

## Guidance Notes

### *Introduction*

The Freedom Fund is the way that **Freedom Church** gives financially “beyond itself”. Freedom Church will in no way benefit directly from the fund. The Freedom Church Leadership Team and Trustee Board have decided that Freedom Church will give away the first portion of what it has received, as an act of generous obedience and gratitude, recognising that all income received is a gift from God.

### *How is the fund generated?*

The Freedom Fund is a set amount of money (agreed by the Leadership Team and the Trustee Board) from Freedom Church’s budgeted general income.

### *Who can benefit from the fund?*

The fund is anticipated to bless others by meeting need in five distinct areas:

1. Freedom Church **Partners** undertaking activity requiring financial support such as:
  - Gap Years, Discipleship Programmes, Short Term Mission Trips, Internships, etc.
  - e.g. giving to a young person to contribute towards the cost of a mission trip.
2. **International** Initiatives such as:
  - Linked charities working overseas, Responding to humanitarian crises, etc.
  - e.g. Supporting Serve Direct, or a specific Tearfund Appeal.
3. **National** Initiatives such as:
  - National charities, National Networks, etc.
  - e.g. Kintsugi Hope, Chaplains Association, Urban Saints.
4. **Local** Initiatives such as:
  - Charities based in Romsey, Charity Projects in Romsey, etc.
  - e.g. Youth in Romsey, TVBC, Churches Together, Romsey Family Support, SCM.
5. Meeting the practical needs of people experiencing **hardship** such as:
  - Clients associated with Freedom Matters, Local people in need, etc.
  - e.g. buying a client a new washing machine or offering a client a food shop.

### *Who can access the fund?*

The fund is accessible, upon application, by any Freedom Church Partner. It is anticipated that the applicant will be seeking funds on behalf of an individual or an organisation known to them.

### *How big is the fund and how will it be spent?*

For 2020 the Freedom Fund is budgeted £16,000. Although responsibility for considering applications rests with the Freedom Fund Team (see below), the following framework suggests guideline proportions across the five areas identified above:

- |                                |              |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Freedom Church Partners -   | £1500 / year |
| 2. International Initiatives - | £6000 / year |
| 3. National Initiatives -      | £3000 / year |
| 4. Local Initiatives -         | £4500 / year |
| 5. Hardship -                  | £1000 / year |

### *How is the fund administrated?*

The Freedom Fund is overseen by a small team, led by the Executive Leader, consisting of a member of the Trustee Board, a member of the Spiritual Oversight Team and a Freedom Church Partner. Decisions will only be made to support applications when this team are unanimously in support. One member of the team will step down at the end of each year (other than the Executive Leader) on a rolling basis, meaning that team members will normally serve a three-year term. The team will endeavor to respond to all applications within two weeks of the receipt of a completed application form. The team will be guided by the following principles:

- Recipients will generally receive support a maximum of one time a year from the Freedom Fund.
- The amount of money applied for must not exceed £1500 without being supported by a Freedom Church Trustee or Leader (not including members of the Freedom Fund Team).
- Other than for applications for the Hardship Fund, the recipient must have established a method and commitment to report back on how the money has been used.
- Only applications submitted using the approved Application Form will be considered.
- The hardship fund is intended to meet an individual's needs through purchasing what they require (food, an appliance, clothing, etc) and therefore will not give individuals money.

#### ***How will the Freedom Fund Team report?***

The Freedom Fund Team will report to the Trustee Board each quarter. An annual report from the fund will be created each January reviewing the gifts made in the previous year.

#### ***How is the Freedom Fund promoted?***

The Freedom Fund will be promoted to Freedom Church Partners throughout the year, via Freedom News videos, Freedom News emails, Partners Evenings and MyChurchSuite.

#### ***What if I have more questions about the fund?***

If you have any further questions about the fund, or if you would like an application form, please contact the Executive Leader ([tim@freedomchurch.uk](mailto:tim@freedomchurch.uk) / 01794 450451).

## **FURTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED APRIL 2020 IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19:**

Covid-19 is a global pandemic with far reaching consequences. This may require the Freedom Fund to operate differently, depending upon the ramifications and consequences of the pandemic. Therefore, with immediate effect, the Freedom Fund will only be accessible for any grants that are related to Covid-19 until further notice, **with the exception of hardship applications** which we will continue to support as far as possible.

### **International, National and Local Applications:**

The Freedom Fund will only seek to support international, national and local Covid-19 response initiatives where there is a strong relational connection between the beneficiary / organisation and the Freedom Church Community. Ideally this connection should be more established than just one Freedom Church Partner being a supporter – there should be a proven link between the beneficiary and Freedom Church.

### **Hardship Applications:**

It is anticipated that in this season applications will be approved in order to meet the needs of local people experiencing hardship. We must recognise that the Freedom Fund is a comparatively small pot of money, but one which can be allocated relatively quickly. The Freedom Fund aims to support a niche range of situations which need small sums quickly.

In recognition of the above, the following additions are temporarily made to the Freedom Fund guidance:

1. There may be instances where, although we would still prefer to buy specific food, clothing, household goods, etc., we may be inclined to give an individual or household direct financial support. If this is the case this will be done as a BACS payment. Before the Freedom Fund gives direct financial support to any individual or family the Freedom Fund Team must be satisfied that the recipient has done everything reasonable to try and alleviate the financial problem themselves including considering (but not limited to); claiming benefits, mortgage holidays, payment holidays, cancelling commitments, claiming on insurances, etc.
2. It is anticipated that only one application would be successful for an individual / household. This would likely be either one (likely larger) gift or a pre-arranged number of (likely smaller) gifts.
  - a. Any one-off gift of financial support must be demonstrated to be adequate to “see them through” until a clearly defined date at which point it is highly likely that further financial support will be received (such as a benefit payment) or their situation will change. Financial support cannot be given to support a situation which will be sustained indefinitely.
  - b. Where regular financial support may be required over a number of months, the funds will be paid in smaller amounts, but must be approved in full by the Freedom Fund Team first. This would only be granted for long enough for a more sustainable solution to be found.
3. Although the Freedom Fund will still aim to support an individual / household / organisation once, it must be recognised that there may be specific cases where further support is suitable. The Freedom Fund Team will make these decisions.
4. Given the increased complexity of decision making anticipated, beneficiaries must agree to the confidential and anonymised sharing of decisions and specific situations amongst the Freedom Church Leadership Team and the Freedom Church Trustee Board.
5. There may be instances where the approved Freedom Fund form cannot be used (for example when accessing a printer is not an option). In these instances, the relevant information should be provided by email to [tim@freedomchurch.uk](mailto:tim@freedomchurch.uk).

Given the above, if the Freedom Fund spends its entire budget before the end of the financial year, the Trustee Board will be responsible for determining what further funds are allocated and when.