingham website. In addition, there are two contactless giving points in Birmingham located at Snow Hill Station and Waylands Yard coffee shop on Upper Bull Street.

BVSC act as the fund holder and administer payments to delivery partners.

The Change into Action Birmingham Funding Panel has responsibility for overseeing the fund and its allocation. All decisions on applications to the fund are made by the Panel.

The Change into Action Funding Panel consists of 3 to 6 members, where a minimum of 3 Panel members are required to make an award for payment. Decisions are made by a simple majority. Panel members include members of the business community and a representative from Birmingham City Council.

The Change into Action Funding Panel will fully assess each individual funding application. Panel members cannot be involved in the decision making if they have a vested or pecuniary interest in the application. If they have an interest, they must declare it before the decision is made and withdraw from the decision-making process in relation to that application.



Change into Action Birmingham welcomes applications throughout the year. The Funding Panel may close applications to the fund if donations to the scheme have been exhausted.

## 7. Application Process

### Registering to become a Change into Action Delivery Partner

Before any funding applications can be made to Change into Action Birmingham, your organisation must register as a Change into Action delivery partner. You can do this by completing the delivery partner application form which can be found on the [Change into Action website](#). If this or any document is required in an alternative format or reasonable adjustment required, organisations should contact [Homelessness@wmca.org.uk](mailto:Homelessness@wmca.org.uk)

The WMCA Homelessness Taskforce in partnership with Birmingham City Council will review your application and notify you once you have been registered as a delivery partner. We will aim to process these applications within 5 working days. We may request additional information from organisations in order to verify the application.

Once an organisation has been registered as a delivery partner, BVSC will make contact to confirm bank details and relevant references.

The delivery partner application form will only need to be completed once to allow us to register your organisation as a delivery partner.

### Submission of Funding Applications

Once your organisation is registered as a delivery partner you will receive a link to access the online Change into Action funding application form. All applications for funding must be made by completing the online Change into Action funding application form.

Any queries about the submission process can be sent to [Homelessness@wmca.org.uk](mailto:Homelessness@wmca.org.uk)

We aim to process funding applications and inform you of a decision within 5 working days. For all applications marked as 'Emergency', we aim to have a decision made within 2 working days. Emergency applications should be clearly marked, by ticking the relevant box on the online form.

Once the Panel has made a decision on a funding application the delivery partner will be notified by email.



If a delivery partner receives a negative decision, there is no right of appeal. However, the delivery partner can reapply and seek feedback on their application.

### **Purchase of Goods or Services**

Once communication has been received that the application has been successful, the delivery partner should proceed and purchase the agreed goods/items/services within the budget agreed by the Funding Panel. The delivery partner should ensure that they retain all receipts and evidence for the purchases made.

Cash should not be given directly to an individual.

If the cost of a service or product which has been approved by the Funding Panel changes, delivery partners should email [Homelessness@wmca.org.uk](mailto:Homelessness@wmca.org.uk) stating the reason for the change in cost and the new expected cost. The revised costs and reasons will be considered by the Panel and the delivery partner informed if these can be approved.

### **Payment to Delivery Partners**

Payments for approved applications will be made to the delivery partner following the purchase of all approved goods/items/services. The delivery partner must provide Change into Action Birmingham with the following information in one email so that payment can be made to them:

- Receipts for all purchases.
- Evidence that payment has been made by the delivery partner for the goods/items/services purchased.
- The evidence submitted can include for example, organisation bank or credit card statements and petty cash receipts. In the case of bank and credit card statements they should be submitted in a format whereby the purchases are highlighted clearly so that it is clear which purchases you are referencing.
- Confirmation that the service user has received the goods/items/services – this can be submitted as a signed confirmation of goods form (we will supply you with a template) or a screenshot of a text message from the service user confirming receipt of the goods/items/services.

This information should be forwarded in full to [Homelessness@wmca.org.uk](mailto:Homelessness@wmca.org.uk) within 8 weeks of an application being approved. Once this information is received in the correct format, payment will be made to the delivery partner by BVSC through electronic bank transfer.



If you do not submit the required documents in the correct format as stated above, within the 8-week timeframe, Change into Action Birmingham will close your application and reallocate the funds.

**Payments will not be made to delivery partners until all evidence of spend is received for an application.**

It is the responsibility of all delivery partners to have read and understood these guidelines **before** any applications are made to the fund.

### **8. Record Keeping and Monitoring**

Delivery partners must record how any monies obtained from the fund have been utilised. These details should be logged in the service user's file or appropriately recorded in some other way.

Receipts must be obtained by the delivery partner for all purchases and the original proof of expenditure should be retained by the delivery partner.

BVSC will monitor and keep a full record of all donations to the fund, as well as details about payments made to delivery partners from the fund.

### **9. Impact of Change into Action Funding**

Change into Action Birmingham and its partners are keen to hear stories of how the support funded through Change into Action has made a difference. Good news stories can be provided in all sorts of different ways, including case studies, interviews with support staff and through the use of performance monitoring information.

We would like to work with organisations to support the Change into Action communications campaign and show the positive outcomes that are being achieved in Birmingham.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage with organisations that have received funding about how the public might get to hear about what has been done with their donations. Please contact [Homelessness@wmca.org.uk](mailto:Homelessness@wmca.org.uk) for further information.

