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## Funding for an Adapted Computer

Applying for funding to cover the cost of a computer can be a daunting task. However, there are many organisations that exist to help, and this sheet tells you who some of them are, how to find them and how best to approach them for a grant.

There are three things that you need to do:

- Get a precise list of what you need.
- Produce an effective letter of application.
- Send it to the right people.

### Getting the Right List of Equipment

Funding organisations receive many applications and do not wish to waste their time with guesswork. Vague requests for “a suitable computer” will be unlikely to succeed. You should provide a clear description of exactly what is needed, why, and how much it will cost.

Funders always want to know that their money is being spent well.

### Guidelines for Fund-Raising

These guidelines are intended for a disabled person who has never written a fund raising letter before. They may, of course, help others too.

AbilityNet does not guarantee that these guidelines will achieve success.

- Make your letter easy to read and to photocopy.
- Type or word process it using clear, bold print.
- Use white A4 paper only.
- Write on one side of A4 paper only.
- Try to get a Social Worker, Occupational Therapist, Teacher or the head of a day centre to write for you on their letterhead. Alternatively, make your own by centring your address.
- Letters **MUST** include your full address, postcode and telephone numbers (both day and evening) with dialling code and extension in their headings.
- It must be easy for anyone who wants more information to get it.
- Trustees are busy people who cannot be expected to wade through pages of solid text, so keep it short, ideally on one side of an A4 sheet.
- Enclose a stamped-addressed envelope.

## Contents of the Letter

1. Get the name of the person to write to. Ring up the organisation to find out who it is, if you are not sure.
2. Give the full details of the person you are asking for funds for. Start your letter Re: name, address and postcode, telephone number and your age. Write these in a straight line, then underline it. The first paragraph should include brief details of your disability and your age.
3. The next two paragraphs should include information about:
  - Why you need the equipment, and how you feel it will help you.
  - Something personal about your circumstances. How your disability affects daily life, home situation and work history.
  - Back up your application with anything that shows you have achieved successes. Newspaper stories about yourself, exam results, sporting achievements, prizes won, even if it has nothing to do with computers. Keep this to a maximum of two sheets.

Trustees want to see that their money will be put to good use.

4. The next paragraph should give full information about your financial situation. Here trustees want to know that you are getting all the allowances you are entitled to from statutory bodies.
5. Give an indication of the approximate cost, rounded up to the next £100. Allow for a possible increase as it may take some time to raise the money.
6. Don't expect to get the whole amount from one source. Fifteen letters asking for £250 or £500 is far more likely to raise the £1,500 you need than one letter asking for the whole amount.
7. Say what you have raised so far, and if you have saved any money yourself.
8. Ask them to suggest other funding sources if they cannot help you.
9. Check your grammar and spelling.

## Other Information

Do not expect an instant answer. Some trusts do not reply to unsuccessful applicants. Many trustees only meet every few months.

- **Follow up** If you get a grant you should:
- Write immediately to thank them.
- After a few months, write again. By this time, you will be up and running. Tell them how the equipment is helping you. Make your letter as positive as you can. Any success is worth including. This kind of feed back is unusual, and trustees are very pleased to get it.
- Let us hope that they remember you, because you may want to ask them again. However, it is unwise to approach the same organisation twice within two years.

## Some Sources of Funding

There can, of course, be no guarantee that funds will be available from these sources. The following are merely suggestions.

We suggest that you apply to all who seem relevant because it is rare that one funding body (particularly in the charitable sector) will provide a complete system.

## Via Government Bodies

### Employment

For people in employment or hoping to be employed, we strongly advise contact with the DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ADVISER (DEA) and the Disability Services Team. Contact them through your local Job Centre. They will advise you about the "ACCESS TO WORK" scheme.

### Education

For those in education, there is the possibility of special help from central or local government. To get details of what is available in your case, you need to contact your local education authority. For those on higher education courses grants are available towards the cost of computer equipment and enhanced allowances for additional needs. These are administered by local authorities.

