**THE METHODIST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM DISTRICT**

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY**

**Grant Policy and Process**

**Aim:**

The district will create a Training Fund to encourage, equip and enable the people of God to deepen their Christian discipleship and fulfil their vocation in accordance with Our Calling, with the priorities of the Methodist Church and with the District Policy.

**Means:**

The fund will be financed by an annual district training budget and administered through a standardised grant making process. Applications will be approved by at least two district officers (usually the treasurer and the chair), with disbursements made by the treasurer/finance officer.

**Purpose:**

The fund will have two purposes:

1. to give grants to individuals entering into training events or courses run by organisations and agencies external to the district.
2. to give grants to churches, circuits or groups providing training and development opportunities within the district.

**General Process:**

Applications will be made on the appropriate grant application form (Form A for individuals, Form B for groups), and sent to the District Office office@birminghammethodist.org.uk

Applications are welcomed from presbyters, deacons and individuals who are members of the Methodist Church.

Application forms should be counter-signed by an appropriate circuit superintendent or senior circuit steward. Churches and circuits are encouraged to offer financial support to individuals and groups undergoing training and vocational development. Individuals and groups are encouraged to seek support from their church and circuit in addition to applying for help from the District.

The treasurer will produce an annual summary of grants given (ie an analysis of “Training” costs within the annual accounts) as part of the report to the autumn District Council.

**Criteria:**

**a) Grants to individuals entering into training events or courses run by external organisations or agencies**

In order to qualify for a district grant, an individual must normally be resident, stationed or working within the district, or able to demonstrate that the training or vocational development in question will improve the district’s ability to address the aims and priorities of the Methodist Church.

It is assumed that those undergoing initial training for presbyteral or diaconal ministry will be funded by the Connexion and that therefore they will not normally be considered for grants from the District Training Fund. This is usually the case for probationers as well.

Grants to individuals will be considered for up to one third of the fees for a course, the remainder being funded by church/circuit/individual.

For presbyters, the funding split could be 50% circuit/50% district, depending on the nature of the course.

If the course is in connection with a person’s district role, district funding is 100%.

Grants given to presbyters and deacons will not normally cover the cost of travel, as it is assumed that ministers can reclaim travel costs from other sources. However, lay people are invited to note their travel costs as a separate item on their application, and up to one third of these costs may be included in the grant awarded.

Training grants for Higher Education further studies (eg MA, PhD) can be applied for from connexion, using the following links:

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning-and-development/scholarships-and-funding/>

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/25672/2022-he-funding-application.doc>

The district will consider small grants to cover top-up costs of further studies.

Providing sufficient funds are available, applications can be made at any time of year.

Grants will not normally be given to individuals going on unstructured, personally guided retreats. It is the district’s view that where the chief purpose of a retreat is an improvement in the applicant’s general spiritual health and wellbeing, or an applicant’s need for rest and recreation, it is not appropriate for a grant to be offered from the District Training Fund.

The district offers grants in the expectation that recipients will fulfil the requirements of the specified course/event in a satisfactory manner.

**3Generate and Amplify**

Grants are considered for up to one third of the cost per youngster.

**b) Grants to churches, circuits or groups providing training and development opportunities within the district.**

In order to qualify for a district grant, those providing training must be able to demonstrate that the course or event in question will relate to the District Policy, to Our Calling and to the priorities of the Methodist Church.

A grant may be given towards the following costs:

1. commissioning leaders and speakers
2. accommodation, travel and expenses of leaders and speakers
3. cost of room hire at the standard rate for the venue

For courses provided by churches, the district will consider funding of up to one third. Funding of up to 50% will be considered for courses provided by circuits. For other groups offering courses, the amount of district funding will be at the chair’s discretion.

***District Council - February 2023***