

## 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 those who are homeless or vulnerably housed through small-sum, rapid response grants to prevent eviction or access accommodation.

### Who do we aim to support?

The VRF aims to support those individuals across the UK who need help with:

**Preventing Eviction:** 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.

**Accessing Accommodation:** a contribution towards a rent deposit, rent in advance, 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.

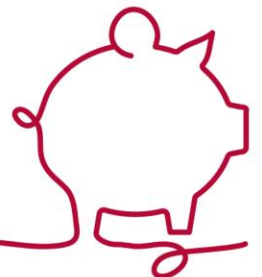
### How much funding is available from the VRFEF?

The maximum amount available under the VRF in respect of each individual requiring our support is limited to £500 per 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 are employed in a paid capacity 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

The frontline worker must first undergo our new user registration process, which involves creating an account with us using their work email address and submitting a New User Registration Form via our applications portal. 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.

In order to promote the safety and wellbeing of clients we give grants to, we can only accept applications from frontline workers whose organisation has a safeguarding policy and who have undertaken safeguarding training within the last 3 years.

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. 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
- Current and proposed accommodation type
- Support needs
- Anticipated outcomes of receiving the grant
- Postcode of current address (as appropriate)
- Purpose of grant

We also request equality and diversity 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.

Frontline workers will also need to provide evidence of the cost they are applying for at the point of application. Details about the evidence we need to see and the formats we can accept can be found on our website.

## **Decision-making process**

We have a maximum monthly budget from which we can award grants. The VRF portal is open to receive applications on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, between 9am and 12 noon (excluding Bank Holidays). 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 three working days of receipt of the application, however this depends on our capacity at any given time and may be subject to change.

Where an application is successful, BACS payment will be made within three working days of the frontline worker being notified of the outcome.

## **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 unsuccessful 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 condition is satisfied:

- the applicant will not have received more than £500 in total of VRF funding within the previous 12 months (calculated from the date of their new application)

## **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.

## **Equality and diversity**

We recognise that the needs of people who are homeless or are 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:

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