### Social Services

Local Authorities Social Services only rarely give grants, but may be able to help by supporting your application. They may also keep a list of local charities for disabled people.

## Communication Aid Centres

Within the Health Service there are some Communication Aid and Advice Centres, who will assess people for equipment. If there is one in your area, the Speech and Language Department of your nearest Hospital will have their address.

## National Charities

### Help from trusts and other voluntary organisations

There are various charities and organisations that may be able to help individuals with funding and equipment. **However, you should try all the statutory services before approaching them.** Your local library will have several books in the Reference Section giving details of these charities and trusts. They all have different criteria for their giving so you must look at their details and decide which are the most appropriate for you.

**The following charities help individuals in the United Kingdom. If you know of any more National Bodies we can add, please tell us:**

**British Association of Health Services in Higher Education (BAHSHE), Student Disability Assistance Fund** helps students over the age of 18 studying in higher education (degree level) whose studies have been interrupted or delayed by illness, injury or disability. Funding does not cover living expenses or fees and priority is given to those not eligible for funding from LEAs. Applications should be in writing and supported with a letter from a tutor, member of academic staff, disability advisor or a doctor.

Apply to: Dr Kathy Cockerill, c/o Mrs Sandra Furmston, Administrative Secretary, BAHSHE Office, 35 Hazelwood Rd, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, EN1 1JG Tel: 020 8482 2412 .Email: s.furmston@mdx.ac.uk

**Snowdon Award Scheme** helps students with physical disabilities in further or higher education or training towards employment, aged between 17 and 25 years. In some situations older candidates can be considered. Awards are made for disability related costs including computers and notetakers.

Apply to: Snowdon Award Scheme, 22 City Business Centre, 6 Brighton Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5BB Tel: 01403 211252  
Web: [www.snowdonawardscheme.org.uk](http://www.snowdonawardscheme.org.uk)

**Action for Blind People** Grants-in-Aid scheme gives one off grants nationally to people who are registered blind/partially sighted, who are UK residents and on a low income. Grants are up to the maximum of £500 and can be used towards education costs, computer equipment and CCTVs.

Apply to: The Grants Officer, Action for Blind People, 14-16 Verney Road, London SE16 3DZ Tel: 020 7635 4820 Web: [www.afbp.org](http://www.afbp.org)

**The Royal National Institute for the Blind** Grants may be made to blind or partially sighted people who are facing financial hardship to buy equipment. Applications must be made by a third party, such as a social worker or a voluntary organisation.

Apply to: The Grants Officer, Welfare Rights Service, RNIB, 105 Judd Street, London WC1H 9NE Tel: 0845 766 9999 Web: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

**The National Deaf Children's Society – The Freddy Bloom Children's Equipment Fund** offers grants to families on a low income (less than £23,000) who need to buy equipment for their deaf child that cannot be provided by any other means. Unable to give grants for equipment that is available via any other statutory funding. Normally for children between 4 and 16 but also 16-18 yr olds who are in full time education. One grant per family and there needs to be a letter of support from a supporting professional included in the application. There is a factsheet called Freddy Bloom Children's Equipment Fund on the NDCS website under 'Our Services'.

Apply to: Yvonne Tysoe, NDCS, 15 Dufferin Street, London EC1Y 8UR  
Tel: 0808 800 8880 Web: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

**Peter Greenwood Memorial Trust** Gives grants to students who are deaf or hard of hearing undertaking courses in further or higher education and training in England and Wales only (i.e. students from Scotland who are studying in England or Wales may apply, but the Trust cannot fund students studying in Scotland). An application form should be requested and need to be sent in by 1st October for the coming academic year.

Apply to: Julie Ralph, Secretary, Morley Street Resource Centre, 124 Morley Street, Bradford BD7 1BB Tel: 01274 435001 Minicom: 01274 435013

**The Lord Ashdown Charitable Settlement** Keen to assist students who have disabilities which effects their studying. Every effort should be made by students to obtain funding from statutory sources. No grants for elective periods (i.e. time taken out from a degree course to work) or second degrees. Applications should be in writing, enclosing **stamped, addressed envelope** and a doctor's letter if appropriate and a letter of offer from the college.

