**Hemel Hempstead District Scout Council Policy**

**on Support in a case of Hardship**

Revision 1.0

Date March 2015

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 **Hemel Hempstead District Scout Council Hardship Policy**

 **Background**

Hemel Hempstead District have decided to create a special fund which will encourage the growth of Scouting in our District. Our aim is to give every young person who wants the opportunity to be a Beaver, Cub, Scout, Explorer Scout and Network Scout the chance to do so, whatever their circumstances may be.

It is the view of the District Executive that Groups should be the first port of call for help to those families experiencing financial hardship. As such, it is the expectation of the District that each group with will have in place their own Hardship Policy.

We recognise, however, some groups will already have huge strains on their resources. We aim to ensure that families experiencing difficulties will have an equal opportunity of obtaining support regardless of where they live in the District.

**What do we fund?**

Things we intend to be able to fund include:

* The cost of a youth member attending an activity that they may not otherwise be able to take part in
* Support for youth & adult members in financial hardship to purchase uniform
* Group subscriptions (up to a maximum of 3 terms), where the group itself is unable to provide assistance

**Things we will not fund:**

* General scouting equipment e.g. camping and other activity equipment, craft materials and scout publications.
* Grants for a whole Section or Group to undertake an activity
* The repayment of loans, deficits on events or any kind of retrospective funding
* Contributions to international scouting expeditions

The above lists are not exhaustive and will be regularly reviewed by the Hemel Hempstead District Executive Committee.

**How to apply**

What is most important is to have a clear idea of what you want funded and why, what are the total costs, how much you are able to contribute yourself and how much you are asking for. If you do not have the balance, where will it come from?

You can apply by contacting the District Commissioner **dc@hemel-scouts.co.uk** or by downloading the form from the District website and returning it to the above named person.

All applications are confidential and names will not be disclosed.

All applications will be considered by the representative of the District’s Executive Committee, generally via e-mail/telephone on a no names basis. The Treasurer will report to the Exec each meeting on the number of people helped and by how much without revealing any details of the individuals concerned. Current limits applied by the District Executive are based on the Ralph Reader Memorial Fund criteria, as such;

**Maximum grants of £200 per individual for camp fees, or 50% of costs whichever is the lower amount. For other purposes a maximum grant of 50% of costs is the norm. Matched funding is always sought where possible. Applicants must provide evidence of financial hardship for beneficiaries.**

Please don’t assume the answer will automatically be “Yes‟ – funds are limited and applications will be considered on merit and evidence submitted, remember applications may often be in competition with others equally or even more deserving than yours. If you are not sure about anything, ask!

**How will the Fund be financed?**

The Fund will be financed from the District Levy and from outside sources.

**Advice on individual ‘financial hardship’ from HQ – (for exec members to refer to)**

Financial hardship can be a difficult subject for individuals to discuss within their Group with other parents and Leaders. Currently the District have decided to define in line with the criteria used by the Development Grants Board, this is as follows;

Evidence that can help make a best judgement of financial hardship would be if a family is in receipt of one of the following:

* Free school meals – Not including Universal Infant Free School Meals\*
* Income Support
* Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
* An income-related employment and support allowance
* Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
* Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have
* an annual income that does not exceed £16,190 as assessed by Her Majesty's
* Revenue and Customs\*
* The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

\*Free school meals are provided to all pupils in primary schools in a few areas of the country, so the other indicators are more valid in these circumstances.

Extract from Parents’ frequently asked questions about scouting (Scout Association website):