

SHEFFIELD DISTRICT METHODIST CHURCH

DISTRICT LEARNING and DEVELOPMENT FUND

TERMS OF REFERENCE, GUIDANCE AND ALLOCATION CRITERIA

Please read these carefully before filling in the Grant Application

1. The District Learning and Development Fund is used to primarily support non-CDiM, learning and development activities of Methodists in the Sheffield District. Priority will be given to people who have no other learning and development grant entitlement, especially first time applicants, but applications from staff, including presbyters, will also be considered.
2. Applications for support from the Fund are welcomed from individuals, groups or churches who are seeking learning and development to fulfil their mission and ministry or develop skills to enable mission and ministry. There is an expectation that any application will also have already sought support at church and circuit level if appropriate¹.
3. Applications should be directed to the District Office for advice and consideration from the Learning and Development Working Group.
4. All grants will be dependent upon the availability of funds within the District Budget for Learning and Development. There is an expectation that any applicant will already have a decision on the level of support available from individuals/church and circuit. Grants will be considered at least 4 times per annum and decisions will be made and communicated within 4-6 weeks of the application (see the Sheffield District website and the Weekly Newsletter for details of the next deadline).
5. The Fund is available to support the following categories of learning activities:

5.1 Courses, workshops, study programmes and other learning events or activities

- Learning activities to develop individuals who have a District role (lay and ordained) as well as District groups/committees, where the learning event is directly relevant to that role and increases the capacity of the individual or group in their roles;
- Learning activities which develop lay individuals who do not have a District role but where the learning will make a significant contribution to mission and/or ministry across the District, across a Circuit or in an individual church;
- Learning and development activities which develop groups such as house-groups, or groups which have identified specific learning and development needs to fulfil their function eg nurture groups; children and youth work volunteers; worship groups.
- The level of support will be considered on an individual basis;
- Costs of attending courses, such as Mission Shaped Ministry (MSM); Encounter or Regional retreats, will be supported according to regional policy (normally 1/3 from individuals/church; 1/3 from circuit; 1/3 from district).

¹ We recognise that this support may not always be in financial terms, but may be in kind, for example: releasing a lay worker from their usual duties, or by offering the free use of premises for an event to take place.

5.2 Grants for Higher Education courses

- Applications for grants will be considered for ministers and lay employees towards the costs of substantial long-term part-time courses, normally up to a maximum of three years.
- Presbyters and deacons stationed in the district can apply for a grant in line with current Connexional policy. Grants will be awarded in line with the Connexional HE Grant-giving policy. <http://www.methodist.org.uk/learning/scholarship-research-and-innovation/scholarship/study-support>
- Lay employees (employed under S.O. 405 or 570/1/2) can apply for a grant as long as they are also financially supported by their employer. Grants will be given on the same basis as Connexional Scholastic Research and Innovation (SRI) Grants for courses that will make a significant contribution to their personal development and work within the District.

5.3 Learning Opportunities and activities

The provision of learning opportunities for the District, a Circuit or Church/group of Churches. However, we generally expect such learning events to be self-financed through modest charging.

5.4 Donations

Donations, agreed by the District, to outside bodies who are providing learning opportunities to Methodists in the District in line with District and/or Methodist Church priorities.

5.5 Learning & Development Costs

Costs to support the provision of learning and development activities organised within the District.

6. Applicants who receive funding will be expected to complete a simple feedback form on completion of the learning activity or the end of the grant period.