**A single application form … a more joined up service.**

Following a review of the emergency grant [EG] process and a discussion by the board of trustees; and with a view to delivering an improved service to members; we have made changes to the There for You grant application form and process.

With immediate effect we have withdrawn the EG form. All applications are reviewed by a member of the casework team within 24 hours of receipt to enable us to identify and respond to the cases which require a faster assessment.

**Why do we believe that this is the right way forward**

The original EG process was introduced in the days when EGs were received in the post and supporting docs were also received in the post, so even an EG could take up to a week to process. EGs were submitted via the branch and were always intended to be followed up by a full application.

Now EGs and supporting docs are received by email and dealt with in 24 hours. The vast majority of EGs do not lead to the member submitting a full application. The number of EGs has increased and they are moving away from the charity’s eligibility criteria i.e., “in financial difficulty due to unforeseen circumstances”.

Processing EGs is having a negative impact on the timeframe for assessment of main grant applications and leading to perverse outcomes where members, whose situation is not the result of unforeseen circumstances, are receiving priority over members who are in financial difficulty due to unforeseen circumstances and who end up waiting longer for the outcome of their application.

**What are the benefits of the changes we have introduced**

A more holistic approach in which:

* Caseworkers will have better information to be able to properly assess the members circumstances
* Members will receive the appropriate level of support and assistance
* Cases will still be prioritised for assessment appropriately with the most urgent cases having the fastest turnaround time

**Prioritisation Categories**

* Pr 1: assessment to commence within 48 working hours of receipt.
* Pr 2: assessment to commence within 5 working days of receipt.
* Pr 3: assessment to commence within 15 working days of receipt.
* Pr 4: corrective action required by the member and/or branch before the application can be progressed.

Whilst we aim to adhere to our prioritisation categorised turnaround times, like many charities at the moment, the increase in demand for services has meant that we're not currently meeting our targets. Pr 1 and Pr 2 cases are still being assigned within the timeframes listed above. We are actively working to bring our turnaround times on Pr 3 cases back to within the turnaround times.

In summary having a single application form will enable us to deliver a better service for the individual applicants and a fairer service to our members.