

Birmingham Law Centre Hope Destitution Fund:

Criteria for Grant-Making

Agreed 22 March 2010

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 asylum-seekers or 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 (including those for Hope Housing residents) are, as from 17 March 2010: £15 for an adult with children, plus £15 per child, and £10 for an adult without children. After six weeks' receipt of grant payments, referring agencies will need to make a further application asking for support to be continued.

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

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

(continued)

- 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.

Grants where families already have some income are to be restricted to single parents with one child where the child is receiving no support. Otherwise, grants to those not completely destitute 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 or people granted indefinite leave to remain who are unable to access welfare benefits will no longer be made.

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, except in the case of grants enabling asylum-seekers to travel to Liverpool or Croydon in order to lodge fresh applications.

(continued)

9 Review of ongoing cases

Ongoing cases will be reviewed by a Sub-Group of the Grants Panel, comprising BLC Hope workers and volunteers, on the day before the fortnightly meeting of the Grants Panel.

The Sub-Group will always require clear written information about action/ progress on a case from the referring agency, and in the absence of such information cases will generally be closed or carried forward to the next meeting without a grant being made. Ongoing cases can be referred by the Sub-Group to the Grants Panel at the Sub-Group's discretion.