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Foundations Independent Living Trust Fast Track Hardship Fund Guidance for HIAs using the Hardship Fund

1. What are the eligibility criteria for the fund?

Applications are accepted only from home improvement agencies in England. Applications are not accepted from individuals.

The sole beneficiaries of this fund are clients of home improvement agencies who meet the fund's criteria.

1. The home improvement agency client must be in receipt of a means-tested benefit and have savings of less than £3,000. Benefits such as Attendance Allowance, while not means-tested, can also be accepted as a qualifying benefit.
2. Full or part payment must be needed for essential building repairs, aids, adaptations, **essential** equipment, services or security measures that are required **immediately**. The safety, health and wellbeing of the client or structure of the building may be at risk if the work is not carried out.
3. There must be no other appropriate sources of help accessible within a reasonable timescale for the circumstances.

Cases that fall outside of these guidelines may be considered for a grant from the Trust, subject to the merits of the individual case.

Notes on the criteria

Requests to the Fast Track Hardship Fund are most likely to be for emergency repairs to essential items (such as toilets, hot water and heating systems), repair of dangerous electrical items, urgent roof repairs, and security items. Requests could also include additional work required to a property to make it safe and habitable after improvement work or adaptation.

There may be circumstances where items such as planning permission fees, building regulation fees, structural engineers' reports, electrical, technical and legal costs may need to be funded. These are eligible. The fund will not cover agency fees.

The Fast Track Hardship Fund is a fund of last resort and is not an alternative to statutory and other sources of finance used routinely by home improvement agencies. If your agency operates a hardship fund of its own, the Trustees expect your agency to use this source of funding before making any application to the Fast Track Hardship Fund.

Amounts requested are not expected to exceed £500. If the amount exceeds £500, the case will be submitted to the Trustees for consideration. It is not envisaged that the fund be used to routinely 'top up' large projects such as shortfalls in Disabled Facilities Grants. Contributions to measures being applied under the WarmFront scheme are possible, with some additional conditions (see section 2.5).

An agency may make 10 requests during one year for each local authority area it covers. The Fund year runs from 1 April to 31 March. If an agency makes more than 10 requests within the fund year, the fund administrator may require additional documentation to show that other funding sources have been considered and approached where appropriate, and the Trustees' approval may be sought for each additional request.

2. How to make a request to the fund on behalf of a client

Information that we require in the application form:

1. Please give us the details of your HIA and your contact details. We may need to get in touch with you to clarify details of the application.
2. Bank account name: payments are made by cheque payable to the agency, not to the client or contractor. Many home improvement agencies operate a client or holding account and it is the name of this account that we need to go on the cheque.
3. Local authority: the local authority covering the area that the client lives in. The Trustees have decided that applications will normally be limited to 10 in one year for each local authority area. We need to report on this to the Trustees.
4. For all applications, you are asked to respond to questions 1 to 6. As with all the details on the form, if these are not complete we will need to contact you to seek clarification, and this may delay our response.
5. If the application is for funding towards a heating or insulation measure, please complete questions 7 to 11. The Hardship Fund has benefited from a contribution from n-power Health through Warmth, which is specifically for heating and insulation measures. If the application is for heating or insulation and these questions have not been completed, there may be a delay in processing the application.

(Please note that home improvement agencies providing services in the areas where the n-power Health through Warmth scheme is operating may not apply to the Hardship Fund under this section.)

- a. Question 7: you can select more than one of the illnesses or health conditions listed.
 - b. Question 9: choose the description that best matches the type of measure.
 - c. Working heating systems are not replaced.
 - d. If a property has partial heating in the form of gas wall heaters, or storage heaters, these will not be replaced by new full central heating systems.
 - e. Additional heating of the same type may be offered in rooms used daily by the clients. For example, if heating exists in living rooms downstairs, a heating solution may be offered in the main bedroom and the bathroom if none is present.
 - f. Additional requirements and cosmetic enhancements will not be funded. If you need funding for replacement windows, fire surrounds, chimney sweeping or decorating, you can apply to the Hardship Fund for these items but please do not complete questions 7 to 11.
 - g. Question 10: please give the full cost of the work. For heating and insulation measures, the amount applied for must always be less than the full cost. You must ensure that the contractor who will install the measures is qualified to appropriate trade standards and registered with the relevant trade bodies.
 - h. Please give a breakdown of the source and value of funding that will go towards the total cost, not including the amount you are requesting from FILT. This may just be a client contribution, or may be amounts from three or four different sources.
 - i. Funding is available under heating and insulation measures to provide 'top-ups' to WarmFront grants, assuming that the conditions described in the previous notes have been met.
6. Attach **either** quotations for the item, equipment or work required, **or** receipts/proof of payment if you are requesting funding after the work has taken place. Retrospective requests will only be considered where urgent work that falls within the Trust guidelines has already been carried out, and must occur within one calendar month of the completion of work.
7. E-mail, fax, or post the application to:
- The Foundations Trust Hardship Fund Administrator
 C/O CEL
 Bleaklow House
 Howard Town Mill
 Glossop
 SK13 8HT

Email: info@foundationstrust.org.uk
Fax: 08458 645115