



Financial Support Policy

1. Purpose

We recognise that there are circumstances where members of The Scout Association may be unable to meet the financial commitments associated with Scouting activities and events. Where participation would be of clear benefit to the young person, this policy sets out the framework by which financial support may be considered.

All financial support is:

- Considered on a **case-by-case basis**
 - Subject to the **availability of funds**
 - Provided with the **primary consideration always being the young person**
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2. Principles

This policy is guided by the following principles:

- **Inclusion** – no young person should be excluded from Scouting due to financial hardship
 - **Equality and opportunity** – the policy will be operated in line with Scouts values and its commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities
 - **Dignity and respect** – discussions around finances will be handled sensitively
 - **Confidentiality** – personal financial information will be protected
 - **Proportionality** – information requested and support provided will be appropriate to the circumstances
 - **Good governance** – clear accountability, transparency, and trustee oversight will be maintained
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3. Leader Responsibility and Inclusive Planning

Leaders have a duty to ensure that the activities they plan and deliver are not excluding individuals due to cost.

Leaders should consider the cost of their activities, individually and collectively over the term or year, to minimise the possibility of the cost of activities becoming exclusive. Where cost pressures are identified, leaders should explore alternative approaches, use of Section Grants, or other mitigations before activities are finalised.

4. Scope of Support

The Financial Support Fund may support:

- Children and young people who are **looked after (in care)**
- Individuals experiencing **significant financial hardship**

Support may apply to:

- Subscriptions
- Camps and events
- Uniform
- Other Scouting-related costs where exclusion due to cost is a risk

Section Grants

A **Section Grant** is available to enable Section Leaders to offset the cost of activities that may otherwise become exclusive due to cost. Section Grants are distinct from individual hardship awards and are approved **in advance** of the activity concerned. Approval will follow the same financial thresholds as camps and events unless otherwise agreed by the Trustee Board.

5. Commitment to Scouting

Applicants should demonstrate a level of commitment to the Group that is reasonable and proportionate to the support requested. As a guide, this would normally include:

- Membership of The Scout Association
- A minimum of **six months' regular attendance**, confirmed by the relevant Section Leader
- Participation by parents, guardians, carers and/or the young person in Group activities and fundraising **where reasonably possible**

Inability to participate due to personal circumstances will not automatically disqualify an application.

6. Types of Financial Support

Financial support is normally provided on a **matched funding basis**, meaning the recipient is expected to make a contribution alongside the Group's support. In exceptional circumstances, support may be provided without matched funding.

Support for an individual will fall into **one** of the following categories:

6.1 Child in Care Support

Support may be provided to a child in care to enable broader participation in Scouting activities, helping to maximise the impact of social care funding allocated for the child.

Normally, the guardian will be asked to confirm in writing that the support provided by the Group enables funding to be used for other beneficial activities for the child. No financial assessment of the guardian's circumstances is required.

6.2 Hardship Support

Financial Circumstances

Applications for hardship support must demonstrate that financial hardship exists.

The Group may request relevant and proportionate information to understand the financial circumstances and assess the application. Leaders will provide guidance on what information is required and will handle requests sensitively. Applications cannot be considered if requested information is not provided.

Payment Method

Where possible, payments will be made **directly from Group funds to the camp or event budget**. Loans or deferred payments will be avoided.

7. Specific Areas of Support

Subscriptions

Subscriptions may be reduced at a rate agreed by the Group Trustee Board and, in exceptional circumstances, may be waived. All cases will be subject to **periodic review**, normally annually, recognising that personal circumstances may change.

Uniform

Support may be provided for the purchase of uniforms. The Group maintains a supply of used uniforms, which may be offered subject to availability.

8. Application Process

Applications should normally begin with a discussion between the applicant and:

- Their Section Leader, or
- The Group Lead Volunteer (GLV)

Applications may be initiated by a parent, guardian or carer, but will be progressed and managed within the Group by the Section Leader or Group Lead Volunteer to ensure consistency, confidentiality, and appropriate safeguarding.

Section Leaders may raise cases directly with the Group Lead Volunteer. Applicants will be advised of any additional information required once an initial request has been received.

9. Consideration and Decision-Making

Applications will initially be reviewed by the Group Lead Volunteer to assess the scale of support requested. A broad outline of the case may be discussed with the Group Chair or Treasurer to determine what further information is required.

In making decisions, consideration will be given to:

- The benefit to the young person's participation in Scouting
- The applicant's circumstances and evidence provided
- Fairness and consistency across the Group
- Available funds and the wider needs of the Group
- Any relevant risks, including safeguarding considerations

Conflicts of Interest

Any trustee or volunteer involved in an application, or closely connected to the applicant, must declare a conflict of interest and must not take part in the decision. The conflict and how it was managed will be recorded in the confidential record of the decision.

10. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Records

Information relating to financial support applications is highly sensitive and will be treated as strictly confidential.

Information will be shared only with those who need it to assess and administer support. Records will be kept securely and retained only as long as necessary for governance, audit and safeguarding purposes, after which they will be securely destroyed.

Any discussion of individual cases by the Trustee Board will be recorded in **Confidential Minutes**, separate from general meeting minutes.

For reasons of privacy, the level of financial support provided to individuals will not be disclosed separately in the Group's annual accounts.

Status

This policy is approved by the Group Trustee Board and will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with Scouts guidance and charity governance requirements.