St Martin's Charity Sustaining Accommodation Fund

St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity is committed to ensuring everyone has a safe place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

This funding programme was designed and piloted with frontline workers in direct response to what people told us was needed to help people sustain accommodation and prevent homelessness or repeat homelessness.

The fund provides direct support to individuals, while also enabling us to continue to test, learn and build an evidence base around what helps people sustain accommodation. In doing so, we hope to strengthen the case for others to develop similar, flexible funding approaches.

Flexibility and agency are central to the fund, recognising that people and those who support them are best placed to determine what is needed.

The Sustaining Accommodation Fund

The fund offers block grants of up to £5,000 per organisation to remove barriers to help sustain people in accommodation and improve their housing stability. Further funding may be considered where the initial grant has been used effectively and additional funds are available. We envisage we will make around 30-40 grants of up to £5,000.

The grants provide a flexible fund of up to £500 per person, which can be accessed as needed to help sustain accommodation. Shifting away from crisis towards a holistic, preventative approach and adopting a more flexible funding model where frontline workers and those they support have greater agency to decide what would make a meaningful difference to their housing stability.

Research, frontline worker engagement and our pilot fund evidenced that the types of things that are often needed but difficult to resource are items such as essential household items, equipment to help manage a home, transport costs, digital access/set up and one-off costs that help people access or maintain support and / or local networks. For example, gym membership or an art class to tackle social isolation.

We will not be prescriptive about what funding can be spent on as long as the following principles are adhered to:

1. The recipient is accessing support and through that support identifies a personalised package of financial assistance that would help them keep their accommodation.
2. There is a link between the grant and tenancy sustainment.

We encourage organisations to use local Crisis and Resilience Funds or other available local support first. This fund should be used only when these options have been exhausted, and financial support is still needed. Funds cannot be used for rent in advance, deposits, ID, storage or relocation costs, which are covered by our Emergency Grants (VRF), or for ongoing bills and daily living expenses.

Note that whilst there are no restrictions on how long a person needs to have been in their tenancy to be eligible, we encourage uptake across a person's housing journey not just at the outset.

Key features of the Sustaining Accommodation Fund

- Flexible
- Timely – available when needed to respond quickly and with ease
- Agency and trust in frontline workers to work with people they support to define need.

Who we will fund

We recognise that there are many charities who would benefit from our support but, like any funder, we have a limit to the resources we have available. We want to be open and transparent with charities and make best use of time by being clear in advance who we will fund.

Funding is available to organisations in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland who:

- Have an annual income of less than £2 million per year
- Are a registered charity (this can be as a CIO) with a Board of at least 3 unrelated Trustees
- Will make awards through employees (not through volunteers or people in unpaid roles)
- Have its own bank account and a way of accounting for how funds are allocated and spent
- Have free reserves of less than 12 months' operating costs
- Have at least one set of annual accounts published on the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, Charity Commission for England and Wales, or Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator websites, having a track record of delivering services for more than a year
- Have a safeguarding policy in place.

Where demand for funding is high, we will aim to fund people and places that experience high need and tend to be less able to access other forms of financial assistance.

We want to tell your story and would look, where appropriate, to include stories of your work in our communications and fundraising activity.

Our approach to safeguarding

St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity is committed to promoting the safety of everyone supported by the organisations we fund. We recognise and take seriously our responsibility to promote the welfare of adults at risk and children, where we become aware of any safeguarding concerns. As part of our assessment, we will review your safeguarding policy and practice. We also have our own safeguarding policy and processes to ensure concerns are managed effectively.

Monitoring and Evaluation approach

Successful organisations will be expected to report regularly on grant spend and attend occasional learning meetings with other funded organisations to discuss and reflect on how funds have been spent, who has benefitted, how the funding has contributed to encouraging and supporting tenancy sustainment and people to move on and away from homelessness and rough sleeping, the processes in place to administer funds and delivery challenges.

We will capture the data, learning, insights and impact and will use this to help inform the future development of our work in this area.

Successful organisations will receive a named contact from St-Martin-in-the-Fields Charity to ask any questions, advice or guidance.

Next steps

Please complete our application form. We are working to the following timeframe:

- 2nd November at 9am – fund opens for applications
- 11th November at 10.30am – information session to hear more about this fund
- **27th November at 5pm – closing date for applications**
- By 15th January – funding decisions communicated
- January 2027 grant agreements signed, successful organisations to start utilising funds.
- Monitoring & evaluation