



Scouts

1st Virginia Water

Hardship Policy

Approved by the Trustee Board for use on

3rd December 2025

Date of Review

Every 3 years or after an unforeseen event to which the group has suffered financial loss.

Aim(s) of this policy

1st Virginia Water Scout Group's leadership team and Trustee Board (referred to throughout this policy as the group leadership team) recognise that families involved in our group in **any** capacity may occasionally struggle with managing the costs of living, this policy aims to outline the policy and procedures that the group leadership team must adhere to in the event that a case of financial hardship is disclosed to any member of the leadership team.

Our hardship policy aims to provide various means of financial support including, but not limited to the subsidising of, subscription payments, uniform, camps and events that a young person may take part in.

Applying for support

If a parent is facing significant financial issues which affect their ability to cover Scouting-related costs (thus compromising a young person's ability to attend an event or, worst case scenario, compromising their membership status at 1st Virginia Water), then they must alert their **Section Team Leader** as soon as possible to initiate the process of organising a Financial Hardship Support Package (FHSP) discussion, a documented discussion with details outlined below.

Notice for Team Leader(s): Please ensure that all disclosures are kept strictly confidential and please remind the parents that their details will need to be given to the trustee board to arrange this discussion.

The Financial Hardship Support Package (FHSP) discussions

1st Virginia Water Scout Group recognises that every financial hardship case requires a case-by-case review. FHSP discussions will take place with an *absolute minimum* of two members of the Trustee Board, one of which will be the Group Lead Volunteer and the Treasurer. The structure of the conversation will be as follows:

1. The Trustee Board will thank the family member for their courage in stepping forward to disclose the necessary information.
2. The Trustee Board will consider any evidence that is provided (where applicable), evidence can include (but is not limited to) letter(s) from local authorities or schools declaring that a child is eligible for Pupil Premium benefits within an educational setting **OR** Free School Meals.

Please be advised that, whilst this information is requested, we do respect that it is confidential information that you may not wish to share, we only request to view these

*documents, **no trustee will ever take copies of these documents**, it is purely for speeding up the FHSP process.*

Reviewing and Agreeing FHSPs

Three Trustee Board members will review any drafted FHSP packages and two 'named responsible Trustees' will be assigned to the FHSP. These Trustees will remain responsible for agreeing any further necessary discussions regarding changes of circumstances as well as ensuring that the terms agreed upon in the FHSP are being upheld. In the event that a named responsible trustee ceases to be a Trustee a new named responsible trustee will be agreed upon and the parent will be notified with an updated FHSP document.

Necessary Discussions

A necessary discussion is entirely at the discretion of the Trustee Board and, should a necessary discussion be requested, you will be required to attend the discussion or risk voiding the terms set out in the FHSP.

In the event of a dispute or a lack of agreement of terms set out, the Trustee Board will take it to review as an agenda topic at the next Trustee Board meeting and the final documented vote at the following Trustee Board meeting will be the **final** decision. Please be advised that there is no recourse for appeals.

Changes of Circumstances

Any FHSP forms will include a broad overview of financial hardship faced as well as any support that has been agreed upon. We do request that if there are any changes to the financial circumstances after the FHSP has been put in place, either the 'named responsible Trustees'^[1] or the Group Lead Volunteer (where different) are notified.

Equally, if the group faces a change of circumstances which should affect the ability for the group to fulfil the terms set in the FHSP, this will be communicated to you as soon as reasonably possible.

Sensitive Information Handling

The group recognises that the nature of applying for financial support, and the details provided within any FHSP documents are sensitive. We will always keep this in the strictest of confidence and operate on a 'need to know' basis and information will be stored in line with The Scout Association's GDPR policy [2].

FHSP documents will be stored under the "Care Plan" tab on the Online Scout Manager software, which allows the necessary members of the group leadership team access to this FHSP to ensure the terms are being met.

If there are any concerns regarding the FHSP terms, please email the Group Lead Volunteer on glv@1stviriniawater.org.uk

If there are any issues regarding policy compliance, please email the Chair of Trustees on chair@1stviriniawater.org.uk

Reference List

[1] FHSP → Financial Hardship Support Package

[2] The Scout Association's GDPR (Data Protection) Policy.
<https://www.scouts.org.uk/about-us/policy/data-protection-policy/>