

Patient Experience Funding Guidelines

Guidance for Staff Applying for Charity Funding

About This Guidance

As an independent NHS charity, we support initiatives that improve the **experience of patients, families, and carers** across the Trust.

Patient experience is shaped by many factors, including:

- Care environment
- Comfort and dignity
- Emotional wellbeing
- Support for families and carers

Charitable funding enhances these areas “**above and beyond**” what the NHS provides as core services.

This document explains:

- What we can fund
- What we cannot fund
- What we look for in applications

Funding is designed to **enhance—not replace—core NHS provision**.

Our aim is to ensure funding delivers **meaningful improvements to patient experience**, while being used fairly and responsibly.

What We Can Fund

1. Enhancing Patient Environments

- Improvements to wards, waiting areas, and clinical spaces
- Therapeutic or calming environments (e.g. sensory rooms, lighting, décor)
- Outdoor or wellbeing spaces
- Relatives' accommodation or quiet areas
- Patient-friendly bathroom or personal care environments

2. Equipment & Experience Enhancements

- Enhanced Equipment (medical and non-medical)
- Sensory equipment for patients with additional needs
- Distraction tools (e.g. for procedures or paediatric care)
- Entertainment or engagement resources

3. Comfort, Dignity & Experience

- Equipment that improves comfort, privacy, or dignity (e.g. recliners, screens)
- Support for anxious or vulnerable patients
- Communication tools or distress-reducing solutions
- Enhancements during treatment or recovery

4. Emotional Wellbeing & Holistic Care

- Art, music, or creative therapies
- Complementary therapies or relaxation initiatives
- Structured wellbeing or mindfulness programmes
- Emotional support interventions

5. Family & Carer Support

- Facilities or spaces for relatives and carers
- Bereavement spaces
- Areas for sensitive conversations

6. Innovation & Pilot Projects

- New or evidence-based approaches
- Time-limited pilot initiatives
- Projects with evaluation and potential for wider rollout

What We Cannot Fund

Core NHS Responsibilities

- Regular staffing costs, salaries, or backfill
- Core clinical services or treatment
- Standard or replacement clinical equipment
- Routine operational or re-current costs

Mandatory or Statutory Requirements

- Estates maintenance or repairs
- Infrastructure or compliance costs
- Utilities, cleaning, or facilities management
- Standard basic hospital furniture required by the ward/ service
- Essential fixtures

Other Exclusions

- Projects already funded through NHS budgets
 - Shortfall funding for services
 - Requests primarily addressing operational pressures
 - Individual-only benefit without wider impact
-

What We Are Unlikely to Fund

- Projects without clear patient benefit
 - One-off items with limited or short-term impact
 - Requests lacking evidence of need or impact
 - Proposals that do not demonstrate added value
-

Additional Guidance

1. Can staff costs be included?

Yes – but only where:

- they directly relate to the project you are applying for.

- They are temporary and project-specific

We cannot fund:

- Permanent posts
- Core staffing or service delivery

The Charity Fund the **project** and the costs related to delivering that project, not individual staff salaries.

2. Do projects need to be evidence-based?

Yes, where possible. Strong applications:

- Demonstrate clear need
- Use evidence or best practice
- Include measurable outcomes

Innovative projects are welcome with clear evaluation plans.

3. Do projects need to benefit all patients?

No. Projects may focus on:

- Specific departments
- Patient groups with particular needs

However, they must:

- Be fair and proportionate
 - Deliver meaningful wider benefit
-

4. Do projects need to be Trust-wide?

No. We can support individual areas. These will be judged on a case-by-case basis

All projects must show **clear need and impact**.

Do projects need evidence?

Yes. Applications should include:

- A clear need or rationale
- Expected outcomes
- How impact will be measured

(Evaluation is required for grants over £25,000)

Before You Apply

Ask yourself:

- Does this improve patient experience or wellbeing?
- Is this beyond what the NHS should provide?
- Is the benefit clear, meaningful, and measurable?
- Will it benefit a wider group of patients?
- Is it proportionate and sustainable?

If yes, your project is likely suitable.

Contact Us

If you are in doubt as to whether Charity funding would be available, or would like to talk through your idea, please contact the Grants Team.

nuhnt.charitygrants@nhs.net