

Wiltshire Link Schemes Good Practice Guide 2021 Edition:

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Funding and Grants

COMMUNITY
FIRST



About this Guide

This Guide has been produced by Community First. It is intended to be used by Wiltshire Link Schemes both in the set up phase and as an on-going reference. It is based on the experience of the Link Schemes themselves, current legislation, and advice from a number of agencies.

Please note this Good Practice Guide is for guidance only. Each Link Scheme must review and amend documents, information, processes and policies to match their circumstances and needs.

In general, this Guide assumes that a Link Scheme is a Registered Charity (which is the case for most Link Schemes). If your scheme is not a Registered Charity, then guidance is included in Information Guide B. Community First is aware that other legal arrangements exist and may be chosen by Link Schemes, such as charitable incorporated organisation, charitable company, unincorporated association or trust. Advice is available from the Charity Commission.

You will find '(L)' in various places throughout the Guide. This is designed to help Link Schemes and direct their attention to legal requirements. Where (L) appears at the head of a sub-section this indicates the following section covers some legal requirements. Where (L) appears next to one or two items in a section these items are particular legal requirements. Please be aware that these distinctions are not always straightforward, and that general good management is also a legal requirement of charitable status.

There are also funding requirements. These are the criteria set by the funders of the Wiltshire Link Schemes, and apply to the Annual Grants Programme and the Small Grants Fund. These criteria are set out in Information Guide G (Section 5). These may occasionally change, but full notification and support will be given to Wiltshire Link Schemes to meet any new requirements.

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that information is accurate, this document is for guidance only and there is no assurance that it is a full statement of law. We do hope you find it useful, but no legal liability can be accepted by Community First or its employees.

Please check www.communityfirst.org.uk for updates and news.

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The Wiltshire Link Schemes Good Practice Guide 2021 is produced by Community First and replaces the previous (2016) Good Practice Guide.

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G1: New Link Schemes

Grants are available from funding partners to set up new Link Schemes in Wiltshire. The size of the grant will depend on the size of the proposed Link Scheme. This grant funding is managed by Community First on behalf of the funding partnership. Application forms and further information can be requested from Community First. See also Guide B.

G2: Grants and Donations

The Link Scheme service is free to clients (L) but they are asked to make a voluntary, anonymous donation in return for the services they receive.

Link Schemes obtain a significant proportion of their income in donations from clients. However, there is usually a shortfall between the cost of their journeys and the donations received. On average Link Schemes recover 90% of mileage expenses in donations.

Annual grants are available from Community First to support schemes operating with less than six months annual running costs.

Financial responsibility for the Link Scheme rests with the Management Committee not its volunteers or its clients.

G3: Guidance on Donations

The intention of this section is to provide guidance on how to operate an inclusive and appropriate donations policy that allows all clients to access the service whilst ensuring the Scheme's financial sustainability. A sample donations policy is available from Community First.

A robust and effective donations policy is central to the service provided by a Link Scheme and is also a requirement of grant aid from the statutory authorities. When setting your donations policy please remember the underlying ethos of the Wiltshire Link Schemes:

'While no direct charge is made by Wiltshire Link Schemes for the service they deliver, they do depend on the donations they receive in order to continue to operate.'

- Link Schemes are able to set their own donations policies but must take into account the following principles to minimise associated risk.
 - Be consistent. What applies to one client must be applied to all clients.
 - The support offered is not a means tested service. A client's ability to donate more should not be judged or the Link Scheme could risk severe legal consequences as a result of operating in a discriminatory way.
 - Donations must remain confidential from drivers. Not only does this ensure that clients of all financial standings are able to confidently utilise the Link Scheme but it ensures that drivers are protected against claims of operating for 'reward and hire' (L).

If a Link Scheme is concerned about the level of donations it is receiving, Community First recommends they occasionally remind their clients, perhaps on an annual basis, of the cost of running the service and give guidelines outlining suggested donations. This could be done by:

- Newsletters,
- A letter directly to each individual client,
- The co-ordinator informing clients from a standard example list, and
- An announcement at meetings and AGMs.

Community First does not recommend:

- Volunteer drivers directly telling clients the 'cost' of a journey, nor
- The carrying of lists which give costs or tariffs to show clients.

It is essential that donations are seen as donations and that they cannot be misconstrued as charges, payments or tariffs, as this could have an impact on the personal car insurance of the Volunteer Drivers who may be seen as offering a service from reward and hire (L). The best way to protect your Volunteer Drivers against this kind of risk is to ensure that the donations remain anonymous and confidential with a robust donations policy and procedure in place.

Journeys outside Wiltshire

Wiltshire Link Schemes are being asked more frequently to support clients to attend medical appointments at hospitals outside Wiltshire. For most Wiltshire Link Schemes this may have a severe financial impact. To mitigate this impact as much as possible, a Link Scheme may implement a policy asking for a donation for all journeys over a set mileage (the Link Project suggests 50 miles). This requested donation must be equal to or less than the actual cost of the journey to the Link Scheme.

For example:

- The journey is a 63 miles round trip.
- Link Scheme mileage rate = 45p/mile.
- The Link Scheme is able to ask for a donation of up to £28.35, i.e. 63 x 45p.

If a Link Scheme decides to implement this policy, then it must be implemented in full, for all clients.

G4: Grants from the Funding Partnership

A Funding Partnership has been established between Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire NHS Clinical Commissioning Group and Community First (via Community First).

Annual grants

Annual grants are available from Community First to supplement income received through donations and fundraising activity. The amount of grant that can be claimed is based on the number of journeys and tasks completed over a one year period. To be eligible for operational grant support Link Schemes are required to have no more than six months unreserved running costs in any account/s and to have certain policies and procedures in place. The full criteria and documentation requirements are set out on the application form as agreed by the funding partnership. For full details see Section G.5.

