
VRF grant making policy

Introduction

The Vicar's Relief Fund (VRF) is a fund established by St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity (registered charity number:1156305). The VRF helps homeless and vulnerably housed people through small-sum, rapid response grants to prevent eviction or to help people access accommodation.

Who do we aim to support?

The VRF aims to support those individuals across the UK who need help with: Rent arrears (including a DRO and bankruptcy fees), service charge arrears, or money to pay for a hoarding clean up - where it will prevent eviction. A contribution towards a rent deposit, rent in advance, admin fees, ID, moving costs or temporary accommodation - where it will help someone access accommodation.

The number of individuals the VRF can support is limited by the amount of funding available for distribution each day. Priority is given to applicants who are currently homeless or are facing imminent threat of homelessness.

How much funding is available from the VRF?

The maximum amount available under the VRF in respect of each individual requiring our support is limited to £350 per 12 month period, except in respect of the items set out below for which we set different maximum amounts as follows:

Identification: £90; and

Administration fees: £100.

Applicants are entitled to apply to the VRF for help towards different items but each applicant shall not be entitled to receive more than £350 within any 12 month period. The 12 month period is calculated from the date an application is received and is not calculated on a calendar year basis.

Who can make an application?

All applications must be submitted on behalf of an individual in need of financial support from the VRF by frontline workers who have registered for an account on our [VRF portal](#) and who are employed by agencies working to alleviate and prevent homelessness. Such agencies include, but are not limited to, charities, housing associations, Citizen's Advice Bureaux or statutory agencies such as the National Probation Service.

How to make an application

Frontline workers will need to apply to [register with the VRF](#) using their work email address (or where relevant a general email address for the agency) and provide details about the agency that employs them. We may carry out the following checks on publicly available resources in order to verify the identity of the agency and check its eligibility:

- checking the Charity Commission's Register of Charity/Scottish Charity Register;
- checking the register of companies at Companies House;
- checking the register of approved social housing providers maintained by the Homes and Communities Agency; and
- checking the agency's website.

We will email frontline workers directly on the work email address they have supplied to confirm completion of their registration and to provide log in details.

Once registered, frontline workers will need to log on to our portal and complete the online application form on behalf of the individual requiring support from the VRF. Please note that we cannot accept applications from volunteers. Frontline workers should carefully read our VRF terms and conditions, privacy statement and FAQ before commencing and submitting an application.

Frontline workers will need to provide the following basic information on the application form about the individual requiring support:

- Name of individual
- Date of birth
- Employment status
- Household circumstances
- Residency status
- Current accommodation type
- Support needs
- Postcode of current address (as appropriate)
- Purpose of grant

We also request equal opportunities information but support workers are not obliged to provide this information and it is not used to assess grant recipients. Once the application has been submitted by a frontline worker, we will acknowledge receipt by email.

Decision-making process

We have a maximum daily budget from which we can award grants. All applications that have been received on any given working day are reviewed by our team usually within five working days. Applications will be reviewed on their individual merit in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out above. We endeavour to email frontline workers with our decision within five working days of receipt of the application.

Where an application is successful, the frontline worker will also receive a paper copy of the decision and a cheque, or an email and BACS payment within five working days of submitting the application.

Appeals and re-submissions

Please note that our decision on whether to grant funding is final. Unfortunately, due to the high number of applications that we receive and our limited capacity, we are unable to respond to requests for re-considerations and we are unable to process an application that is re-submitted.

Submitting a new application for the same client

We are happy to receive a new application in respect of the same individual, regardless of whether their original application was successful or not, provided that the following two conditions are satisfied:

the applicant will not have received more than £350 in total of VRF funding within the previous 12 months (calculated from the date of their new application); and the applicant is applying for funding for a different purpose under the new application (for example rent arrears).

Evidence of expenditure

Once the funds have been spent, you must provide documentary evidence to the VRF that the funds have been used appropriately. This must be done by uploading it onto your original online application form. Examples of acceptable evidence can be seen [on our website](#).

Equal opportunities

We recognise that the needs of homeless or people at risk of homelessness are diverse and often urgent. We are committed to equality of opportunity and seek to challenge and respond to disadvantage through the VRF.

Further information

For further information about the VRF, please contact:

The Vicar's Relief Fund

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