

# Money Wellness calls for a ‘uniform approach’ to school uniform grants

Submitted by: Money Wellness

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Money Wellness is calling for the government to review school uniform grants, after 93% of parents said they were unaware there was any help available.

A Money Wellness survey found 97% of families – already struggling with debt - were worried about being able to afford school uniform this September. The same number (97%) said now they know they might be able to get a grant, it’s highly likely they’ll apply.

The majority (57%) said they spend more than £150 on school uniforms each year and over half (52%) said they had to make cutbacks to cover the cost.

Other ways families find the money to pay for school uniform include:

- 11% rely on credit
- 11% save throughout the year
- 11% use second-hand clothes passed onto them
- 4% get help from families
- and just 3% have successfully applied for a grant

School uniform grants are handed out to families by their local councils. They are worth up to £150 per child but how much you get, and if you qualify, depends on where you live and your council’s criteria.

One council could offer nothing, another £30 and a third £150 because the government hasn’t set fixed rules.

Ian Somerset, Chief Executive of Money Wellness, said: “School uniforms are an additional cost that low-income families struggle to meet.

“We’re speaking to lots of families who are having to cut back on basics like food or electricity just to ensure their children go to school in the right uniform. They shouldn’t be having to choose between a blazer and putting food on the table or pushing themselves further into debt. And children shouldn’t be going to school worried about feeling isolated or singled-out because they have mismatched or incorrect uniform.

“Reform is desperately needed because school uniform grants are a total lottery – inadequate at best and non-existent at worst. One family in one area could receive £150 worth of help, while another family a few miles away might get nothing.

“It’s time the government recognised that this isn’t acceptable and it’s letting down the poorest families in society at a time when they need help the most. We’re calling for a meaningful change to the system so that low-income families can be confident about what they’ll receive, regardless of where they live.”

School uniforms are commonplace in the UK. Almost every secondary school (98%) and the majority (79%) of

primary schools require children to wear some form of uniform.

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PRESS CONTACT: CAROLINE CHELL

caroline.chell@moneywellness.com

07814448564

Notes to editors

Money Wellness has helped more than one million people find solutions to deal with their problem debt. It is one of only three organisations commissioned by the Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) to deliver free debt advice in England and one of only two organisations appointed to administer debt relief orders DROs.