

Yorkshire Synod

Mission Fund Procedural Guidelines

1. Receiving Applications

The Yorkshire Synod Mission Fund is open to applications from United Reformed Churches and Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) which are part of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church. Applications will also be accepted from recognised Church Groups and Organisations.

Unfortunately, applications cannot be accepted from churches which have failed to put into place up-to-date safeguarding policies or which are in arrears or in debt to the Synod over other payments. Neither can applications be accepted from churches which have received grants but then failed to submit the required report and accounts detailing how the grant has been used.

Applications should be submitted to the Synod Clerk with a copy to the Synod Office on the form provided, together with any other appropriate papers, by the deadline given.

The Convenor will appoint one member of the panel to take a lead on each application. Their role will be to scrutinise the application against the agreed criteria and ensure that all necessary supporting documentation has been submitted. That “lead member” will be tasked with asking any questions of clarification and requesting further documentation where necessary. They are not expected to tell applicants that the application is ineligible for funding where the grant criteria are not met.

Where an application is for £20,000 or more, one or more members of the panel will visit the church. The church may also be asked to make a presentation to the panel and the panel reserves the right to visit a church where an application is for less than £20,000.

There will be four application rounds a year. The deadlines for applications are March 31st, June 30th, September 30th and December 31st each year. The Mission Fund Panel will meet as soon as practical after these dates to consider applications and either make a decision or agree to seek further information. For projects deferred for further information, the Panel will meet again to make a decision.

2. Making and Recording Decisions

The Panel will assess each application against the agreed criteria. Criteria will be published on the Synod website.

The Panel will seek to make a unanimous decision by consensus but reserves the right to make a majority decision if agreement cannot be reached.

The Panel can agree to award a grant, defer a decision while further information is sought, refer an application back for more work, or reject an application. It is also possible the Panel may decide to reject an application for the current year because there is not enough money in the fund. Churches may re-submit an application at a future date.

In agreeing to award a grant, the panel may make it conditional upon any number of factors, such as the applicant securing the balance of funding, report progress to the panel or approving a job description.

The Panel decision will be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting, together with the reasons for the decision. Where an application is rejected, referred back or referred to

another fund, the Minutes must record the precise reasons for the decision with reference to the criteria. Any conditions attached to the award of the grant must be recorded in the Minutes.

The Panel may decide to spread an award over a period of time.

Panel members will withdraw in the event of a conflict of interest (e.g. if the member's church has submitted an application). In the case of an application being received from the Convenor's church, a Deputy Convenor will be appointed for the whole of the meeting or for the part where that application is discussed.

3. Informing the Applicants

The Convenor will write to each applicant as soon as possible after the meeting telling them of the Panel's decision, the reasons for it and any conditions attached to the grant award.

If the Convenor is unable to attend the Panel meeting, the Panel will elect a substitute who will be responsible for writing to applicants and informing the Synod Office of the grants awarded. (See Section 4)

4. Disbursing grant

The Convenor will complete a schedule of grants awarded, sign and date it and send it to the Synod Office. Grant will be dispatched as soon as possible and once the church has agreed in writing to any conditions attached to the grant award.

Where a grant is spread over a period of time, the applicant must submit a report on how the grant has been spent when they request the next tranche of the grant. The Convenor must approve the payment of the next tranche on the basis of the report received.

5. Reporting

It is a condition of all grants from the Mission Fund that all successful applicants will be required to submit a report and accounts showing how the grant has been used at the anniversary of the grant being awarded. Such reports and accounts will be due by either March 31st, June 30th, September 30th or December 31st the following year depending on when the grant was made. Where funding is given for more than one year this report and accounts are due annually thereafter for each year that is funded and subsequent payments are conditional upon a satisfactory report being received by the Convenor before the payment is made.

Please note that once a grant has been made to a church no further grants to that church can be considered unless a satisfactory report and accounts relating to the previous grant have been received.

6. Managing the Grant Fund

Grants will be paid from this fund according to the schedules agreed by the Panel. Any monies unallocated or not yet disbursed at the end of the financial year will be carried forward in the Mission Fund.

Yorkshire Synod Mission Fund Guidance Notes for applications of more than £2,500

All applications must be submitted on the form to enable the Mission Fund Panel to assess them accurately against the agreed criteria (attached).

Synod aims to encourage, enable and support local churches. In planning your project, bear in mind that Synod may be able to offer personnel with experience and expertise to assist you as well as financial resources, though both are limited. **Applicants are advised that seeking advice from the Mission Fund Panel at an early stage and before submitting an application is more likely to result in a successful application.**

Name of Church

If the application is made by a separately constituted project, please give the name of the sponsoring church and explain the relationship between the project and the church.

Name of Project

Please provide a brief project name to enable the Mission Fund Panel to identify it easily

The numbering below correlates with the numbering on the application form.

1. Your Project

Describe your project clearly and simply and explain how it arises from the life of the church as set out in your Pastorate Profile/Church Life Review. Tell us how many years you expect your project to last, even if you are only asking for a grant for one year or for a one-off cost. If your project is already running, please provide a report on the work to date and explain how the grant would help you to develop the project. Please note that funding cannot be provided retrospectively.

You may need to update your Pastorate Profile. In preparing the Pastorate Profile the Ten Statements of Mission should be borne in mind, consideration should be given to those who should be involved in the process e.g. through a full congregational audit, and everything should be rooted in the Bible and prayer.

