

## Hertfordshire Children's Fund

### Guidance Notes

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## About the Fund:

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Started in 1996, Hertfordshire Children's Fund has been providing effective, practical support to disadvantaged children (aged 0-16) and their families in Hertfordshire by providing grants of up to £300 for household essentials such as washing machines, cookers and beds to ensure they can keep their children healthy, safe and clean.

The Fund has managed to build up a small endowment which ensures we can continue to make grants each year. However, it still relies heavily on donations from individuals, companies and other supporters in order to make grants at its current levels of between £12,000 - £15,000 per year.

If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in supporting the Fund by making a donation or fundraising on our behalf, we'd love to hear from you!

## Who can apply?

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**Applications must come from a worker or trained volunteer who is part of an organisation that is supporting the family or young person and is capable of assessing their needs.**

**If the application is successful, the payment will be made to the organisation so they must be able and prepared to administer and supervise the grant on our behalf.**

For example, applications are welcomed from those working for:

- Hertfordshire County Council Social Services
- Children's Centres
- Housing associations
- Charitable and voluntary groups e.g. debt advice agencies, family support etc.

*Please note: We will only discuss the application with that professional and unfortunately are unable to enter into discussions with or provide direct support to the applicant and/or their family during the application process.*

If you are unsure whether you or your organisation are eligible to apply, please contact the grants team on 01707 251351.

If the family are not currently being supported by an organisation, we suggest they contact Herts Help on 0300 123 4044 who will be able to signpost them to relevant sources of support.

## **What we will fund:**

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Hertfordshire Children's Fund grants are made primarily for the benefit of the child/children and can cover items including:

- Beds and bedding
- White goods including
  - Fridge
  - Freezer
  - Cooker
  - Washing Machine
  - Heated Airers
- Baby equipment including
  - Stair gates
  - Buggy
  - Bed guards
- Specialist equipment for children with special needs

## **What we will not fund:**

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Requests for the following items will automatically be rejected:

- Items that have already been purchased
- Debt repayments
- Clothing or school uniform
- Holidays or school trips
- Carpeting, curtains or other soft furnishings
- General furniture including wardrobes, drawers, tables, sofas etc.
- Gardening equipment
- Tumble driers

## **How to apply:**

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- Applications must be made using the standard application form – **please do not include a covering letter**, there is ample space for the required information within the form.
- All sections must be completed – if there is any information missing, the application will not be considered.
- Applications should be typed. Hand written applications will not be accepted.
- The application form must be signed by both the referring worker/volunteer and the main carer/applicant.
- Completed applications should be returned
  - by email to [grants@hertscf.org.uk](mailto:grants@hertscf.org.uk) (including a scanned copy of the signed declaration)
  - by post addressed to Hertfordshire Children's Fund, Hertfordshire Community Foundation, Foundation House, 2-4 Forum Place, Fiddlebridge Lane, Hatfield, AL10 ORN

## What happens after the application is submitted?

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- Once the application has been received, the referrer will get an email confirming receipt, and a reference number – please use this number in all communications regarding the application. If you do not get this confirmation email within 3 days of submitting your application please call 01707 251351
- Applications will go to the Hertfordshire Children's Fund Panel who meet monthly, usually in the last week of the month, where the requests will be discussed and decisions made.
- If the application is successful:
  - the referring worker/volunteer will be sent a letter and accompanying cheque with details of what it can be spent on.
  - it is the professional's responsibility to ensure the money is used on what was agreed and report back to the Foundation when the item(s) have been purchased. We ask that they confirm receipt of the cheque within two weeks and assist the family to complete the purchase of the item within three months otherwise the cheque will be cancelled.
- If the application is unsuccessful:
  - the referring worker will receive a letter or email informing them of the outcome. We will do our best to provide feedback on why the grant was rejected.
  - The referrer/applicant can submit another application if they wish

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## Application FAQs

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### Where can I get a copy of the application form and guidelines?

