



# The United Reformed Church Northern Synod

## Guidelines for SMALL GRANTS FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE TO CHURCH PROPERTIES

The Synod offers five categories of grant:

1. Church Property
2. Manse Property
3. Mission
4. Ministries & Training
5. Youth & Children's Work

These guidelines relate only to **SMALL** grants of up to £10,000 for repairs and maintenance to **church properties**.

All other categories, including grants for other types of church property expenditure, have their own guidelines and application form, which can be downloaded from <http://urc-northernsynod.org/grants/> or obtained from Synod Office.

### Terms of the Small Grants for Repairs and Maintenance to Church Properties

This is a simplified process for small property grants. These can be for emergency repairs or planned maintenance, for example arising from condition surveys, and can include costs for engaging appropriate professional help to assist in organising and managing the project.

The Property Subgroup will aim to make fast-track decisions within 2-3 weeks.

- Minimum grant of £1,000; maximum of £10,000
- Normally 20%-50% of cost, **depending on the church's own resources**

## The United Reformed Church Northern Synod Guidelines for SMALL PROPERTY GRANTS

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Please complete both parts of the form.

- PART A will be forwarded to the Property Subgroup.
- PART B is for office use, to enable us to get in touch with you, and to arrange payment, if the application is successful.

Do get in touch with Synod Office if you need help or have any questions.

Tel: 0191-232 1168      Email: [trust@urc-northersynod.org](mailto:trust@urc-northersynod.org)

### **Reserves**

Churches are encouraged to set and periodically review a reserves policy, as part of planning their work and managing their finances. Guidance on drawing up a reserves policy is available on the Synod website:

<http://urc-northersynod.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Reserves-Policy-Guidance-160908.pdf>.

Churches should only apply for grants if they cannot cover the cost from their own resources. This is so we can prioritise resources for those churches in most need of support. For this reason, we need to understand the church's finances.

*Please note that applicant churches are expected to keep up to date with Synod and M&M payments.*

### **Quotations**

Applications should be accompanied by quotations wherever possible. The Trust recommends that churches consider obtaining 2 or 3 quotations for medium-large building works (say, over £5,000). This can help to ensure that the contractor is charging a reasonable price, and that the contractor is of a reasonable quality. Churches with historic buildings may be interested in the online directory of specialist contractors, [www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com).

However, it will not always be appropriate to seek comparative quotations. For example, if there is only one contractor in the area specialising in this type of work, if you have established a good working relationship with a particular contractor, or if the job consists of a series of small individual contracts. Even so, it is worth comparing prices occasionally, to make sure that your favourite contractor doesn't begin to take you for granted.

For minor works, churches may find it useful to give authority to a small group to oversee arrangements and report back to the next Church or Elders' Meeting. It would be up to the church to set an appropriate level after which the works would have to be referred back.

### **How to Claim a Grant that has been Awarded**

Payments will normally be made only on receipt of a copy invoice (whether paid or unpaid), and the cheque or BACS payment will be sent within a fortnight. Churches are advised to ensure that they agree terms of payment with their contractors at the outset, and 28 days is recommended, to allow plenty of time for clearing.

Note that the payment will be made only for the works specified in the grant application.

### **Appeals**

If, exceptionally, you are not happy with a decision by the Property Subgroup, it is possible to appeal to the Trust Board.

Appellants should apply in writing or by email, giving clear grounds for an appeal, based on a procedural irregularity, a perverse decision, or where new information had come to light.

Both the appellant and the subgroup may make submissions either in writing or in person to the Board, which would then make a final determination. For the purposes of the appeals procedure, members of the subgroup in question would not be counted as part of the Board's quorum. If it should prove difficult to achieve a quorum, a separate meeting may be held, or the Board may invite three independent people to review the matter and make a recommendation to the Board.

No appeal is possible against a decision of the Board.