

# South England Conference Women's Ministry

## Hardship Fund Disbursement Policy

### A. Purpose

To establish South England of Seventh-day Adventist (SEC) Women's Ministry policy and procedures governing the initiation, authorisation, and review of all expenditure of the hardship fund. This policy establishes the process for the effective management of this fund.

### B. Scope

South England Conference of Seventh-day Adventist is a not for profit organisation (Charity) and as such, all disbursements made on behalf of the organisation must be in keeping with Charity Commission rules and guidelines. Management, internal and external auditors need to be satisfied that our internal control processes have been adhered to. That is, providing reasonable assurance that good stewardship is being applied in handling and accounting for the fund. Ultimately, **best practice** must always be in operation.

The fund is setup to assist individuals and families within the church community (SDA) facing financial hardship due to various circumstances e.g. loss of employment or reduced income due to Covid-19, a family becomes a single parent household and trying to adjust financially to meet basic needs, charities that are directly assisting vulnerable individuals).

### C. Policy

This policy outlines the hardship fund disbursement process, identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks related to the process, defines related roles and responsibilities for the effective management of the fund and establishes the following:

1. The beneficiaries should be representative of the SEC churches, i.e. not favouring a particular church, plant or company.
2. The Women's Ministry Director (the Fund Manager) should be the first point of contact.
3. Information relating to the availability of the hardship fund should be made to the local church via the local Women's Ministry Leader.
4. An application form must be completed by all potential beneficiaries.
5. The women's ministry director should liaise with the Church Pastor or First Elder to ascertain the legitimacy of application made.

6. Applicants **should not** be an employee of the SEC as this will have P11D implications (benefit in kind). The fund **should not** assist SEC departmental events (except departments that directly assist vulnerable individuals e.g. Cornerstone Counselling Service), external businesses, private ventures, subsidise tuition fees or any other spend that is not in keeping with the fund intended purpose.
7. Individuals or families can only apply to the fund **once** within a financial year, e.g. January - December.
8. The amount applied for should not exceed £500.00.
9. The approval of an application is at the discretion of the Fund Manager and is considered based on several factors including availability of funds, legitimacy of the application, and the number of applicants.
10. All applicants will be given feedback on the success or failure of the application.
11. In the event of a failed application, an applicant will be given the opportunity to appeal by letter to the fund director giving further evidence to make a more compelling case if there are sufficient funds.
12. Once an application is successful, the director will liaise with the treasury department by making a payment request via email with the relevant paperwork to [accountspayable@secadventist.org.uk](mailto:accountspayable@secadventist.org.uk)
13. Successful applicants will be paid within 10 working days.
14. The treasury department will provide periodic financial reports to the Women's Ministry Director so that informed decisions can be taken regarding disbursements from the fund.
15. All data collected will be confidential and stored in full compliance of GDPR.
16. Should there be grievances relating to an application please do so in writing to OFFCOM (committee includes, President, Executive Secretary and Treasurer) at the SEC, 25 St John's Road, Watford, WD17 1PZ.