Both the application form and the guidelines are available on the HCF website here:

[www.hertscf.org.uk/grants](http://www.hertscf.org.uk/grants)

Please check the website before you apply to make sure you have the most current version of the application form and guidelines and check the fund is still accepting applications (we do occasionally have to close the fund for short periods while we raise more funds).

### I want to make an application on behalf of a family I'm working with but the organisation I work/volunteer for can't/won't take the payment. What can I do?

We do prefer for payments to be made to the referring organisation in order for them to be able to supervise the purchase of the item(s). However, we are aware this isn't always possible so in certain circumstances we will consider making the cheque out directly to the suppliers.

If your organisation can't take the payment, please send a covering email with your application explaining why it isn't possible and provide details of who any payment should be made out to if the application is successful.

Please note, we will not make payments directly to the individual applicants.

**I have already submitted an application on behalf of one family I'm working with and am still awaiting the outcome, can I submit another application for a different family?**

No, we prefer it if referring workers only have one active application at a time. If the application is successful and a grant is awarded, you will be able to submit another application as soon as we have received the proof of purchase for the previous one. If the application is unsuccessful, you can submit another application straight away.

**I submitted an application over a week ago but haven't heard anything?**

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all applications within 5 working days. If you haven't heard from us within that time, please email [grants@hertscf.org.uk](mailto:grants@hertscf.org.uk) or call 01707 251351.

**How long will it take to find out if the application has been successful?**

Applications to the Hertfordshire Children's Fund are reviewed on a rolling basis. We do our best to review applications as quickly and aim to make sure you have a decision within a month, but it is often much quicker than that.

**The family I'm working with need more than we can apply for from the Hertfordshire Children's Fund, do you know of any other sources of funding/support we could try?**

We're aware that many of the families seeking support through the Hertfordshire Children's Fund need more help than we are able to provide. As a result we try to keep track of other sources of support or information that may be useful and share them here.

If you know of any organisation or funding programme that may be useful to those applying to the Children's Fund, please let us know and we'll include it below.

**Funding:**

- Family Action (national) – [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)
- The Buttle Trust (national) – [www.buttleuk.org](http://www.buttleuk.org)
- New Life Charity (national) - <http://www.newlifecharity.co.uk/local/index.php>
- Always Look on the Bright Side of Life (national) - <http://www.thebrightsideoflife.org.uk/>
- Turn2Us - <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>
- Glasspool Charity Trust (national) <http://www.glasspool.org.uk/home/homepage>
- Hertfordshire Charity for Deprived Children (Countywide) <http://mgtact0.wixsite.com/herts-charity-child>
- Wellfield Trust (Hatfield) - <http://wellfieldtrust.co.uk/>
- Dacorum Community Trust (Dacorum) - <http://www.dctrust.org.uk/>
- Stevenage Community Trust (Stevenage) - <http://stevenagecommunitytrust.org/>
- Harpenden Trust (Harpenden) - <http://theharpendentrust.org.uk/>



- Bowley Charity (Watford/Three Rivers) - <http://www.bowleycharity.btck.co.uk/>
- Charlie's Gift (Herts, Beds, Bucks) <https://www.charliesgift.co.uk/>
- The Olive Branch Network <https://www.theolivebranchnetwork.org.uk/>

#### **Additional Support:**

- Herts Help – 0300 123 4044
- Citizens Advice - [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- Foodbanks – details of local foodbanks are available on [www.HertsDirect.org](http://www.HertsDirect.org)

#### **Second hand furniture:**

- Freecycle - <http://uk.freecycle.org/>
- Gumtree - <https://www.gumtree.com/>
- PreLoved - <http://www.preloved.co.uk/>
- Emmaus - <https://www.emmaus.org.uk/>
- Furniture ReUse Network – [www.frn.org.uk](http://www.frn.org.uk)

**I want to apply for a Hertfordshire Children's Fund grant for my child/children but we aren't currently being supported by anyone, can I apply directly?**

We're afraid not. Applications to the Hertfordshire Children's Fund have to come through a referring worker/volunteer who are working with the family on behalf of a recognised organisation.