Apply to: The Lord Ashdown Charitable Settlement, c/o Clive Marks & Company, 44a New Cavendish Street, London W1G 8TR Tel: 020 7486 4663

**Lawrence Atwell's Charity** assists young people who come from a low-income background to become qualified in their career. It is stressed that although help quite often takes the form of a grant towards the cost of a course of study, applicants must demonstrate that they are actively preparing for work, as it is not an educational charity. Assistance with computer equipment will only be given if the applicant is intending taking an IT course or in making their career in IT. Applicants must be aged between 16 and 26 years and either a British citizen or a refugee with indefinite leave to remain.

Apply to: Atwell Administrator, The Skinners' Company, 8 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2SP Or call 020 7213 0561 to discuss eligibility.

Web: [www.skinnershall.co.uk/lawrence\\_atwell\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.skinnershall.co.uk/lawrence_atwell_guidelines.pdf)

**The Hunt & Almshouse Charity** awards grants in the region of £100-300 to single adults/single parents who are permanently unable to earn a living due to disability including mental health or ill health or who are in receipt of a state retirement pension. Applicants must also be in receipt of a means tested benefit and resident in England. Majority of funds have to be awarded to women. Applications should be made via a voluntary organisation, local charity or a member of the Skinners' Company and must be accompanied by a supporting letter from the referring organisation or person. Applications from individuals and statutory bodies are discouraged.

Apply to: The Hunt & Almshouse Charity of the Skinners' Company, Skinners' Hall, 8 Dowgate Hill, London EC4R 2SP Tel: 020 7213 0562

**Teachers' Support Network** helps trainees, serving and retired teachers and their dependants in England and Wales. They also have a Teachers' Support Line offering support and advice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 08000 562 561

Apply to: Teachers' Support Network, Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BE Tel: 020 7554 5200. Web: [www.teachersupport.info/](http://www.teachersupport.info/)

**The Multiple Sclerosis Society** may give grants to people with MS.

Contact the Grants Team at the Multiple Sclerosis National Centre, The Multiple Sclerosis Society, 372 Edgware Road, London, NW2 6ND

Tel: 020 8438 0700. Web: [www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)

**SEQUAL - Special Equipment Aids for Living** An organisation that helps members with speech and/or movement difficulties with the provision of special electronic equipment including computers and speech synthesisers (no cash grants but would help fund raise). They will look after the maintenance and repair of equipment after provision. You need to be a member of the SEQUAL Trust which is £10 per year and £50 for life.

Apply to: The Sequal Trust, 3 Ploughmans Corner, Wharf Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire, SY12 0EJ Tel: 0870 770 3272 Web: [www.the-sequal-trust.org.uk](http://www.the-sequal-trust.org.uk)

**St Dunstons** helps men and women who have lost their sight as a result of serving in the forces.

Apply to: Mr Nick Ward, 12-14 Harcourt Street, London W1H 4HD  
Tel: 020 7723 5021. Web: [www.st-dunstons.org.uk](http://www.st-dunstons.org.uk)

**SCOPE** Apply to local Community Teams for information on fund raising assistance.

**Open University Students Educational Trust** may occasionally be able to help OU students to purchase equipment but more usually it is for course fees, childcare and travel costs. Students must be studying for their first degree and have already applied elsewhere for funding. Please contact your regional office first.

Apply to: The Open University Educational Trust, PO Box 397, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6BE Tel: 01908 659587

**The Family Fund Trust** aims to help families with severely disabled children under the age of sixteen and whose income is less than £23,000 per year. May help with computer equipment if child is approaching sixteenth birthday and use is for vocational purposes only.

Apply to: Information Officer, The Family Fund Trust, Family Fund, Unit 4, Alpha Court Monks Cross Drive, Huntington, York, YO32 9WN.