2. Mission

The Ten Statements of Mission have been adopted within the United Reformed Church and resources made available to support this programme. Mission can be expressed in many ways and in this section you can explain to what extent mission is expressed for your church through this project. Clarity of vision and purpose will help the Panel understand your project.

The Ten Statements of Mission

- **Statement 1: Spirituality and prayer**

We will grow in our practice of prayer and spirituality, nurturing strength for our witness to Jesus Christ, and developing our discernment of where God is and what God is calling us to do by reading and studying the Bible and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Statement 2: Identity**
The URC will be a Church where every local congregation will be able to say who they are, what they do and why they do it.
- **Statement 3: Christian Ecumenical Partnerships**
We will be more confident in our identity, valuing the treasures of our tradition, discerning when to seek ecumenical partnerships, and when and how to seek the further unity of the Church.
- **Statement 4: Community partnerships**
We will be a Church that is more active in the life of local neighbourhoods.
- **Statement 5: Hospitality and diversity**
We will be a Church committed to becoming even more welcoming and hospitable, and embracing all people equally.
- **Statement 6: Evangelism**
We will be more confident to engage in evangelism, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God with friends, families and strangers, through story and action.
- **Statement 7: Church growth**
We will be a growing Church with an increasing membership.
- **Statement 8: Global partnerships**
We will be a Church that is an active partner in God's global mission with other Churches around the world.
- **Statement 9: Justice and peace**
We will be a Church committed to peacemaking and reconciliation that keeps faith with the poor and challenges injustice.
- **Statement 10: The integrity of creation**
We will be a Church that has taken significant steps to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

Questions 3 and 4 provide an opportunity for you to explain the mission purpose of your project in more detail and the outcomes you hope to achieve.

5. Management

f) **Risk Assessment.** Think through what could go wrong with your project and prevent you from achieving your objectives. Risks to consider might include failure to raise the full amount of money needed, a sudden increase in expenses leading to a budget overrun, resignation of key personnel, unresponsive beneficiaries, withdrawal of support by partners. You will know what the most likely risks for your project are. List them and explain how you would deal with the risks you have identified. You may wish to provide a formal risk assessment as a separate document.

g) **Evaluation.** Would this be done internally, for example by the management group or the Elders, Synod personnel or by an external consultant? Think about the evaluation of the project itself but also its effectiveness as mission and its contribution to the church. When you draw up your budget, remember to include the costs of the evaluation you plan.

6. Finance

The Mission Fund may be used as a “first funder” to help you secure other funding, but grants will be conditional upon the rest of the funding being secured. The church may match a Mission fund grant from its own resources or through applying to other grant-making bodies. Appropriate evidence of this (offer letters, bank statements, etc.) will be required before the Synod issues any grant awarded.

7. Sustaining your project

Describe how your project will be continued after the grant has been spent. If your project will end once this grant funding ends, explain why this is the case and describe your strategy to exit from the project.

General

A report on how you used your grant and what difference it has actually made to your mission will be required from all successful applicants. This report and accounts showing how the money was spent will be required 12 months after the grant payment has been made, and annually thereafter for all grants that cover more than one year.

Seek advice on completing the application form for any area where you are unsure how to answer.

Yorkshire Synod Mission Fund

Criteria for evaluating projects

Introduction

All applications to the Mission Fund for grants will be examined according to the following criteria.

The Ten Statements of Mission have been adopted within the United Reformed Church and resources made available to support this programme. Mission can be expressed in many ways.

1. Mission

1.1. The church has thought through and expressed the mission implications of its project.

1.2. The project demonstrates clarity of vision.

1.3. There is a clear faith purpose.

1.4. The target audience or membership of the project has been identified in a way that is relevant to its mission purpose.

1.5. There is a positive relationship between the volunteers or staff of the project and the people they are trying to reach.

1.6. The application shows how sharing faith will be included in the activities of the project.

1.7. There is an understanding of how this project will enhance the life of your church/make a difference to the wider community.

2. Leadership

2.1. The team leadership is identified and suitably qualified or job/role descriptions are identified.

2.2. Existing volunteers/staff have experience in this area of work.

2.3. The application shows how new volunteers/staff will be recruited, trained and motivated.

2.4. The life issues of the target group have been identified and appropriate measures to address them have been included.

2.5. An evaluation process is identified.

3. Resources

3.1. The project has been properly costed.

3.2. Other sources of income have been identified to match a Mission Fund grant where necessary.

3.3. The church and/or project accounts demonstrate that the church or other managing body for the project is able to support this work and other areas of work will not suffer in consequence.

3.4. Where the church is holding large reserves but is not putting financial resources into this project, an acceptable explanation has been provided.

3.5. Risks have been identified and measures identified to minimise or handle them.

3.6. There is clarity about how the project will be continued in future.

3.7. The church is meeting its Ministry & Mission Fund (M&M) obligations by monthly direct debit payment. (M&M contributions are the first call on a church's income.)

4. Project Plan

4.1. The project plan includes adequate description, aims, strategy, management structure, expected outcomes and evaluation.

4.2. There is a plan to continue the project beyond this funding, or there is a clear exit strategy.

5. Reporting

5.1. The conditions on any previous grants were adhered to.

5.2 The required annual report(s) was(were) received from projects previously supported by the Mission Fund.