



VRF Grant Making Policy

Introduction

The Vicar's Relief Fund (VRF) was established by St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity (registered charity number: 1156305). The VRF provides crisis grants via frontline workers to individuals at risk of, or currently experiencing, homelessness. Grants are given to prevent eviction or help access accommodation.

Who do we aim to support?

VRF grants are open to individuals across all 4 Nations of 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, clearing rent arrears to access social housing, or emergency / temporary accommodation - where it will directly enable the client to access accommodation.

We may also apply discretion to consider awarding a grant for items / costs not included above, if there is clear evidence the grant will prevent eviction or help access accommodation. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The number of individuals the VRF can award grants to is limited by the amount of funding available. We reserve the right to decline on budget in line with budget restrictions. In this scenario, priority is given to applicants who are currently homeless, or at imminent risk of, homelessness.

Please note that in no circumstances can a VRF grant be transferred to another client or be used for purposes different to those set out in the application form.

We understand that sometimes you may apply for a client to access a property which then falls through. In this instance, please email us for approval to transfer the grant to a different property.

How much funding is available from the VRF?

We will consider paying up to:

- £350 for Preventing Eviction grants.
- £500 for Accessing Accommodation grants.

You can apply for more than one grant for the same client. However, the maximum amount we can award to any one client in any 12-month period is £500. The 12-month period is calculated from the date the initial application is received and is not calculated on a calendar year basis.

We reserve the right to use our discretion to award beyond our maximum amount in exceptional instances. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

We actively encourage use of the VRF and place no limits on the number of applications each frontline worker or organisation can make. For learning purposes, we will however be in touch with you / your organisation if a significant amount of funding has been awarded over a 3-month period.

Who can make an application?

All applications must be submitted by a frontline worker on behalf of the individual in need of financial support from the VRF.

To register to make VRF applications, you must:

- be employed by a constituted organisation that may be a charity, company, CIC, CIO, or statutory organisation.
- provide direct support to people who may be experiencing homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- have the best interest of the people you are applying on behalf of.

You cannot register with the VRF if you are:

- a volunteer or in an unpaid role.
- employed by an organisation that is not registered with the relevant UK authorities such as (in England) the Charity Commission or Companies House or if a constituted group cannot provide a constitution with an asset lock.
- not providing direct support to people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.
- intending to apply on behalf of friends or family.
- using a non-work email address (e.g. hotmail or yahoo) unless we can establish that the organisation is bona fide (i.e. is registered with the relevant UK authorities) and the worker uses this email address for work only

For every new organisation applying to the VRF we will carry out the following checks:

- Charity Commission's Register of Charity;
- Register of companies at Companies House;
- Register of approved social housing providers maintained by the HCA
- Your organisation's website.

If the checks reveal that your organisation has not met regulatory requirements (i.e. submitting annual accounts) or that your organisation is under investigation, you will not be able to register with the VRF.

NB: If you are already registered your account will be deactivated if the above the eligibility criteria are not met.

In order to promote the safety and wellbeing of clients we can only accept applications from frontline workers:

- whose organisation has a safeguarding policy reviewed within the last 3 years and
- who have undertaken safeguarding training with their current employer within the last 3 years.

We will contact you to provide updated safeguarding policies and training dates when either or both of these are over 3 years old.

If you meet the eligibility criteria, we will endeavour to process your application within 5 working days so that you can then apply for a VRF grant.

How to make an application

You are required to apply for an account via our VRF portal. This will involve filling out a 'New User Registration Form' with details about yourself and the organisation you are employed by. You will not be able to make a grant application until this form is submitted and approved by the VRF team.

Accounts must not be shared. Each employee who requires access to the VRF portal must register for and request their own individual account. Accounts must be registered to email addresses that are individualised and have an organisation specific domain name. Where relevant we may accept a general email address for the agency, such as for employees of domestic abuse agencies.

We will email you directly on the work email address you have supplied to confirm completion of your account authorisation.

Once registered, you will need to log on to our portal and complete the online grant application form on behalf of the individual requiring financial support from the VRF. You must gain consent from the person you are applying on behalf of. We cannot accept or assess any applications where consent has not been obtained using the VRF consent form.

You should carefully read our VRF [terms and conditions](#), [privacy statement](#), [help guides](#) and [FAQs](#) before making an application.

Decision-making process

All applications that are submitted on any given working day are reviewed by our team, usually within five working days. Applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the eligibility criteria set out above.

After an application is reviewed, our team will email you and your line manager with a decision.

Please note that we do not consider funding for:

- Items / costs that have already been paid for.
- Rent in advance / deposit costs where the client has already moved into the accommodation.

Where an application is successful, you will receive an email with an offer letter attached, containing details of the payment date and confirmation of the BACS details.

All payments will be made to the Frontline workers organisation, service/housing providers or to private landlords. Payments will not be paid directly into a client's or frontline worker's bank account.

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.

To keep our records and database as efficient as possible, we will delete any New User Registration Forms and VRF applications that are more than 3 months old and have not been submitted / resubmitted. Please submit / resubmit any grant applications within 3 months if the funding is still needed.

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

Evidence of expenditure

Once the funds have been spent, you must provide evidence of expenditure to the VRF that the funds have been used as stated in the application.

Evidence must be provided within 8 weeks of the grant being paid. Evidence is required for all grants, even if we paid the funds directly into the applicant organisation's bank account. This must be uploaded to the reporting form, which is attached to the original application form within the application portal.

A breakdown of the evidence we accept for each grant category and instructions on how to upload it to your application can be found on our [Help Page](#) under the heading Post-Grant Evidence.



Charity

Equal opportunities

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, we recommend visiting the [VRF web page](#) and our [Help Page](#). Otherwise, please contact:

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