

CIRCULATION	
INTERNAL	<input type="checkbox"/>
EXTERNAL	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Charitable Fund Procedure

**October 2021**

**Important**

Policies and procedures must be coordinated through the Business Development Team for compliance, auditing and control purposes. A Policy Registration Form must be completed before any revisions are made by contacting the Business Development Team at [NH.Policy@networkhg.org.uk](mailto:NH.Policy@networkhg.org.uk)

<b>Document status (/Draft/Final)</b>	<b>Final V1.3</b>
<b>Document reference</b>	
<b>Reason for review</b>	<b>Update to reflect current practice</b>
<b>Approved by (Officer)</b>	<b>Network Homes Board</b>

Document name: Charitable Grant Procedure	Status: Final	Page 1 of 9
Issue Date: December 2019	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: Amended November 2021

<b>Approved date</b>	<b>October 2020</b>	
<b>Effective from (Date)</b>	<b>October 2021</b>	
<b>Procedure author</b>	<b>Head of Resident Engagement and Corporate Experience</b>	
<b>Procedure owner</b>	Maria Moriarty	
<b>Accountable officer</b>	<b>Maria Moriarty</b>	
<b>Date of next review</b>	<b>1 October 2024</b>	
<b>Consultation: internal</b>	<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>	
<b>Consultation: residents</b>	<b>London &amp; Hertford Resident Panels; residents who attended “How do we give back to your community?” virtual event</b>	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</b>	<b>Date completed</b>	
	<b>Initial/ Full EIA</b>	

**Version Control – Change Record**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Reason for change</b>
22/10/2021	Network Cares Team	V1.1	Update to reflect current practice

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 2 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Definitions and Eligibility Criteria</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Charitable Funds Available</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Annual Cap</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>5. Emergency / Exceptional Applications</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. Prohibited uses of funds</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7. Charitable Fund Application Procedure and Decision Making</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8. Appeal</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>9. Roles and Responsibilities</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>10. Publication</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>11. Equality and Diversity</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>12. Review</b>	<b>13</b>

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 3 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure sets out how an application can be made to Network Homes for an allocation of funds from the Charitable Fund for identified beneficiaries. The following people/bodies can make an application:
- Network Homes residents;
  - Staff;
  - Volunteers;
  - Contractors;
  - community groups;
  - anyone working on behalf of Network.

This procedure also explains what criteria we use to reach decisions on applications made.

- 1.2 This procedure must be read alongside the Charitable Fund Policy and adopted in compliance with that policy. Charitable grant funds will only be granted to benefit those deemed eligible (beneficiaries). See section 2 below.
- 1.3 Those submitting an application to the Charitable Fund (applicants) may be independent or connected to prospective beneficiaries. Any applicant submitting an application to the charitable fund must do so in accordance with our other relevant policies, procedures and relevant legislation. For example, should a staff member be seeking to apply for an award to benefit a Network Homes resident known to them, they would also be obligated to declare this interest in accordance with Network's Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interest Procedure. Failing to do so may impact upon the success of the application as it will be noted that there has been a failure to appropriately adhere to existing Network policies and procedures by the Applicant.
- 1.4 The purpose of the Charitable Fund is to support residents who are experiencing hardship and to support beneficiaries to undertake a community event/activity/improvement project.

## 2. Definitions and Eligibility Criteria

- 2.1 An **Applicant** is the individual or collective applying for the Charitable Grant on behalf of a beneficiary. An applicant may be a proposed beneficiary, connected to or independent of the proposed beneficiary. The applicant must specify the relationship if any between them and the proposed beneficiaries.
- 2.2 **Beneficiaries** of the Charitable Grant must be either:
- 2.2.1 Network Homes resident(s) defined as 'any living person residing in a property owned or managed by Network Homes Limited or one of the subsidiary entities in the Network Homes Group'. This includes leaseholders or tenants.
  - 2.2.2 Someone (individual, corporate or collective) who is connected to Network

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 4 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

Homes by virtue of their community, employment, or other activities. For the avoidance of doubt, this can include community organisations, resident associations or other collectives who are seeking to undertake specific projects or activities in support of Network residents or communities.

2.3 A prospective beneficiary must also meet the “**Charitable Test**”, namely that the benefit to be awarded through or as a result of the charitable grant:

- 2.3.1 is not available to them through any statutory service or other means available;  
**and**
- 2.3.2 will promote or protect the housing needs of the resident or their community; **or**
- 2.3.3 will promote the relief of the aged, disabled or chronically sick.

