

SOFT UK Financial Assistance for Families Policy

Introduction

SOFT UK recognises that there may be families who would benefit from attending one of our Family Events but who are unable to do so because of cost. In order to promote equality of support, the Board of Trustees aim to delegate a portion of the annual budget for the provision of financial assistance.

To ensure that any decisions on financial assistance are concurrent with our responsibilities of stewardship over appropriate expenditure, the following Policy and Procedure will act as a guide to decision making.

1. Financial Assistance Budget

- 1.1 The budget for Financial Assistance will be set annually by the Board of Trustees.
- 1.2 Any potential external sources of funding, such as grant funding, will be taken into account on an annual basis.
- 1.3 Any requests for Financial Assistance that fall outside of budgeted costs must be fully approved by the Board of Trustees in the usual manner.

2. Promotion of Financial Assistance to Families

- 2.1 The availability of Financial Assistance will be advertised alongside promotional material for Family Events, to ensure that all families have equal access to the information.
- 2.2 Where Financial Assistance is available for a particular user group, for instance if funded by an external source, the terms and conditions of this will be clearly advertised.

3. Eligibility for Financial Assistance

- 3.1 Only SOFT UK members are eligible to apply for Financial Assistance.
- 3.2 It is generally expected that families will only be funded to go to the Family Event nearest their home. In particular circumstances, a family may need to go to a Family Event further away. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis in discussion with the SOFT UK Trustee responsible for that Family Event.
- 3.3 Families will be eligible to apply to the fund ONCE a year.

4. Provision of Financial Assistance

- 4.1 Financial Assistance will be provided in the form of a contribution to travel expenses. This contribution should be calculated as mileage (regardless of the method of travel) payable at 35p per mile for the first 120 miles, and 17p per mile thereafter.
- 4.2 Accommodation costs will be offered in the following circumstances:
 - 4.2.1 The family lives too far from the location of the Family Event to travel in one day:
 - 4.2.2 The family are travelling with a disabled person, which makes it difficult to travel in one day:
 - 4.2.3 The family are travelling with your children, which makes it difficult to travel in one day.
- 4.3 Families travelling with a disabled child who need to bring their own carer in order to attend the event will be eligible for a contribution to their costs, to a maximum of £100 or otherwise as set by the Board of Trustees within the annual budget.

5. Administration of Financial Assistance

- 5.1 Applications for Financial Assistance should be dealt with by SOFT UK using the *Procedure*

for Applications for Financial Assistance.

- 5.2 Applications for Financial Assistance, and all communications resulting from applications, should always be dealt with by a Trustee.

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