



Mersey Weaver Scout District

MWSD Hardship Fund

What is the MWSD Hardship Fund?

The MWSD Hardship Fund is a grant-giving fund to enable adults and young people in hardship to participate in MWSD activities for example attending a national or international scouting event.

The MWSD Hardship Fund is drawn from the MWSD reserves built up from fund raising, donations and bequests and other sources of funding. Both adults and young people are eligible for this fund.

The MWSD team wish to promote adventurous, innovative, high-quality scouting events accessible to all. The MWSD Hardship Fund endeavours to ensure that cost is not a barrier to young people and leaders in accessing these transformational experiences.

What can be funded:

The fund can be used to fund any individual from the Mersey Weaver Scout District taking part in a scouting event or activity.

We may fund up to 50% of the cost of the event, up to a maximum of £500, per individual.

The fund is not aimed at financing whole group block applications purely to reduce the cost of the trip overall, unless the entire group is in hardship, in which case it will be necessary to detail how each individual member meets the criteria.

Who can apply?

Any member of The Mersey Weaver Scout District with a particular financial need can apply; (financial need is defined as the difference between what it costs to attend and what the applicant can afford to pay). Priority will be given to individuals who fulfil one or more of the criteria below:

- Young Carers
- Child/ Young Person in care
- Recent death of Parent (within 12 months)
- In receipt of Job Seekers Allowance /Benefits
- Convalescence after illness
- In receipt of Free School Meals
- Physical/mental health issues (applicants own)
- Recent redundancy (of applicant or next of kin, within 12 months)
- Total household income level below £23,000 (in line with Gilwell fund)
- Young person in Part Time work (less time to fundraise)
- Young person in need of additional support in the form of a carer whilst abroad.

The Process.

The process for applications is as follows:

- 1 Research the activity you are undertaking and produce a budget and costs for the young people attending
- 2 Ask/determine if prospective attendees are in a situation of financial hardship as defined above.

www.merseyweaverscouts.org.uk
Registered Charity no. 1145482

MWSD Hardship Fund rev4 Nov 2017
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- 3 Gather evidence of the individual's financial hardship
- 4 Complete an application form and send it the District Executive
- 5 A decision will be made roughly 6 weeks from the date of any application. If the application is successful the applicant will be informed of the amount the Executive will contribute. The funds will be paid to the event organisers; If unsuccessful the applicant will be informed why funding was not provided.
- 6 The applicant will be required to submit a report about the event or activity within 6 months of the event taking place.
- 7 Should the event make a surplus a donation back to the MWSD Hardship Fund will be expected to help other members in the future.

Applications must:

- Be received at least 2 calendar months prior to an event taking place, retrospective or late applications will not be considered
- Be supported by evidence of costs
- Be supported by evidence of the financial hardship of the individual. Proof must take the form of an official document or a letter (on headed paper) from a professional (i.e., Doctor, Head teacher, Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Advisers).
- Show some fundraising attempts on the application form, the MWSD Hardship Fund is designed to be supplementary to an individual's fundraising efforts rather than their total undertaking.

Note that when applications are received from individuals from Groups within the district, the MWSD Executive will expect to see evidence as to why the resources of the Groups cannot be used to support any such hardship. As a minimum this would take account of the financial status of the Group and also require evidence of the hardship being considered within the Group Executive.

How to apply for a funding

Before applying to the MWSD Executive for funding, think about these questions:

- What do you want the money for? How will it benefit local Scouting?
- If your application is for a specific event, will the application be received at least two months before the event?
- Have you included the date of the event on your application form?
- Have you checked if local funds or other sources are available?
- Where will additional (matching) funding be found?

Once you have found the answers to these questions please complete the application form. To help us deal quickly with your application, please make you sure you have satisfied all of the steps in this checklist.

- Complete the application form as fully as possible according to the guidelines provided
- Only apply for future expenditure (retrospective funding will not be awarded)
- Check that the amount applied for can be match funded
- Allow at least 6 weeks for the application to be processed.
- Get the form signed by the relevant people
- Attach any evidence to support the application
- Be prepared to provide any additional information if it is requested

Once an application is received you will receive an acknowledgment by email from the MWSD Executive

Advice on individual 'financial hardship'

The fund will allow us to support individual members in 'financial hardship', something which can be a difficult subject to discuss with young people, parents and leaders. Young people and adults who are carers or are considered 'looked after children' (in care) would be eligible.

Evidence that can help make best judgement of 'financial hardship' would be if a family is in receipt of 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 (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*
- Working tax credit
- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

*Free school meals are provided to all pupils in the lower years of primary schools in England and Wales, so the other indicators are more valid in these circumstances