2.4 Examples of applications or activities likely to be approved include:

- the provision of an activity or funds that protect from homelessness;
- Prevention of fuel or child poverty;
- Provision of food vouchers, where required;
- Provision of essentials for the home;
- Projects that may improve the local Network community or sustainability of a Network community.

2.5 All applications must be submitted in accordance with the process set out below. Should an application not be submitted in accordance with this process or compliant with the eligibility criteria it may not be deemed to have been validly submitted and may not be considered.

2.6 The **Charitable Fund Year** is the period during which charitable grant applications may be submitted and considered. It will be aligned to but may be shorter than any one financial year, determined by when charitable funds are available. When charitable funds become used up in that financial year, the charitable fund year is ‘closed’ and that will be the Charitable Fund Year for reporting purposes.

### 3. **Charitable Funds Available**

3.1 The Executive Leadership Team will determine the amount available during the Charitable Fund Year. This will be managed on an annual basis using the Charitable Fund procedure. Funds will be awarded on a ‘first come, first served basis’, according to the need of the applicant. For example if the funds have almost been exhausted within any given Charitable Fund Year, then those applicants who have the greatest need and have submitted their application before other applicants of similar need, will be awarded the grant.

3.2 Additional funds will be allocated to the fund through fundraising activities by Network Homes’ staff members.

3.3 The Network Cares Project team will monitor the level of award given during the Charitable

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 5 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

Fund Year ensuring that appropriate communication is issued when the funds are used up in any period. This then confirms the charitable fund is 'closed' until the following financial year.

3.4 Any applications received after the 'closure date' will need to be resubmitted when the next Charitable Grant Year commences.

#### **4. Annual Cap**

There are 2 types of application to the fund:

4.1 A community application for support i.e. supporting a school with a play area. There is a limit of £5000 for each community project within one grant year

4.2 The other type of application is where an individual is supported, (for example they have just moved in, have been living in a hostel and have no furniture. These types of applications are limited to a maximum claim of £1000 within one grant year, although occasionally a maximum claim can be increased but this is rare.

4.3 We would expect to only offer assistance to a resident once a year, but if a resident suffers another incidence of hardship or change in circumstances we would again consider supporting them through the fund'.

4.4 In exceptional circumstances, the annual cap may be exceeded by prior approval of the Executive Leadership Team.

#### **5 Emergency / exceptional applications**

5.1 There may be occasions where an application is made and the Charitable Test is not evidencable at that time, the annual cap is reached, or an emergency arises, and a request is made in exceptional circumstances.

5.2 In such circumstances, the Executive Leadership Team have discretion to consider and approve any applications received. All emergency / exceptional applications should be recorded as such, and where necessary, any outstanding information or evidence must be obtained as soon as practicable to be kept with and in support of the application.

5.3 Annually, the Executive Leadership Team will review the use of the Charitable Fund with particular regard to the frequency and nature of emergency / exceptional applications to ensure that the appropriate process is being adopted.

5.4 The Charitable Fund will also act as a vehicle for holding, accessing and administering of other (restricted) funds intended to serve similar purposes. Where this is the case, it will be ensured that any restrictions with regards to access and uses of allocated funds will be honoured (e.g. where funds may be restricted to a defined group of residents, geographical areas or types of support, etc). The conditions/restrictions will usually be stipulated at the point of transfer of said funds to the Charitable Fund.

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 6 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

## 6 Prohibited uses of funds

- 6.1 Except in an emergency, the relevant statutory agency should be requested or asked to provide for the beneficiaries needs where applicable. The applicant should be directed or assisted in obtaining the item/s or service. Local authority social services should provide basic living requirements and other items to meet the needs of the beneficiary. The charitable fund should not normally be used to fill the gap for services that should be provided by a statutory agency.
- 6.2 The charitable fund should not be utilised where insurance is in place and available for the benefit of the beneficiary. The applicant should be directed or assisted in obtaining the insurance as appropriate.

## 7 Charitable Fund Application Procedure and Decision Making

- 7.1 We have a range of checklists which cover each type of application and guide our decision-making process, these can be found on our Intranet Apollo page.
- 7.2 The funds will be accessed via the established payment protocols/methods (e.g., P2P, , business credit cards) with additional financial limits in place as set out as below. Although staff will be able to approve spending without overly zealous approval requirements, any spend will be scrutinised and staff will be held accountable if any part of the process set out below is not followed accordingly.
- 7.3 P2P codes: LA2 = E240, Account Code = 313000 (Community Training & Grants)
- 7.4 The following items will not be covered by the Charitable Fund:
- Living Room furniture, (excluding seating)
  - bedroom furniture (excluding beds and bedding)
  - soft furnishings
  - decorating
  - dishwashers
  - flooring, however, there may occasionally be exceptional circumstance that would enable us to help
  - replacement of faulty items which still work.

