

YORK AND HULL DISTRICT ADVANCE FUND

This document defines the agreed policy for the York and Hull District Advance Fund and includes the criteria and procedures for administering the fund, as well as providing guidance on making applications to the fund by individuals, churches, circuits and district groups who wish to avail themselves of these resources.

DISTRICT ADVANCE FUND

1. Policy Statement

The District Advance Fund is a resource to support growth and development of circuits and churches within the District as they seek to engage in God's mission.

The District is committed to encouraging and enabling circuits, churches and district groups to grasp mission opportunities, by supporting them with grant aid where it is appropriate and possible.

The District Advance Fund is primarily for 'development' rather than 'maintenance' and is an example of the Methodist principle of connexionalism, whereby resources are shared in order to help and support those with least resources of their own.

Applications for District Advance Fund grants may be made for the support of mission projects involving ministry, property schemes, ecumenical work and chaplaincy within the York and Hull District.

Applications should be made according to the process outlined below and submitted to either the District Grants Secretary or the District Property Secretary (for property schemes only) at least four weeks in advance of a meeting of the District Advance Fund Committee. The dates of those meetings will be published on the district website and in the District Directory.

The District Advance Fund is administered by the District Advance Fund Committee on behalf of the District Policy Committee.

2. Criteria for District Advance Fund Grants

When considering grant applications, priority will be given to:

- schemes that are part of a clear strategy directed towards fulfilling God's mission through the local church/circuit and are consistent with district priorities
- schemes that make good use of resources by working in an ecumenical context, and where appropriate, in partnership with other circuits and/or organisations
- schemes that have identified a need both in the Church and the wider community and have developed a way to respond effectively
- schemes that encourage involvement with the gospel priority for the marginalised and poor and with those who are disadvantaged within the community
- schemes that have considered the needs of various age groups
- schemes that incorporate the potential for providing new ways of being Church ('Fresh Expressions') or improving on existing practice
- schemes in accordance with the district's priorities for the current year
- assisting churches and circuits which have insufficient resources to achieve their mission

3. Guidelines

1. projects that involve the employment of a lay person under a contract of service must be approved by the District Lay Employment Secretary

2. applications must demonstrate a clear aim for the work for which grant aid is sought and include objectives, an action plan and details of the monitoring and evaluation process.
3. evidence of the local church's or circuit's mission policy statement should be contained within the application.
4. both termed grants (to a maximum of 3 years) and single grants are available. Where appropriate, applications need to show a strategy for sustaining the work on a self-funding basis at the end of the grant period.
5. the district will consider extension of support to grants initially made for 3 years, for up to a further 2 years, in the final year of the initial grant.
6. with the exception of point 5 above, grants are only awarded to support new mission initiatives.
7. unless there are exceptional circumstances, matched funding from the church or circuit would be expected.

4. How to apply for non-property grants

No forms are required. Please contact the District Grants Officer who will advise you on the most appropriate way of documenting your application. It is advisable to allow sufficient time for this as the application itself will need to be submitted four weeks before the meeting of the District Advance Fund Committee.

5. How to apply for a property grant

Please contact the District Property Secretary who will provide advice and the relevant forms required. The same time criteria applies as for non-property grants.

6. General Information

1. the superintendent of the circuit (or a nominated substitute) from which a grant application originates has the right to attend the District Advance Fund Committee meeting at which the application is to be discussed and to speak and answer questions.
2. no grant will be given automatically. It must not be assumed that a project will receive a grant even though it matches the grant criteria as the funds available for distribution vary from year to year.
3. applicants have the right of appeal to the District Policy Committee against a decision of the District Advance Fund Committee. The decision of the District Policy Committee is final.
4. In accordance with Charity Law recommendations, the District Advance Fund Committee will ensure that sufficient money is set aside for the whole of term grants made, including the future financial commitment to the project.