

Greater Manchester North County Scout Council

Hardship Fund Policy

Purpose / Overview

The Greater Manchester North (GMN) County Scout Council Hardship Fund is a discretionary fund that is available to support young people and leaders who are experiencing financial hardship. Finances should not be a barrier to being a Scout so the Hardship Policy is designed to ensure that all members within GMN can continue to participate in Scouting opportunities, regardless of any changes in their circumstances.

The fund is not aimed at financing whole district or group block applications purely to reduce the cost of a trip or activity for an individual experiencing hardship. The fund should also be regarded as supplementary to any fundraising efforts, rather than a request for the total amount required.

Your district or group should be the first port of call for help for those families experiencing financial hardship. As such, it is the expectation of the GMN Trustee Board that each district or group will have their own Hardship Policy in place.

We recognise however, that some districts and groups will already have huge strains on their resources. The primary consideration of the GMN Trustee Board Hardship Panel will always be the person; if they are a keen and active member, then we will do everything we can to enable them to continue their participation.

The hardship fund is a ring-fenced fund under the management of the GMN Trustee Board Hardship Panel.

What do we fund?

The Fund is to be used primarily for providing financial support to young people in Scouting, aged up to 25. Examples include subscriptions, uniform, activity equipment, activity/event attendance costs and other justifiable Scouting expenditure, at the discretion of the GMN Trustee Board Hardship Panel. The beneficiaries must be from families in financial hardship and be supported by their Group Lead Volunteer (GLV) or their 14 – 24 Team Leader.

Adult leaders from GMN County can also be supported, in exceptional cases of hardship, with the support of their GLV. The individual must demonstrate that they cannot raise the funds themselves and put forward a case for how Scouting will benefit from a grant being awarded.

Any member of GMN County with a particular financial need can apply. Financial need is defined as the difference between a particular cost, and what the applicant can afford to pay or raise.

GMN normally uses the financial acceptance criteria employed by many Education Authorities for free school meals. This provides an independent known benchmark as a guideline that can help make the best judgment of financial hardship. Priority will be given to individuals, or parents, in financial hardship, or who fulfil one or more of the criteria below:

- In receipt of free school meals.
- In receipt of Universal Credit, Income Support or Working Tax Credit.
- In receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance.
- Recent redundancy.
- Young carer and Looked after children.
- Convalescence after illness.
- Disability.
- Recent death of parent.
- Young person in part time work (with less time to fundraise).
- Young person in need of additional support in the form of a carer.

Commitment to Scouting

The applicant must demonstrate a commitment to their group. The following is a minimum:

- Membership of the Association.
- For adults, six months of regular attendance, confirmed by their relevant section lead volunteer, and all necessary training completed.

Dependent upon the need for the grant, feedback may be requested. For example, a recipient may be asked to share details of the experience or the expertise gained, to their own or other groups within the GMN County.

Applications

- Must be received at least two months prior to the funds being required. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as a last-minute opportunity), the GMN County Trustee Board Hardship Panel may consider an application submitted with a shorter timeframe.
- Must be supported by evidence of cost.
- Must be supported by evidence of financial hardship of the individual.
- Must show some fundraising attempts on the application form.

How to apply?

Before applying for a one-off or ongoing grant, applicants will need to answer the following questions:

- What the money is needed for?
- What are the benefits to the individual?
- Details and date that any grant is required?
- What local funds or other sources are available?

Any request for ongoing grants will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Once you have answers to these questions, then please complete the application form.

Please follow this link to download the application form: [GMN County Scout Council Hardship Fund Application Form](#)

Completed application forms should be sent by your GLV to your District Lead Volunteer who will then forward to the County Chairman: chairman@gmnscouts.org.uk **If concerns of Confidentiality or embarrassment are issues applications direct to the County Chairman are possible.**

To help us deal quickly with your application, please make sure you have satisfied all of the following:

- Allow at least two months for an application to be processed.
- Provide as much detail as possible on the application form.
- Only apply for future expenditure. Retrospective funding will not be awarded.
- Be prepared to provide any additional information if this is requested.

Once an application is received, you will receive an acknowledgment by email.

Payment

Preferably payment would be made directly by bank transfer from the Hardship / County Funds to the camp / event / treasurer.

Confidentiality

Information relating to individual hardship cases may be highly personal and as such will be treated with the strictest of confidentiality, in line with the Scout Association's GDPR Policy. Any application and follow up discussion of a hardship case will be recorded in confidential minutes.

Policy revision

Thanks to Pennine District for providing the original model documents for use by GMN County.

Date Presented to the County Trustees Board

18/7/2024

Date Approved

18/7/2024 (with minor changes – see updated September 2024 version)

Date Updated

9/9/24

Next Review Date

The July 2025 County Trustee Board Meeting