Every other request is carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. We have a separate arrears panel. This panel considers individual resident arrears cases which are presented by an Income Officer. It is not possible for a resident to apply for their arrears to be paid by the Charitable Fund.

- 7.5 Front-line staff who communicate with residents have been given permission to utilise the funds (e.g. Income, Voids & Lettings teams, Welfare Advisors, Neighbourhood Officers, etc). However, before making or promising any payments to our residents, staff must:

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 7 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

- 7.5.1 Ensure that they have the permission to access the funds; please see financial limits on 7.4 (below);
- 7.5.2 Complete the online form found on the Network Homes website;
- 7.5.3 Check the prioritisation table (on Apollo)
- 7.5.4 Check Northgate/Customer Hub to check the resident is in receipt of benefits;
- 7.5.5 Before approving the request, please check the service Directory to determine whether another agency may be better placed to help;
- 7.5.6 Discuss the case with their line manager or escalate the request further when the amount exceeds agreed limits;
- 7.5.7 Follow the relevant checklisst (see Apollo)
- 7.5.8 Determine how the funds will be used (e.g., what will be purchased by Network Homes).
- 7.5.9 Ensure they have access to a valid payment method(most purchases will be made through P2P).
- 7.5.10 Determine customer requirements, (if application approved) when and how the support will be provided (e.g., if ultimately purchased, when will the item be delivered and where).
- 7.5.11 Keep resident informed of progress.
- 7.5.12 Fill in the tracker spreadsheet where all charitable spending is logged.
- 7.5.13 Make a referral to the Welfare Team when required by completing a referral form

7.6 The following financial limits are currently in place for staff accessing the charitable fund:

- 7.6.1 Officer – can award payments of up to £200.
- 7.6.2 Team Leads/Managers – can award payments of up to £500.
- 7.6.3 Heads of Service – can award payments of up to £1,000.
- 7.6.4 Director – can award payments of up to £5,000.
- 7.6.5 Executive Leadership Team can award payment over £5,000.

7.7 The following financial limits are currently in place for applicants accessing the charitable fund:

- 7.5.1 When the required amount exceeds, for an individual resident request the financial limit is £1000 and for community projects the limit is £5,000 ;
- 7.5.2 and/or when one payment had already been made to the same household within a period of 12 months.
- 7.5.3 and/or if the line manager is not certain whether the use of funds falls within the criteria established in this procedure.

Then a written request will have to be made and approval sought from either the Network Cares project team or the ELT (as appropriate) through the process described below. Please note, requests must be made prior to mentioning the possibility of

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 8 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021



support to the resident.

- 7.6 Applications from non-staff members should be submitted via the specified form located on the Network Homes website. Staff members should follow through with enquiries made directly to them and should consider supporting a resident using the Charitable Fund Policy and the Network Cares project team can advise as necessary. The form will include the details of the following (as appropriate):
- 7.6.3 Applicant,
  - 7.6.4 Beneficiary,
  - 7.6.5 Relationship between the applicant and beneficiary as relevant.
  - 7.6.6 The basis upon which the eligibility criteria is satisfied with supporting evidence where available.
  - 7.6.7 Purpose: the amount or Network resource required to undertake the activity needed should the application be approved.
  - 7.6.8 The means by which the purpose will be achieved.
  - 7.6.9 The timescale by when the funds/resource is required.
- 7.7 The purpose (amount or activity) should be no more than is reasonably required to achieve the purpose.
- 7.8 Application forms should be completed online. Once submitted the form will be automatically routed to the Network Cares Project Team who will review the request and may ask for supporting evidence to be provided to the dedicated email [Networkcares@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:Networkcares@networkhomes.org.uk). Before approving the request, a benefit check should be completed, and the Service Directory should be checked to determine whether another Agency may be able to help.
- 7.9 The Project Team will seek to review applications weekly on a rota basis. The Project Team may:
- 7.9.3 Approve the application in full.
  - 7.9.4 Approve the application in part (for example reducing the amount of funds to be awarded from that which may be set out in the original application).
  - 7.9.5 Ask for more information or evidence to support the application and then re-review the application once the necessary information / evidence has been supplied (at the subsequent available charitable grant review meeting).
  - 7.9.6 Escalate the decision making to the Executive Leadership Team.
  - 7.9.7 Refuse the application providing the applicant with the outcome in writing.
- 7.10 Any exceptional / emergency application must be so marked on the application request. If an application is marked as an emergency, the Network Cares Project Team will seek to consider the application within three working days of receipt of the application although it gives no commitment to being able to do this. For this reason, applicants of emergency applications must always consider whether other statutory services are

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 9 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

better placed to support the application purpose.