Development and Innovation Grants

Grants of up to £1,000 are available throughout the year to help schemes invest in their development or trial a new idea. Grants may cover a range of non-revenue activities including equipment, marketing and feasibility studies.

Emergency Grants

If any Scheme has any financial concerns or is experiencing any type of financial difficulties, please contact Community First. Emergency grants are available in exceptional circumstances.

G5: Statutory Funding Grant Aid Criteria

Service Level Agreement

The funding partnership has negotiated a Service Level Agreement under which Community First (via Community First) will distribute grant aid to Wiltshire Link Schemes.

Link Schemes are able to apply for one off grants allocated to Link Schemes according to the number of journeys and tasks carried out.

Journeys and Tasks undertaken per year	Maximum grant available
Over 2,000	£5,200
Over 1,000	£3,600
Over 500	£2,600
Under 500	£1,200

Figures relating to the population and miles travelled will be used as 'back up' criteria.

Schemes which are adversely affected by the above criteria or who are experiencing financial difficulty will be assessed individually and may be eligible for a one-off payment to assist with any deficit.

The following grant funding criteria apply.

Providing a service to the local population (within the defined area covered by the scheme) which meets the general requirements as set out in Section A.

1. Meeting standards of Good Practice, and providing evidence if requested.
2. Confirming that the scheme meets all legal and regulatory requirements.
3. Equal opportunities policy on place.

4. Complaints procedure in place.
5. Grievance procedure in place.
6. No balance, in any account, of more than six months unreserved running costs⁹.
7. Link Co-ordinator role description, support procedures and contract in place.
8. Volunteer Recruitment and Induction procedures and ongoing volunteer system in place.
9. Donations policy in place.
10. Volunteer expenses procedure in line with all relevant HMRC regulations.
11. Protection of adults who need more care and support policy in place.
12. All Link Scheme volunteers, and all those trustees and committee members likely to be in contact with clients, are DBS checked. Preferably all trustees and committee members should be DBS checked.
13. Recording and providing data annually on all trips and tasks undertaken as requested by the Link Project.
14. Forward to Community First with the grant application:
 - Annual Report of Chairperson.
 - Annual Report of Co-ordinator.
 - Most recent annual accounts, independently examined (unaudited accounts accepted).
 - Proposed budget for next financial year.

G6: Development and Innovation Grants

Small development and innovation grants are now available for all Wiltshire Link Schemes. These funds are administered by Community First on behalf of the funding partnership via the Grant Fund. All decisions are based on the guidelines below.

- A maximum of £1,000 can be applied for to cover the total costs of a project or towards part funding of a project.
- Grants can be for specific projects (including publicity) and/or items of equipment to be purchased which will be of benefit to the individual Scheme.
- A minimum of two separate quotes for work requested or equipment should be obtained where appropriate and submitted with the application form.
- Applications can be submitted at any time of the year and each will be dealt with on its own merits.
- Normal grant criteria as in Section G.5 apply, however, reserves will be taken into account but having more than 6 months does not preclude you from applying
- A current financial statement should be submitted.

G7: Alternative Sources of Funding

Community First staff are able to provide funding advice on request.

01380 738989

www.wiltshirecf.org.uk

Further funding advice can also be sought from:

Wiltshire Community Foundation, Sandcliffe House, 21
Northgate St, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 1JX

⁹ New Link Schemes (i.e. those who have been operating for less than 3 years from the launch date) will be exempt from the general rule on reserves. Application forms from these Schemes will be assessed according to their individual situation.

G8: Local Town and Parish Councils

Wiltshire Link Schemes are strongly supported throughout Wiltshire by local government. As a result local town or parish councils are a good source of additional funding and should be approached to financially support a local Link Scheme.

The Parish or Town Council can contribute through their powers under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 s26.

G9: Local Fund Raising

There may be a need for some local fund-raising to supplement income from donations and grant aid. A small fund raising event can:

- raise money,
- provide an opportunity for committee members, volunteers and users to get together,
- raise the profile of the Scheme,
- provide an opportunity to recruit volunteers, and
- be good fun!

Some ideas to begin with

- Stalls at local events.
- Coffee mornings.
- Bring and Buy.
- Selling Christmas goods e.g. through the Webb Ivory catalogue.
- Selling promotional goods e.g. pens, key fobs, sweatshirts, t-shirts.
- Collection tins can be left in reasonably secure locations, e.g. doctors' surgeries, libraries, local shops, pubs.

Regular events

Individual Link Schemes often run their own regular events which combine fundraising with bringing everyone together and sometimes with submitting mileage claims and paying out expenses.

Other organisations

Other local organisations may consider supporting the Link Scheme from their local fundraising drives, e.g. carnival committees, hospital leagues of friends, darts teams, churches.

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Other Information Guides:

1. **Guide A:** Link Schemes and Community First
2. **Guide B:** Setting up a Link Scheme
3. **Guide C:** Link Management Committee and Trusteeship
4. **Guide D:** Link Coordinators
5. **Guide E:** Volunteer Recruitment and Support
6. **Guide F:** Volunteer Activity and Guidance
7. **Guide G:** Funding and Grants
8. **Guide H:** Gift Aid
9. **Guide I:** Risk Management and GDPR
10. **Guide J:** Operational Policies
11. **Guide K:** AGMs and Other Meetings

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The above guides are available to view and download on our website along with an Annex including guidelines, templates and other resources:

www.communityfirst.org.uk/transport/link/link-scheme-gpg

