

**The Macfarlane Trust  
National Support Services Committee  
One-off grant policies**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1** The purpose of this paper is to facilitate discussion on the Trust's one-off grants policies, in order to:
- i.** revise and clarify these policies, for the guidance of both staff and registrants
  - ii.** agree authorisation levels for payment of grants
  - iii.** agree how 'appeals' against decisions should be handled.
- 1.2** As I am new to the Trust I would appreciate confirmation (or otherwise) that I appreciate the basic principles underpinning the Trust's work. I may also be raising issues that have already been discussed/agreed, or appear to be stating the obvious. I will ensure, however, that the decisions reached today are codified into procedures and communicated as appropriate to staff and registrants, in an attempt to ensure a common understanding and consistency of approach in the future.
- 1.3** I am aware that discussions will be held over the next few months over issues such as how to deal with capital assets when assessing grant applications, and where means-testing should also be applied to the process. It is important, however, that we make the current system both more transparent and consistent in its administration, during the interim.
- 1.4** I fully anticipate disagreement over some of the recommendations below, particularly relating to maximum amounts, but recognise that it is better to have a starting point for such discussions to focus on.

(Due to time constraints and a desire to give members of the Committee time to fully consider the issues raised, this paper will be sent in two parts).

**2. Underlying principles**

- 2.1** That financial support from the Trust is NOT compensation as such, but is intended to help compensate for some of the results of infection, these results varying between individuals.
- 2.2** That support is primarily for registrants.
- 2.3** That support for carers is aimed to improve the situation of the registrant:
- i.** by helping the carer with their caring role
  - ii.** by reassuring the registrant that their carer will be supported through a period of adjustment and in 'moving on' with their lives, following the registrant's death
  - iii.** by providing this expected support and extending it for a longer period where the carer cannot be expected to 'move on' fully, due to disability or age.
- 2.4** That support for a child or children is aimed at improving the situation of the registrant:
- i.** by helping the registrant to provide the type of care for their children that they would have provided, had they not been infected
  - ii.** by reassuring the registrant that, should they die before then, their child(ren) will continue to be supported until adulthood/independence

iii. by providing this expected support and extending it for a longer period where the child(ren) cannot be expected to fully gain independence at adulthood due to disability or other unique factor.

2.5 That support for carers or children following the registrant's death is not intended to replace the statutory provision they are entitled to as a result of any disability or medical condition, which should be sought instead of Trust support, where possible.

2.6 Issues raised by 2.4b and 2.4c are:

- i. at what age should support of children cease? Leaving education? 16? 18? 21?
- ii. if for reason of disability the child(ren) will not reach independent living until over this age or ever, should support continue until independence is reached/forever?

### 3. Current difficulties

3.1 The MFT handbook gives registrants guidance on the grants available.

3.2 The office guidelines cover applications that can be approved by staff without being referred to trustees, to speed up the grant-making process. (Some are not very clear).

3.3 In a number of cases the actual handling of applications is not in line with either 3.1 or 3.2.

### 4. Education guidelines and recommendations

#### 4.1 Fees

4.1a *MFT Handbook* states: "Fees: Advanced education costs where no help is available from the LEA"

4.1b *Office guidelines* state: "Educational Course Fees ... Advanced education means degree, teaching course, HND or HNC, A-levels or higher. Postgraduate courses are specifically excluded."

4.1c *Actual practice*: in the past some postgraduate degree fees have been funded. As these courses are often more than one year, having funded one year registrants have an expectation of a second year's funding. Examples also exist where this expectation has been created or encouraged by the letters accompanying the first award.

#### 4.1d *Recommendations*:

- i. that existing post graduate courses continue to be funded to completion
- ii. that applications for post graduate course funding to retake years, where this has been made necessary due to ill-health, be funded
- iii. that applications for post graduate course funding to retake years, for reasons other than ii. above, are not funded
- iv. that applications for new postgraduate courses are refused without exception
- v. that the funding of advanced level course courses currently outlined in the Office guidelines continues, for both registrants and their child(ren) (whoever is caring for them), up to a maximum of £2,000 a year and for a maximum of five years.
- vi. that the funding offered under v. above includes fees for registrants and registrant's children, whoever is currently caring for the children.

## **4.2 Special costs**

**4.2a** *MFT Handbook* states: “For specialist equipment or materials, or for “Field trips” but not for recreational school trips”.

**4.2b** *Office guidelines*: not mentioned

**4.2c** *Actual practice*: no recent examples available.

### **4.2d Recommendations:**

That the funding currently outlined in the MFT handbook be continued, subject to a maximum of £100 per year per child, for children of school age.

## **4.3 School costs**

**4.3a** *MFT Handbook* states: “School clothes, books etc when a child starts or changes school”.

**4.3b** *Office guidelines* state: “towards the cost of school uniform, books, sports kit and other equipment ... when the dependent child of a registrant changes school ... Max £500”.

**4.3c** *Actual practice*: Grants are being given up to once a year, because of the rate at which children grow out of them.

### **4.3d Recommendations:**

- i. that grants be available when a child starts or changes school, to a maximum of £200
- ii. that grants be available if a child needs to replace part of their school uniform due to growth, to a maximum of one £100 grant per year
- iii. that any other school expenditure is included under ‘special costs’.

## **5 Mobility**

### **5.1 Motability**

**5.1a** *MFT handbook* states: “Deposits on Motability hire car and new and used cars bought through the Motability scheme. To those receiving DLA(M), similar payments are available when buying a new or used car independently.”

**5.1b** *Office guidelines* state: “A grant is available to any registrant in receipt of Motability Allowance that qualifies them for a Motability lease car, on medical recommendation only where there is no suitable vehicle available in the ‘NIL deposit’ Motability range. Where the member concerned has a dependent partner, this form of assistance is extended, subject to the understanding that no other grant in connection with the car is made for a period of three years.

- i. To cover the cost of purchasing at the end of a three year Motability hire period through their used car hire purchase scheme.
- ii. To buy a car through Motability’s used car scheme.
- iii. To buy a car through Motability’s new car scheme.”

**5.1c** *Actual practice*: Grants are being given to assist some non-Motability registrants with car deposits, and to help with repairs and MOTs.

**5.1d** Motability vehicles are available to anyone in receipt of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance. Vehicles include cars, powered wheelchairs and scooters.

**5.1e** New vehicles are available on three years contract hire. Motability have this month again increased the number of cars that are available without a deposit. Contract hire includes the cost of insurance, RAC breakdown cover and routine servicing and repairs.

**5.1f** Motability will also fund hire purchase of second hand cars, over three or five years, or powered wheelchairs and scooters over one to three years. If the vehicle costs less than the full Motability allowance, the underpayment is refunded to the registrant so can be used to help with the other costs of running the vehicle or other aspects of personal mobility.

**5.1e Recommendations:**

- i.** That Motability deposit grants be available for registrants in receipt of the higher rate of DLA, where the applicant's need for a specific model is identified by a suitably experienced practitioner, up to maximum of £1,000 every three years.
- ii.** That vehicle deposit and maintenance/repair grants be available for registrants not in receipt of the higher rate of DLA, where a medical practitioner has confirmed mobility difficulties create a need for transport, up to a maximum of £1,000 deposit every five years and £500 maintenance/repair grants every year except in a year where a deposit grant has been paid.

(This paper is not complete. The remaining sections will be included in the next mailing)