7.11 A note of the decisions taken by the Network Cares Project Team and/or Executive Leadership Team, when considering charitable grant applications will be taken including the reasons for any decision made. This is achieved by:

- Completing the staff form
- Updating the resident
- Ensuring the Charitable Fund spreadsheet is up to date.

7.12 This will not be a minute of the full discussion. The decision and reasons will be shared with the applicant should the application be refused.

7.13 Once a decision has been made, the outcome will be communicated to the applicant in writing including any reporting requirements on the monitoring of the use of the charitable grant. The applicant will be responsible for notifying any beneficiaries who have been informed of the application. No commitment as to the success of any application is given. As such, applicants are encouraged to consider whether it is appropriate and in the best interests of the prospective beneficiaries to inform them of the application being submitted.

7.14 If the application is approved, the Network Cares Project Team will confirm the next steps needed to administer the award, identifying officers within Network Homes staff to support and administer the successful application as needed.

7.15 Any Purchase Orders will be raised using P2P and the online form updated.

7.16 Goods or services will be paid for by Network Homes and awarded to the beneficiary. Payments will not be made directly to the beneficiary's bank account except where the beneficiary is a community group or charitable organization.

## 8 Appeal

8.5 There is no formal appeal to a charitable grant decision once made. Should the application as submitted be refused and the applicant wishes for the decision to be reviewed on the decision being:

8.5.3 unreasonable, or

8.5.4 illegal, or

8.5.5 there having been some procedural impropriety in the decision making, representations to seek a re-review should be submitted by emailing [networkcares@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:networkcares@networkhomes.org.uk) clearly setting out which of these grounds is being relied upon and the evidence to support it.

8.6 Representations received will be considered by the Network Cares Project Team and

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 10 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

should they determine that the basis for the review does not satisfy any of the three grounds above, there will be no further review of the matter. Should the Project Team consider the review to be necessary under one of the above, it will be submitted to the Executive Leadership Team at their subsequent charitable grant review meeting. There is no basis upon which the applicant should consider this review may establish an alternative outcome.

## 9 Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 The Network Cares Project Team is responsible for:

- 9.1.1 Monitoring the use of applications made/granted/refused and report spending/benefits to the Executive Leadership Team on a monthly basis.
- 9.1.2 Ensuring decisions made in relation to any application are appropriately communicated to the applicant.
- 9.1.3 Annually measuring the impact/outcomes of the support provided including reviewing lessons learnt. The team will submit a report to the ELT.

9.2 The Executive Leadership Team is responsible for:

- 9.2.1 Approving this procedure and ensuring it is compliant with the Network Homes Board approved Charitable Fund Policy.
- 9.2.2 Ensuring the procedure is kept up to date and implemented across the business, making any necessary minor changes as is deemed appropriate to meet the purpose set out and ensuring that day to day activities are conducted to meet the policy requirements.
- 9.2.3 As set out in the Charitable Fund Policy, reviewing, and approving the annual plan to establish the means by which £100,000 will be raised/set aside each financial year.
- 9.2.4 Annually reviewing the Charitable grant applications approved for the year and the proposed means by which £100,000 will be raised / set aside for the Charitable grant to monitor its use and consider any learning to be adopted for the future years planning.

9.3 The Applicant is responsible for:

- 9.3.1 Ensuring the application is submitted complete and provide any further information or evidence as required.
- 9.3.2 Communicating the outcome of any application to any interested parties.
- 9.3.3 Reporting on the success of the Charitable fund award as determined by and to the Network Cares Project Team.

## 10 Publication

10.1 This procedure seeks to support Networks charitable objects and is therefore intended to

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 11 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

be read and shared as a public document, for residents to review. Network Homes residents are entitled and encouraged to apply for funding under this Charitable grant procedure. Further information on the policy and procedure will be made available on Network Homes website.

## 11 **Equality and Diversity**

11.1 Network Homes will apply this procedure consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any relevant characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

## 12 **Review**

12.1 This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law or practice.

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 12 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021

Document name: Charitable grant procedure	Status: V1.1	Page 13 of 11
Issue Date: April 2020	Next Review Date: October 2024	Revision Date: October 2021