We suggest you contact Herts Help (0300 123 4044) who may be able to signpost you to sources of support.

If you are in financial difficulty, you could also try contacting your local Citizens Advice Bureau. Visit their website at <http://www.hcas.org.uk/> or contact the advice line on 03444 111 444 (10am-4pm Monday to Friday)

If you have a young family (pregnant or with a child under 5 years old), you could try contacting your local Children's Centre for support. Find your local centre here:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/childcare-and-advice-for-parents/childrens-centres/childrens-centres.aspx>

## Application Form – Additional Guidance Notes

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### Section 1 – Referring Organisation

All applications must come from a professional working for a recognised local organisation.

If a grant is awarded, the cheques will be made payable to the organisation for them to administer and supervise so please make sure you include the name of the account the cheque needs to be made out to.

### Section 2 – Referrer Contact Details

Please use this section to tell us the contact details of the worker/volunteer who is making the request on behalf of the applicant.

A team name is only required if appropriate and useful for addressing communications to ensure they reach the right person e.g. Children's Safeguarding Team.

The name and contact number of the referrers line manager should be included so that we have an alternative point of contact should we be unable to get hold of the referrer directly.

Completing the question about how you heard about the Children's Fund is much appreciated and helps us target any promotional activity to ensure we are reaching those most in need.

### Section 3 – Applicant details

Please enter the details of the main carer of the children and all the children/young people living in the household.

If there are other people living in the household e.g. a partner or grandparent, please include their details in the relevant section including name and relationship to applicant.

If any of the family have been in care, please include some information e.g. why they were in care, how long for and when they left, as this may enable us to access other funding to support the family.

### Section 4 – Items requested

Please use this section to indicate which items the funding is being requested for.

The maximum grant available from the Hertfordshire Children's Fund is normally £300 but please be aware that many grants are made for less than that – there is no guaranteed standard amount.

Wherever possible, the panel prefer to fund the total cost of the item(s). If you request a number of items the panel may decide to only fund certain items as they feel appropriate but if you list the items in order of priority (most needed first), they will take this into consideration when making their decision.

If the request is for a contribution to an item that costs more than £300, the panel can still consider it but will want to know where the rest of the funding is coming from and whether it has been secured so please include all relevant information in the box provided.

## Section 5 – Financial information

Please complete this section as fully and clearly as possible, ensuring all figures are weekly OR monthly, not a combination of both.

In the “Debts” section, please enter the weekly amounts being paid, not the total amount owed. The details about the total amount owed and how long it will take to be paid off should be included in the relevant part of Section 6 – Supporting information.

The panel will look at this information to help them assess the need so please make sure they provide an accurate picture of the family’s financial situation.

If you need to explain any elements of the income e.g. if utility costs are high due to being on a pre-paid meter having to have the heating on more due to illness or if the client is in arrears (in which case it would be useful for you to include details of how they came to be in arrears, how much is owed and how much is being paid off each week, there is the opportunity to do this in the relevant space in Section 6.

The panel can only work with the information provided – if the financial information is incomplete, inaccurate or does not add up, this may result in the application being declined.

## Section 6 – Supporting information

This is one of the most important sections of the application form and provides the opportunity to explain why the children are in need of the grant and how it will help them.

Please include as much information as you can. Below is some guidance to help with some of the questions for this section

- Which child/children the grant is for and what issues/crisis they are currently facing – this could include
  - any medical , behavioural or emotional issues being faced by the child/children
  - domestic issues including any challenging family circumstances, poor physical/mental health of main carer
  - Other issues such as housing difficulties etc.
  - Whether they are subject to a Child Protection plan or similar. If so, please include any relevant info including which child it refers to
- What other support is being provided. This could include:
  - Support from other agencies such as CABs, Debt Centres, Children’s Centres etc.
  - Support from families e.g. grandparents helping with childcare, friendship groups for social interaction

- Explanation of financial situation – this is the opportunity to provide any necessary explanation for the financial information provided in section 5 as well as any other information that may be useful including:
  - How they are managing any debt, including total amounts owed and how long it will take to pay off
  - Any outstanding benefit claims and when they anticipate they will be resolved
  - If they appear to have a reasonable amount of disposable income at the end of the week or month, why that cannot be used to save for the item needed e.g. it would take too long as the item is needed urgently or they are already saving for other items not covered by the fund e.g. carpets etc.

