



About the Fund

Who's who in the Fund?

Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund comprises five Trustees and nine Regional Reps.

The Trustees are: Neil Woodhead (Chairman), Shirley Priestley (Treasurer), Judy Whiteside (Secretary), Huw Birrell and Bill Whitehouse.

Each region is represented by a dedicated representative, appointed by their region. In 2017, these are: Laura Connolly (Lakes), Keith Gillies (Mid Pennine), Carl Faulkner (North East), Dave Worrall (North Wales), Grant Whiteside (Peak District), Roger King (Peninsula), Ian Cousins (South Wales), Bob Scurr (Yorkshire Dales) and Pete Allwright (Cave Rescue). There is currently no rep for the South West region.

What is the Fund and what does it do?

Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund is a registered charity (number 1152798). It was set up to help alleviate hardship suffered by individuals or their families which has arisen in connection with a mountain and/or cave rescue operation.

Do Mountain Rescue England & Wales (MREW) and the British Cave Rescue Council (BCRC) have any influence over the workings of the Fund and its decision-making?

No. Any decisions are made solely by the Fund's Trustees and Regional Reps.

Making a claim

Can the Fund provide me with short-term assistance?

Yes. An Immediate Support Grant can be awarded up to £1000. The application form must still be completed, signed and supported by the relevant team leader or other team official.

This initial grant may be subject to subsequent adjustment or repayment if the Trustees consider any further, fuller claim is not appropriate.

Is there an upper limit to any single Benevolence Award?

No. We take each claim on its own merits. There is no upper limit to the amount which may be awarded, but the amount awarded is at the discretion of the Trustees and Regional Reps, following full consideration of any supporting information.

Will details of my claim be shared with MREW or BCRC, especially where the claim is for an injury sustained on a call-out?

There are no arrangements for sharing such information and, in any case, the Fund is an entirely independent charity, neither governed by nor answerable to MREW and BCRC.

How are Trustees and Regional Reps appointed to the Fund?

Trustees are elected within the Fund and appointed for an initial term of five years and may then be re-elected for a further five years. When a vacancy occurs, any potential Trustee will be interviewed for the role by the existing Trustees.

Regional Reps are appointed by their region and expected to stay in their role for three years. They may then continue for a second term of three years.

How do I contact the Secretary?

Via the online contact form.

How will you identify and prevent potentially fraudulent claims?

Although we sincerely hope this won't be the case, checks and balances have been put in place to minimise this possibility where we can. And we reserve the right to consult with outside agencies and take legal advice as appropriate.

The Fund has a Reserves Policy and must operate within the limits of funds available, relative to minimum levels required by the Charity Commission and our ability to continue operation as a charity. This may have a bearing on any claim assessments.

Who can apply?

Any member of any England and Wales mountain and cave rescue team. Family members may also apply, if they have been directly affected by the team member's (or their own) involvement with a mountain or cave rescue operation which has resulted in their hardship or suffering.

Individuals outside the immediate mountain and cave rescue 'family' may apply if they have been seconded into an operation led by an England and Wales mountain or cave rescue team and suffer hardship as result of a consequent incident or accident.

1: FAQs

How do I apply?

You can apply both electronically and by hard copy. A pdf of the application form is available from the Secretary. This must be printed out and signed. It can then be scanned and returned via email, or sent by post. If you would like a copy of the form, go to Contact Us on the website.

An official benevolence application form MUST be completed in full, and supported by your team leader or other suitable team official. If you are not a team member, your application must be supported by the team leader or other suitable official of the lead team in the operation.

You can either submit your application through your Regional Rep or directly to the Secretary.

Your application form must be completed, signed and supported correctly before a claim can go before the Trustees. The Secretary has the right to reject and return any claim form which is incomplete.

You must clearly note on your application form, and in any correspondence, whether your application is for an Immediate Support Grant.

Can I request a particular sum?

Any award will be at the discretion of the Trustees, following full consideration of your claim, which may include other factors such as your personal circumstances, medical issues and any other insurance or benevolence claims.

Will I have to repay any or all of the award?

Again, this will be at the discretion of the Trustees. An award may take the form of a short-term loan, in which case you will be expected to agree terms for repayment.