Tel: 0845 130 4542 Web: [www.familyfundtrust.org.uk](http://www.familyfundtrust.org.uk)

**Cecilia Charity for the Blind** gives grants to people with visual disabilities. Individuals must enclose endorsement from social services or their local blind society or organisation.

Apply to: Susan Holmes, Administrator, Boundary House, 117 Charter House Street, London, EC1M 6PN Tel: 020 7253 3757.

**The Guide Dogs for the Blind** You should contact your nearest guide dog training centre.

**Regain** will fund raise for people with spinal injuries as a result of a sporting accident. Apply to: 78, Shirburn Road, Watlington, Oxon, OX49 5BZ  
Tel: 01491 613980 Web: [www.regainsportscharity.com](http://www.regainsportscharity.com)

**Ben - Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund** An occupational benevolent fund specialising in giving help and care to employees and former employees (including pensioners) and their dependants from the motor industry and its associated trades and industries, the cycle and motor cycle industries and agricultural engineering. Apply to: Lynwood, Sunninghill, Ascot, Berkshire, SL5 0AJ  
Tel: 01344 620191 Web: [www.ben.org.uk](http://www.ben.org.uk)

**Challenger Children's Fund** gives grants to physically disabled children under the age of 18, resident in Scotland. Meet monthly to look at variety of grants including computer equipment. For further information or an application form contact Challenger Children's Fund, Barstow Miller, Mid Lothian Innovation Centre, Pentlandfield, Roslin, EH25 9RE. Te:0131 440 9030

**The Association of Charity Officers** is an umbrella organisation for over 200 charities, funds and voluntary organisations. Will ask for full details of family background, career pattern and health problems. Helpline open 10am-4pm Monday to Friday. To see if there is a suitable fund to approach contact The Association of Charity Officers, Five Ways, 57/59 Hatfield Road, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire EN6 1HS Tel: 01707 651777 Web: [www.aco.uk.net](http://www.aco.uk.net)

**EEIBA** is a charity that provides help to the needy and distressed who work, or who have worked, in the electrical and electronics industries and any connected or allied industries and sciences (including mechanical engineering), in the UK. Can provide one-off grants for specialist equipment.

Apply to: 8 Station Parade, Balham High Road, London SW12 9BH  
Tel: 020 8673 0131 Web: [www.eeiba.org](http://www.eeiba.org)

**The Jonathan Young Memorial Trust** can provide grants towards the cost of new computers but also has refurbished and second-hand computers donated to the trust. Enquiries are welcomed from disabled people and from statutory and voluntary organisations on behalf of their clients. Majority of grants go to people living in the East Midlands but people outside this area can still apply. Applications should be made in writing but can discuss situation prior to submitting applications. Requests received are considered at Trustees meetings held in April and October. Apply to: 10 Huntingdon Drive, The Park, Nottingham, NG7 1BW  
Tel: 0115 947 0493. Web: [www.jonathan-young-trust.co.uk](http://www.jonathan-young-trust.co.uk)

**Scope Northamptonshire Active Project** can provide computers and other electronic communication equipment on short term loan to people with a disability. The standard period is nine months and a small charge is made. They can also help raise funds for equipment. Only covers Northamptonshire area.

Apply to or John Stevenson on 01604 715461

## Finding Additional Sources of Funding

The list above is not comprehensive and there are many more places to try. Here are some further ideas if the relevant addresses on the main list do not yield a positive result.

## Reference Books

A visit to your local reference library could be fruitful. Have a look at the following publications, which should be available at most libraries:

- **A Guide to Grants for Individual Needs** Published by the Directory of Social Change, 24 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2DP Issued every 2 years.  
Tel: 08450 777707. Web [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk)
- **The Educational Grants Directory** This is a comprehensive book on all aspects of funding for education, giving lists of national and local contacts. It is well worth a look for any education related issue.
- **Local Areas Grants Guide** Most libraries should have the local edition of this book. It gives details of local support for individuals and groups.
- **Charities Digest** A comprehensive guide to benevolent funds and disabled associations. Produced annually by Family Welfare Association and published by Waterflow Information Services Tel: 020 7490 0049
- **The Voluntary Agencies Directories**
- **IPW Charities Directory**
- **The Grants Register**
- **Sponsorship 95** (Published by Careers and Occupational Information Centre) Information on employers offering sponsorship to people taking professional or technical degrees. PO Box 348, Bristol. BS99 7FE.

