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**GRANTS PROTOCOL**

[www.southendemergencyfund.org.uk](http://www.southendemergencyfund.org.uk)

In view of the coronavirus pandemic and its effects on the wider community in the borough of Southend-on-Sea, the Southend Emergency Fund (SEF) was established under the auspices of Shared Space, who have now passed the administration to Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS). This document lays out guidance for fund applicants and the panel assessing applications to it.

1. Southend Emergency Fund monies will be held by SAVS in restricted funds to be known as the “Southend Emergency Fund”, with the purpose of receiving charitable donations of cash from members of the public, businesses, faith groups, community organisations, charities, statutory funding, Lottery awards or other trust or foundation grants and/or donations. These funds will be disbursed in the form of grants to applicant agencies, intended to relieve individuals and families in Southend from the impact arising both directly from the virus and the steps taken to contain it on the physical and mental health. This for instance could include but is not exclusive of support and physical activities and the purchase of items such as food, fuel, technology etc. From time-to-time, funding may be restricted or designated for a particular group of people.
2. The SEF will be held and administered by SAVS, which will donate an amount of staff time to its management and administration. SAVS will reclaim tax through donations made under the gift-aid scheme and apply 100% of this to the fund.
3. The awards committee will typically meet weekly to receive a report on the balance of the fund and to consider applications received. Applications will be by submission of our form and will be considered on a rolling basis. The awards committee will function as a working party of SAVS, which will invite participants. To make valid decisions, there will need to be present a minimum of two members of the committee and at least one representative of SAVS.
4. Decisions on awards will be made on the strength of each application, taking into account the following:
	1. Is the applicant organisation active in the Borough of Southend on Sea?
	2. Is it still able to address beneficiaries’ current needs in the present crisis?
	3. Is there clear evidence of need?
	4. How many people will benefit from the requested grant and in what ways?
	5. Would any grant adversely affect beneficiaries from accessing Universal Credit or other benefits?
	6. Are the costings realistic and do they represent best value?
	7. What level of unrestricted reserves does the applicant currently hold?
	8. The level of management costs involved in the grant; SEF will prioritise covering costs of direct delivery of the activities rather than generic core costs?
	9. Does the applicant hold a UK bank account (as grants will usually be made through BACS)?
	10. Is the applicant able to offer an independent referee who can speak knowledgeably about the organisation?
	11. Have they agreed to return any grant which is not deployed within the agreed time?
	12. What light-touch monitoring would be appropriate for each grant made?
	13. Has the applicant satisfactorily reported on any previous SEF grant(s).
	14. Does the application meet the criteria of the particular fund of Southend Emergency Fund from which it would be awarded.
5. We expect the grants protocol will evolve over time, in light of the committee’s evolving experience.
6. The need for the fund will be reviewed periodically, following developments in the coronavirus pandemic and its effects on the local population.

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