In the event of a false claim or failure to repay any agreed loan, we reserve the right to pursue the appropriate legal action to recover the charity's money.

What information am I asked to provide on application?

Section 1 of the application form asks for personal details, employment status and details and your relationship/involvement with mountain and cave rescue.

Section 2 asks for details of the assistance you require and details of any other benevolent funds you may have applied to.

Section 3 is a consent form, which requires the date and your signature.

Section 4 asks for details of the mountain or cave rescue official who is supporting your claim, a date and signature.

Section 5 is a medical consent form, asking for details of your injury/condition, name and address of your GP/consultant, and details of how long you anticipate being incapacitated. This too requires a name, address, date and signature.

Can my application be completed over the telephone?

No. We require your signature, a supporting signature from a team official and your signed medical consent.

How long will it take to process my claim?

The time frame will depend upon the complexity of your case and the level of documentation required. We will aim to process an Immediate Support Grant within six days of the Secretary receiving a completed application form.

A full Benevolence Award will need further consideration and may require further supporting documentation. We will aim to inform you of a decision to accept or decline an application within a further three working days.

Please remember that we are all volunteers too, so these timescales may be subject to Trustees being available and all relevant information having been submitted, but we will keep you informed throughout the process.

What happens after I send in my application form?

Once your claim has been through the initial assessment process, to determine whether an Immediate Support grant is necessary, the Trustees will request any relevant documentation from you, before calling a full meeting of the Trustees and Regional Reps.

The Regional Reps will assess your application and make their recommendation to the Trustees whether to reject or accept your claim (with a recommended award level) or request further documentation if further assessment is required.

The Trustees will consider this recommendation and make a final decision to either reject or accept your application, and determine the amount you will be awarded.

Is my application confidential?

Yes. The Trustees and Regional Reps are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. In fact, the information put before the Regional Reps will be redacted of any identifying detail and no documents related to your claim will be taken away from this meeting. No information relative to your claim will be shared electronically.

2: FAQs

Who will see my personal details?

The Trustees and any other professional called upon (eg. your doctor). We may also need to share information with insurers.

Your personal details will be redacted from any documentation shared with the Regional Reps, so any recommendations they make in their assessment of your claim are based purely on merit.

Can I claim for mental health issues resulting from an incident or training which require counselling?

Yes. We would look at all the relevant information and make an assessment in the same way as for any other claim.

Could any pay-out I receive affect any benefits or other insurance claims I may make?

Yes. You should disclose any monies you receive from the Fund when submitting any other claims, and vice versa.

How many times can I make a claim?

You may claim once per single incident or need.

If I disagree with the Trustees' decision, can I appeal?

Yes. If you feel the decision to be unfair, you must notify the Secretary within 14 days of the decision date.

The Trustees will meet within the next 21 days to review your complaint and to establish whether any new evidence has arisen since the initial assessment, then decide whether to review your case. This may include independent assessment of the process and conclusions drawn. Once this has been done, the Trustees' decision remains final.

Where the money comes from

Where does the Fund get its money from?

From charitable donations.

What if my team has chosen not to pay into the Fund, can I still donate?

Yes, of course, anyone can donate.

Is there a fixed donation?

No. Regions, teams and individuals are welcome to make donations as one-off payments, regular standing orders, legacies or, indeed, multiple donations.

Does a greater contribution from my region/team earn me the right to a greater benevolence award or a greater say in assessment of my application?

No. All claims are treated equally on their own merits. Reps will be unaware who you are, and which team you are connected to, when they consider your application.

Can I fundraise for the Fund?

Of course! We'd be delighted if you did. Contact the Secretary for a sponsorship form and to register your intention to raise funds.

Can the Fund claim Gift Aid on my donation?