## Section 7 – Declaration

It is essential that the completed form is signed by both the referrer and the applicant to confirm they have read and understood the Terms and Conditions.

Electronic signatures will not be accepted but the form can be signed and scanned in order to send by email.

## Demographic Information

This section is completely voluntary. The information will not be used as part of the assessment process. If you choose not to complete it, that will not affect your chances of a successful application.

Any information provided in this section is only used internally to help us monitor whether our grants are reaching everyone who needs them and inform any future activities to publicise the fund.

## Hertfordshire Children's Fund Terms and Conditions

### **USE OF FUNDING:**

- Hertfordshire Children's Fund grants are made for specific items and any funding awarded should be spent on those specific items only.
- Any alterations or requests to change what the grant can be spent on should be submitted in writing to [grants@hertscf.org.uk](mailto:grants@hertscf.org.uk). Only if you receive written confirmation with approval for these changes can you make any variation in spend or duration of the grant.
- Referrers/applicants are to inform Hertfordshire Community Foundation as soon as possible if they receive funding from another source for the same items as the HCF grant.
- HCF cannot fund any items that have already been purchased. The grant should not be used to reimburse families who have already paid for the items requested.
- Any portion of the grant not used for the purposes specified, or unspent by the end of the grant period must be returned to HCF.
- No items funded by the Hertfordshire Children's Fund should be sold on or disposed of within their working life.

### **ADMINISTRATION AND MONITORING:**

- By submitting the application, the referrer confirms that their organisation is willing to administer and supervise the grant including receiving payment, purchasing the goods on behalf of the applicant and providing HCF with proof of purchase.
- Payments will be made to the referring organisation. We will not make payments to the individual applicants. If the referring organisation is unable to receive payment for the item, a cheque may be made payable direct to the supplier but the referrer/organisation will still be responsible for administering the grant and providing proof of purchase.
- Referrers must confirm:
  - Receipt of funds with two weeks of the payment being made
  - Proof of purchase (e.g. copy of receipts/invoices) as soon as the items have been purchased and within two months of the payment being made at the latest.
- Referrers can only have one active application at any one time. Further grant requests will not be processed until monitoring for previous grants have been submitted.
- Failure to submit sufficient monitoring without a satisfactory explanation may affect the success of future applications.

### **DATA PROTECTION & CASE RECORDS**



Hertfordshire Community Foundation



Much of the information that you have provided in this form is personal data as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998 (the 1998 Act) which places certain obligations on us to protect your personal data when it is in our control and only use it for specified purposes. Hertfordshire Community Foundation will process the Personal Data of the referrer, applicant(s) and any children for whom a grant application is made for the following purposes:

- administering your application for a grant or grants
- maintaining records of the application and any awarded grants
- keeping you informed about the activities of Hertfordshire Community Foundation;
- as a case study to show how the Hertfordshire Children's Fund can assist others, in such cases we will consult with you in advance and will not use names/locations without the grant recipients express permission.
- confirming that the information supplied is accurate
- monitoring the demographic information of grant applicants

Personal Data may be retained by the Trustees whether or not a grant is made and, if a grant is made, following the end of the grant period.

The data will stored securely and will not be shared with any third parties.

#### **DISCLAIMER:**

- The items funded by this grant are chosen and sourced by the referrer/applicant. As such, Hertfordshire Community Foundation will, under no circumstances, be liable for damage, injury or loss of any kind whatsoever to any property or persons occurring as a result of items purchased with Hertfordshire Community Foundation funding.