

Hardship policy August 2023 update

In these difficult times, we recognise that many are struggling to manage the soaring costs of living and we want to support in any way we can. We are determined that this will not impact on any child's experience of the Group. Our hardship policy aims to cater for this in a sensitive, but efficient way that benefits the young person concerned without posing difficulties for the Group. Much of this is also possible informally, but the Hardship Policy formalises this where that is useful:

- **Our hardship policy will support various payments, including but not exclusively: Subs, uniform, camps, trips and other events.**
- Should paying for sub, uniforms or other events pose significant financial difficulty to your family, you should in the first instance contact your Section Team Leader or the Group Lead Volunteer (Jack Barber) to discuss this. Any details you disclose will be kept confidential and no names or other personal details will be passed on.
- The leader you contacted will then discuss this issue with two designated members of our Trustee Board Lucy Freeman and Clara Smith, to identify how the Group may be able to support. **If you wish to stay anonymous, no details which could identify you will be shared, only the person you contact will ever know your identity.**
- Should you prefer, instead of speaking to your Section leader or Jack, you can contact Lucy or Clara directly on lucy.freeman@countesthorpescouts.org.uk or clara.smith@countesthorpescouts.org.uk
- There will always be 3 Board members who discuss a particular case. Where Lucy or Clara are contacted directly, Jack or a Team Leader will be informed of the to create the 3rd person. This will be in accordance with the confidentiality measures listed above. Should the person initially contacted feel that one of these people could have a conflict of interest, an alternative 3rd Board member will be contacted.
- These 3 members, when confident that the hardship could affect a child's participation in an activity or the Group as a whole, will devise proposals on how the Group can support to ensure the full participation of your child. **This may involve (not exclusively) delaying payments due until an acute issue has been resolved and you are more able to pay, payments in instalments, partially or completed subsidised payments.**
- In more serious cases, or for larger events, the Group will look to apply to external bodies for support with fees for your child – usually this will be the Leicestershire Scouts Rudkin Trust.
- No other Committee members will be aware of the nature of any financial issue, your identity, or any support given. The Committee will though receive non-identifying details of the number of current hardship cases and the amount of financial support, if any given directly by the Group over a given period (e.g. 3 months)
- The Trustee Board have agreed criteria on which decisions to give financial support will be made.
- At no stage will funds be given directly to a claimant's bank account, any support given by the Group or another body towards fees will be transferred internally.