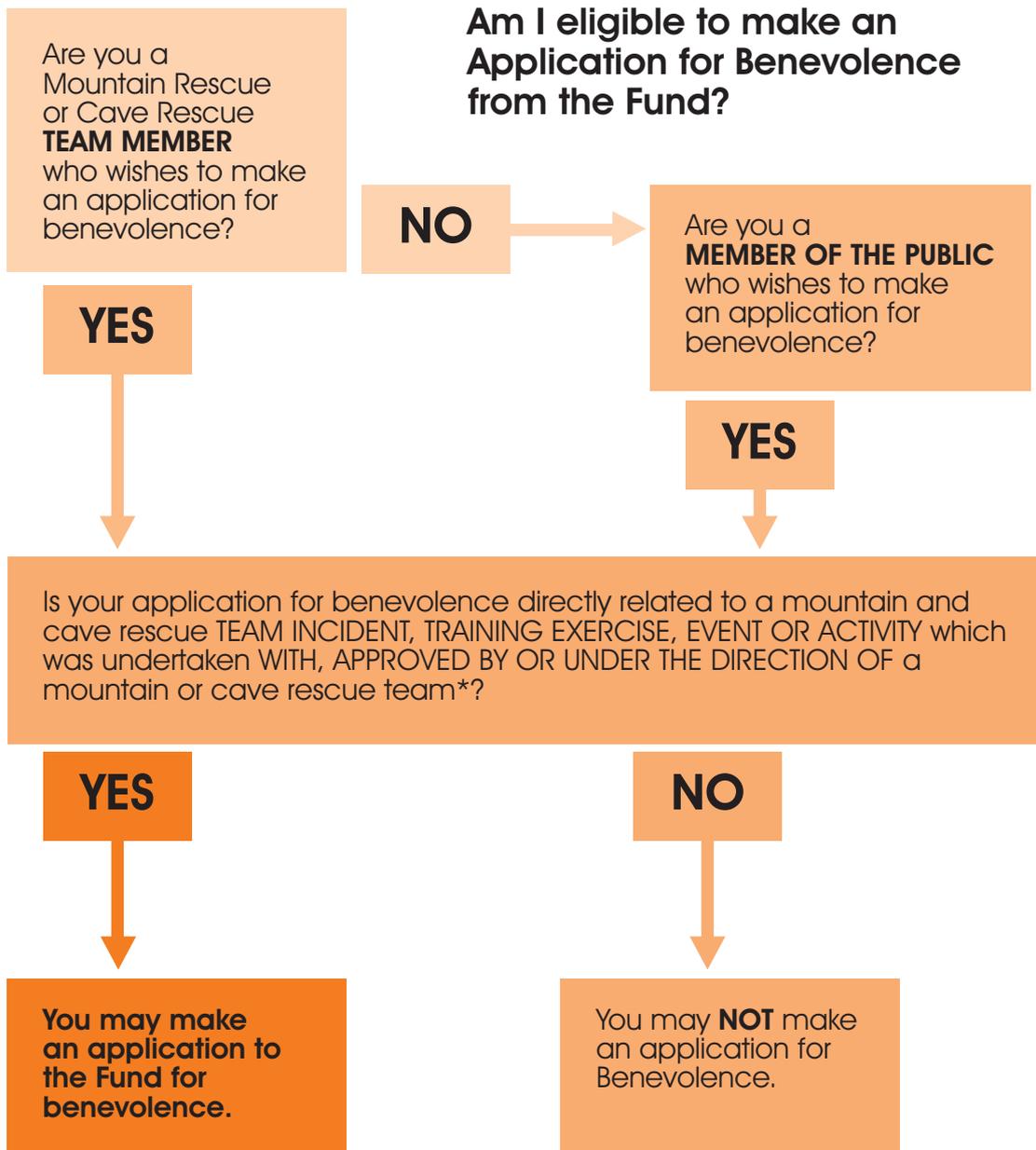
Yes. If you are a UK taxpayer, the Fund can claim Gift Aid of 25p for every pound you give.

Can I leave a legacy to the Fund in my Will?

Yes. In fact, charitable legacies are the foundation for many good causes in the UK and are vital in continuing their work. And you don't have to be rich and famous to leave a legacy to your favourite charity!

We would advise you to seek professional advice from a solicitor in wording your Will appropriately but, as a rule, you must use the full name of the charity — Mountain and Cave Rescue Benevolent Fund — and the registered charity number 1152978.

3: FAQs



** 'Team' also applies to members of Mountain Rescue England and Wales/British Cave Rescue Council who are not members of a specific mountain or cave rescue team but carry out duties on behalf of and have responsibilities to mountain and cave rescue regionally and/or nationally.*

4: FAQs