## Local Organisations

- Your local Council for Voluntary Services (sometimes called Council for Voluntary Organisations, Community Service Council, or similar)
- The County, City or Borough Record Office
- Your local Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Your local Anglican minister or Roman Catholic priest
- Round Tables, Inner Wheels, Lions and Rotary clubs

## Occupational and Trades Union Benevolent Funds

Most trades and occupations have at least one benevolent fund. It is always worth exploring any connections you or your family can establish with any of these funds.

- Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.
- Musicians Benevolent Fund
- British Telecom Benevolent Fund
- Bakers' Benevolent Society
- Timber Trades Benevolent Society
- Perennial – Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society

These are just examples and there are many more. There is a list of benevolent funds and their contact details produced by Naidex. It is called The Naidex Guide to Benevolent Funding and can be requested from the Marketing department at Naidex on 020 7874 0332.

### **Service and Ex-Service Charities Associations**

As well as regimental societies, there are a number of service and ex-service associations. Again, explore any link that you can establish with any of these. Examples include:

- Royal Airforce Benevolent Fund
- Association of Royal Navy Officers
- Royal British Legion
- Army Regimental Associations

## Second Hand and Loan Equipment

**IT for Charities** have a list of companies that supply reconditioned computers on their website. Some supply to organisations, others will supply to individuals.

Web: [www.itforcharities.co.uk/pcs.htm](http://www.itforcharities.co.uk/pcs.htm)

**Recycle It** supplies recycled PCs to voluntary groups, church groups, education, disabled and embryonic businesses., The Wesley Enterprise Centre, Royce Road, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5BP

Tel: 0161 232 1424 Web: [www.recycle-it.ltd.uk](http://www.recycle-it.ltd.uk)

**Recommit** supply individuals, educational and charitable institutions with low cost Personal Computers, laptops and printers.

4 The Dolphin Centre, Southampton Road, Salisbury, SP1 2NB

Tel: 01722 339660 Web: [www.recommit.co.uk](http://www.recommit.co.uk)

**Environ** a charity offering recycled computer equipment.

Parkfield, Western Park, Hinckley Road, Leicester, LE3 6HX.

Tel: 0116 222 0222 Web: [www.environ.org.uk](http://www.environ.org.uk)

**Computers for the Disabled** a charity supplying recycled PCs and parts to people with disabilities, disability centres and home users. Non profit organisation – provide repairs and free advice on best buys and where to buy.

Paul Harris, Computers for the Disabled, 41 New Waverley Road, Noak Bridge, Laindon, Essex SS15 4BJ.

Tel: 01268 284834 Web: [www.cftd.co.uk](http://www.cftd.co.uk)

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Apply to: 10 Huntingdon Drive, The Park, Nottingham, NG7 1BW

Tel: 0115 947 0493. Web: [www.jonathan-young-trust.co.uk](http://www.jonathan-young-trust.co.uk)

**Technology for Disabled** provide computers and printers to people who live in the Swindon and Wiltshire area. There is a £10 pa charge for maintenance of the computer. They also provide basic computer training at their facility in Pinehurst People's Centre. Please leave a message on the 0845 number and someone will get back to you. Everything that is required, including a monitor and basic software, is provided. They can also supply a printer at no extra charge, though the client is responsible for cartridges. Room 1B, Pinehurst Peoples Centre, Olive Grove, Swindon, SN2 1JT.

Tel:0845 2802702

Web: [www.tech4d.co.uk/](http://www.tech4d.co.uk/)



\* Messages charged at standard rate. You will receive two confirmation messages charged at £1.50 each. AbilityNet will receive your donation net of charges applied by mobile network operators and a processing fee. If you have any questions regarding this service, please call 020 7549 2222.