

24th Hastings Scout Group

Hardship Policy

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Date of next review	February 2027

1. General Statement of policy

We recognise that there are circumstances where the parents, guardians or carers of members of the 24th Hastings Scout Group may be unable to meet the financial commitments of Scouting, but their participation would be both deserving and of significant benefit to them. This Hardship Policy outlines the framework for handling cases of financial hardship.

Hardship cases are always considered on a case-by-case basis, and only where sufficient funds are available.

2. Hardship Fund

The Group has set up a separate bank account, which is known as the Hardship Fund. Any surplus from camps or activities will be transferred to this Fund, with the allocation of monies from the Fund to follow the process as set out below.

3. Implementation

When a young person's parents, guardians or carers approach the Group, their Section Leader or the Group Scout Leader should take note of the specific circumstances with reference to the request and pass this detail on to the Group Trustee Board.

The Trustee Board will then review the request in line with this policy, taking into account the criteria set out in sections 4 and 5 below and the amount of available money in the Hardship Fund.

The Trustee Board may also consult with the young person's parents, guardians or carers as well as the Section Leader.

The Trustee Board will have final approval on the amount of support available. All requests for further support must also be reviewed and agreed by the Trustee Board.

The Trustee Board will provide full and transparent detail of the rationale behind their decision to award each specific amount. The primary consideration must always be the young person: if they are keen to join the Group or are active members, then the Trustee Board should do everything it can to enable the young person to participate.

4. Commitment to Scouting

The applicant must show a regular commitment to 24th Hastings Scout Group and join the Scout Association.

5. Financial situation

Support for members in financial hardship is available to:

- Meet subscription payments
- Attend camps and/or events in the UK or abroad
- Purchase uniform
- Provide support for individual members with special needs to participate in Scouting
- Provide a one-off section grant for activities and/or camps. This should be administered by the Group's Treasurer and agreed by the Trustee Board.

Evidence that can help make the best judgement of financial hardship would be if a family is in receipt of, but not limited to, one of the following:

- 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
- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit

6. Payment options

Where the Trustee Board approves a request for support, the Group Scout Leader or Treasurer will ensure the funds are transferred to pay for the items or events as necessary.

7. Subscriptions

The Group's Treasurer can amend the subscription amount requested on OSM to factor the reduction of subscriptions for young people in receipt of funding.

Any reduction in subscriptions will be reviewed each term to assess whether the arrangement should continue.

8. Confidentiality

Information relating to individual hardship cases is often highly personal and is treated as strictly confidential. Any record of discussion of a hardship case at Trustee Board meetings will be reported in confidential minutes, separate to the normal minutes.

9. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually.