

## FURTHER POLICY MATTERS FOR CLARIFICATION

The committee are invited to consider the following policy areas in respect of support services to registrants. This item may well have a modest impact on the text of the office guidelines.

### 1) DOMESTIC FURNITURE *— would like, if agreed, a policy*

The Trust is receiving a number of requests for (non-white goods) furniture in isolation. The current policy is that furniture falls under the grant classification and code that applies to "Setting Up Home Grants".

There is no evidence that there ever was a policy that enables the Trust to entertain grants for items of furniture but it is clear that the Trust has funded such requests in the past.

The main reason for an application appears to be "wear and tear", in particular where children are part of the family unit.

The committee are asked to consider the following as matters of policy:-

- a) Should there be a separate classification and code for non-white goods furniture?
- b) If so, should the policy be limited in respect of the classification of beneficiary that might apply for assistance?
- c) Should there be a maxima applied to the office guideline?
- d) Should there be a maxima applied to the type of furniture item.
- e) Should there be a time-frame on the intervening years an application might be made?

### 2) DECLINING GRANTS

The current policy is that the "office" cannot decline a grant request. The Chief Executive supports the support services team in seeking clarification of this policy in that:-

- a) Where a policy clearly states the Trust will not fund a certain request such as taxi fares to and from hospital, the office should be enabled to decline. The applicant will still retain the right to have an appeal heard but only after the grant has been, under operating policy, declined.

The committee are asked to consider an authority for the office to decline a grant In the first instance rather than automatically put it to the NSSC for determination.

### 3) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A perfect illustration of the anomaly is as follows:-

a) A widow or a carer can apply for financial assistance in respect of school change costs and the maximum is £200.00 when the child starts school. This is for school uniforms, books, sport kit and other equipment when a child starts school.

The guideline needs to state clearly that this is available to registrants and infected intimates that are also widows where it is not clear at present.

b) For school clothes costs, a registrant may claim £100.00. A widow or carer may claim £300.00.

The committee are asked to consider whether or not there should be a consistency of value when applications for grants under this heading are made. The committee are also asked to consider if there should be parity where similar situations might arise.

c) The committee are asked to consider the fact that registrants can and do become widowers and that they should be regarded in the same manner as widows. *(extend to As)*

### 4) SHORT NON ACADEMIC TRAINING COURSES

There appears to be a discrepancy in how the Trust perceives this type of personal development. Recently, an application for funding to undertake a course in floristry was declined by the NSSC (on the grounds that this was a hobby) but an application for glass blowing was approved under Chief Executive's discretion on the grounds that this was not a hobby and should be considered as a route through to employment (the applicant already has a small glass business and this was development to widen the range of "services" he was able to provide).

The committee are reminded that training in such "skills" that could embrace various trades can either be regarded as hobbies and routes through to employment; it is also within the scope of the Trust that beneficiaries should be encouraged and funded to "break out" by whatever means and if achieving this is by a means that meets the needs of the beneficiary then the dynamic to "breaking out" should take precedence over the activity. - *will it lead to economic independence.*

The committee are asked to consider the proposal that the attempt to "break out" and the benefits arising should take precedence over the means to achieve that objective.

**NB:** The Trust has a finite mechanism to accommodate widows without dependents through the Honeycombe Legacy. It may be the committee might wish to exclude this constituency during the lifetime of the legacy arrangement. *(Widows alone to be excluded)*

### 5) WINTER CLOTHING *sket weight gainers tops*

The current policy is to make grants available, up to £150.00, once every two years for registrants and infected partners and widows. The Chief Executive has recently approved a winter clothing grant where a registrant was claiming severe and

prolonged inclement weather was causing health related difficulties and without a winter coat, this could have exacerbated the condition.

The committee are asked to consider that prolonged inclement weather conditions in the winter months (November – March) can be a stated purpose to enable the purchase of winter clothing but that the time-frame should be greater than two years. The committee may determine that 4 years would be reasonable in this instance.