

Birmingham Law Centre Hope Destitution Fund:

Criteria for Grant-Making

Agreed 12 March 2009

1 Transparency

Current criteria for grant-making will always be circulated to all referring agencies. The criteria will also be available from Birmingham Law Centre's Web site at <http://www.birminghamlawcentre.org.uk/projects/hdf-criteria.pdf>.

Agencies wishing to refer cases to the Hope Destitution Fund are generally expected to send representatives to the fortnightly Grants Panel meetings.

2 Basic criteria for grant-making

Grants can be made only to people who have at some time applied for asylum, or to pregnant women and new mothers who are barred from public funds, and generally only to those who are currently destitute – but see 5 below.

3 Rates of grant payment

The normal weekly rates of grant payment are, as from 12 March 2009: £15 for a single adult, £30 for a couple, plus £15 per child. After six weeks' receipt of grant payments, the rates will drop to £10 for a single adult, £20 for a couple, plus £15 per child.

The rates for residents of Birmingham Law Centre's Hope Housing accommodation will generally be: £25 for a single adult, £45 for a couple, plus £15 per child, without any reduction after six weeks. Where Hope Housing residents are receiving some support "in kind" of food etc., HDF support may be at a lower rate.

The HDF Grants Panel will have discretion to increase these rates only in exceptional circumstances.

(continued)

4 Grants and longer-term solutions to destitution

Grants will generally be made only where there is the prospect of a longer-term solution to applicants' destitution, e.g. from UKBA Section-4 or Section-95 support or support from local authorities, within a reasonable period of time. Furthermore, grants will not be made where

- It appears from applications that there is no "need" beyond the fact that the applicant has no income – e.g. cases where applicants are living with and supported by friends; OR
- there is no evidence of a potential "remedy" for the destitution having been already initiated, e.g. a Section-4 application lodged or social-services support sought, and no evidence of special or compassionate circumstances that would nevertheless justify a grant; OR
- more generally, documentary evidence has not been included with the application, including copies of UKBA applications, fresh asylum/HR applications, correspondence with social services etc.

5 Grants for those not completely destitute

The Fund's trust-deed allows for grants to those not completely destitute but, e.g., lacking support or accommodation for their dependants or support to cover special needs. Such grants can only be made provided a case has been made on "humanitarian" or other special grounds.

6 Grants for people "indefinitely destitute"

Grants will rarely be given to people indefinitely destitute and without any possible remedy pending, and only provided a strong case has been made on "humanitarian" or other special grounds, e.g. because of a recent change of circumstances seriously worsening the person's situation.

7 Grants for former asylum-seekers

Grants for, e.g., refugees unable to access welfare benefits should be made only exceptionally and with a low priority, and only if an MP has been asked to pursue their case.

8 Grants for non-support expenditure (e.g. essential travel, doctor's reports, translations, other reports)

Such grants can be made only exceptionally, and with a low priority.

(continued)

9 Cases for review by Grants Panel

The Panel will always require clear information about action/progress on a case from the referring agency.