

## **Funding Applications Policy and Procedures**

### **Guidelines for the Equitable and Efficient Allocation of Funded Services**

#### **1. Introduction**

Access to high-quality self-help services for individuals experiencing mild to moderate mental health challenges is essential to both individual recovery and broader community wellbeing.

This policy outlines the principles, procedures, and standards governing the assessment and allocation of funded service placements. Its purpose is to ensure that funding is distributed fairly, transparently, and in a manner that respects the dignity, privacy, and individual circumstances of each applicant.

#### **2. Scope and Objectives**

This policy applies to all funding applications submitted by individuals, or their representatives, seeking access to funded services.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure equitable access to funded services
- Establish a transparent and accountable application process
- Safeguard confidentiality and uphold applicants' rights
- Promote timely decision-making and clear communication
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of funding allocation

#### **3. Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- Be a resident of Shropshire, Telford, or Staffordshire
- Demonstrate a clear need for the services offered
- Provide all required documentation as specified in the application form

Priority consideration may be given to individuals with urgent needs, those from underserved or marginalised communities, and applicants with disabilities or complex circumstances.

It is important to note that the organisation provides self-help services for mild to moderate mental health concerns only. Applicants must be sufficiently stable and able to actively participate in programmes and training. These services do not constitute clinical mental health treatment, therapy, or counselling.

## **4. Application Process**

### **4.1 Submission of Applications**

Applications must be submitted using the official funding application form, available online or in paper format upon request. The form requires:

- Personal identification and contact details
- A description of the services requested
- Supporting documentation (as outlined in Section 3)
- Consent for the collection and processing of personal data in accordance with applicable privacy legislation

Support will be provided to applicants who require assistance due to language barriers, disabilities, or other accessibility needs.

### **Application Requirements and Initial Review**

1. All applicants must complete the application via the Self Empowerment Foundation website or by submitting a paper form.
2. Applications will be reviewed by the Self Empowerment Foundation ensure completeness, including confirmation that:
  - All mandatory fields are completed
  - The medical disclaimer has been acknowledged
  - Evidence of income is provided where applicable
3. Where formal means testing is not applied, a balanced and sensitive approach will be used to understand an applicant's ability to contribute. This may include:
  - Willingness to make voluntary financial contributions
  - Engagement with self-help strategies
  - Participation in peer support or feedback activities
4. Any voluntary contribution will not influence eligibility or access to services. These contributions are entirely optional and intended to encourage shared ownership and community engagement.
5. All applicants must attend a Wellbeing Assessment (online or in person) to determine service suitability and confirm the appropriateness of support requested.

During the Wellbeing Assessment, it will be confirmed that the applicant understands the nature of the service, including that it is not a substitute for clinical or therapeutic interventions. Participation requires the ability to engage with self-help methodologies, including the SEJ Process.

## **4.2 Receipt and Acknowledgement**

All applications will be assigned a unique reference number upon receipt. Applicants will receive acknowledgement within five (5) working days and will be invited to attend a Wellbeing Assessment.

Following the assessment, applicants will be informed of the expected decision timeframe, typically within ten (10) working days.

## **4.3 Preliminary Assessment**

Applications will be screened for eligibility and completeness. Incomplete submissions will be returned with clear guidance on required amendments.

## **4.4 Detailed Review**

Eligible applications will undergo an initial review by the Self Empowerment Foundation and the designated provider of the service/event for audit and quality assurance purposes within 30 days of approval.

As the Self Empowerment Foundation develops, the review function may include input from professionals such as mental health specialists, financial advisors, and community representatives.

Assessment criteria include:

- Urgency of need
- Suitability and evidence base of the requested service
- Financial circumstances
- Expected outcomes and potential impact
- Previous funding received

All reviews will be conducted fairly, without discrimination, and in accordance with relevant equality legislation.

## **4.5 Decision and Notification**

Applicants will be notified of the outcome within fifteen (15) working days of their Wellbeing Assessment. Notification will include:

- The application outcome (approved, partially approved, or declined)
- Details of the service awarded (which may differ from the original request)
- Any conditions attached to the funding
- Information on appeals or review procedures

- Instructions to accept or decline the offer within 21 days or prior to the agreed start date

All decisions will be formally recorded for audit and quality assurance purposes.

## **5. Funding Provision**

Funding is not provided directly to applicants. Instead, services are delivered free of charge by SEJ Consultants and Trainers, either fully or partially funded, based on eligibility and assessment outcomes.

## **6. Monitoring and Reporting**

Recipients of funded services are required to complete a User Feedback Form in line with their funding agreement.

This information supports service evaluation, accountability, and continuous improvement. Failure to meet reporting requirements may impact future eligibility.

## **7. Privacy and Confidentiality**

All personal data will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and best practice standards.

Access to applicant information is restricted to authorised personnel only and will not be shared with third parties without consent, unless required by law.

## **8. Appeals and Complaints**

Applicants have the right to appeal decisions or raise concerns regarding the application process. Appeals must be submitted in writing within twenty (20) working days of notification.

Where possible, appeals will be reviewed by an independent panel in accordance with principles of fairness and natural justice.

In cases where the organisation operates with a single director, that individual will oversee the appeals process, ensuring transparency, impartiality, and full documentation of decisions.

## **9. Review of Decisions**

Applicants may request a formal review by submitting a written appeal within the specified timeframe. The review process will consider all relevant information and any additional evidence provided.

Outcomes will be communicated promptly, with a continued commitment to fairness, transparency, and constructive engagement.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Applicants:** Provide accurate and complete information and comply with reporting requirements
- The **Self Empowerment Foundation:** Manage application intake, acknowledgement, and initial screening
- **Service Providers:** Deliver services in accordance with policy and organisational guidance

## **11. Review and Continuous Improvement**

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continued relevance, effectiveness, and fairness. Feedback from applicants, stakeholders, and service providers will inform ongoing improvements.

## **12. Policy Communication**

This policy will be publicly available via the organisation's website and in accessible formats upon request. Relevant staff will receive training on its implementation.

## **13. Service Withdrawal**

The organisation reserves the right to withdraw funded services where an individual is not actively engaging with the agreed programme.

Before any withdrawal, the applicant will be informed of concerns and given a fair opportunity to respond or improve participation.

Further details are outlined in the relevant supporting policies.

## **14. Supporting Documentation Guidelines**

Clear documentation requirements ensure transparency, accountability, and consistency in decision-making. These measures help applicants understand expectations and support fair allocation of resources.

## **15. References and Supporting Documents**

- Funding Application Form
- Privacy Statement
- Medical Disclaimer
- Appeals and Complaints Procedures

- Reasons for Non-Allocation of Funded Services
- Refund Policy

### **Conclusion**

This policy reflects the organisation's commitment to reducing financial barriers, supporting access to self-help services, and strengthening community wellbeing.

Through fair, transparent, and accountable processes, the organisation aims to deliver services that uphold dignity, promote engagement, and support meaningful outcomes for all participants.

This document was updated in April 2026