



**Victims & Survivors
Strategic Support Fund**

**FINANCIAL
GUIDELINES**

**TO BE READ AND ADHERED TO IN CONJUNCTION WITH
CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT**

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1.0 CONTRACT AND FIRST PAYMENT

1.1 CONTRACT

- Your Contract will state the total awarded along with a budget breakdown and will include the conditions of the offer.
- You will be issued with two NICRC signed copies of your contract which must be signed and dated by two Office bearing committee members (one of whom should be the Chairman and none of whom must be beneficiaries).
- One copy must be returned to NICRC within four weeks.
- All claims/invoices submitted for verification must be in line with the budget as stated in the Contract.
 - Any alterations to the budget, e.g., re-allocation of monies, must be requested of and approved by (in writing) a Development Officer before spend takes place.
 - Underspends cannot be used to compensate overspends.
 - No overspends will be allowed for, and any underspends will be deducted.

1.2 FIRST PAYMENT

- On receipt of the Contract, duly signed and dated by two authorised signatories along with any conditional requirements as outlined in the Contract (if applicable), the initial payment will be released to your organisation either by BACS or cheque.

(12 month contract)

- Up to one third of 12 months total with up to 3 equal payments thereafter.

(6 month contract)

- 25% of grant allocation (1st April – 30th June XXXX)

2.0 CLAIM PROCESS

- 2.1** A Projected Expenditure Form must be completed quarterly and sent to CRC in advance of any payments being made.
- 2.2** For verification purposes and prior to an on-site visit an Expenditure Claim Form must be completed, signed and dated by an authorised person. **(This form should not be signed by anyone who is a cash beneficiary of the activities/services provided)**. Where possible a copy of claims form should be sent to CRC prior to the on-site visit along with copy invoices and bank statements.
- 2.3** Monitoring/Progress Report should be submitted on a quarterly basis as part of the quarterly grant claim. The organisation will be required to submit an overview and final progress report at year end of 31st March XXXX **(See section 13.1 – 13.2 of Contract agreement)**.
- 2.4** Verification and agreed expenditure will be based only on original documentation submitted at the on-site visit. The agreed amount will be the lower of two amounts – either that of the submitted claim or the amount calculated by CRC.

2.5 Possible delay will occur if the following is not adhered to:

INVOICES

- Verification of expenditure and release of payments will be based on the submission of **original** documentation only, including original bank statements and cleared cheques.
- All invoices should be on headed paper complete with full name and address of supplier and full name and address of customer organisation/group.
- Invoices relating to seminars/workshops/trips should include full details of the event such as contact details, hours worked (where applicable), period covered by invoice, work undertaken – to include participant numbers etc.
- Invoices should be checked to ensure that they are arithmetically correct and that the goods/services charged for are the same as those received.
- As invoices are processed they should be stamped/marked 'PAID' and the cheque number and date should be noted on the invoice to show that it has been paid. **Attaching a copy cheque authorisation/requisition sheet to an invoice is not sufficient. Attached sheets can become separated which could result in the invoice being paid twice by mistake.**
- Payments should be made on the basis of original invoices and not copies of invoices, faxes or statements.
- CRC can only release payment of grant aid based upon evidence that all cheque payments have cleared the SSF bank account i.e. transactions supported by original invoices, bank statements and cleared cheques.
- Cross border payments: If an invoice is received from a supplier in a different currency then it is recommended that the amount should be paid via a bank draft (bank draft details to accompany invoice).
- Any defaced invoices/receipts will not be accepted; this includes any alteration to documentation e.g. by writing on, cancelling by means of Tipp-ex, cutting out part of or attaching to larger pieces of paper by means of glue, sellotape or other.
- Invoices relating to trips which contain more than one charge i.e. bus, boat, and hotel must be complete with times, dates, numbers and be in agreement with quotes already submitted (see 3.10 Purchasing and Tendering, Financial Guidelines).

Invoices submitted with claims which lack sufficient detail or supporting information/documentation will NOT be accepted.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT

3.1 FINANCIAL PROCEDURES MANUAL

- All funded projects **MUST** devise a Financial Procedures Manual and have this approved by their Management Committee/Board. This procedures document should encompass guidelines on areas such as:
 - The procedures for ordering, processing invoices and making payments.
 - Policies adopted by the organisation such as travel and subsistence rates, and recruitment procedures.
 - Authorisation limits within the organisation such as opening and closing bank accounts, approving standing orders, cheque signatories.
 - Back-up procedures and document security.

In the case where staff with financial duties are absent from work for any reason it is good business practice to ensure that a Procedures Manual is available. The manual should outline all of the necessary action and duties associated with the day to day financial obligations/responsibilities for the running/management practices of the organisation.

System Reviews will aim to verify that the procedures contained in the manuals are being followed in the day to day management practices of the delivery of Services.

3.2 AUDITED ACCOUNTS/FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Audited Accounts / Financial Statements must be submitted to CRC on an annual basis.

3.3 ASSETS REGISTER AND DISPOSAL OF EQUIPMENT

- An assets register should be kept up to date at all times. This should show item description, serial number, purchase price and date of purchase for all of the group's assets.
- Any asset valued more than £1000 and purchased with grant aid administered by NICRC must not be disposed of within four years without the prior written agreement of NICRC.
- If you are in any doubt regarding the disposal of assets purchased with grant aid, please contact NICRC for guidance prior to disposing of, lending or donating equipment.
- All assets purchased with grant aid must be included in the organisation's asset register and must be properly insured. **(See section 6.0 of Contract)**

3.4 BANK ACCOUNTS/BANK STATEMENT/COST CENTRES

- A separate bank account for SSF funding must be opened.
- A copy of the Bank Mandate must be submitted to CRC.
- **ANY CHANGES** to the bank account details submitted on the Contract must be notified to CRC **immediately** in writing. Failure to do so will result in the unnecessary delay of payment/s.

- Payments will be issued directly to the SSF designated bank account. A letter will be issued from CRC detailing the amount being paid.
- Funding received should not be used for any purpose other than that outlined in the Contract.
- All receipts/invoices must be paid directly from SSF bank account. Alternatively authorisation may be sought from CRC to use cost centres where relevant.
- Bank statements should clearly show the workings/transactions for the account and should be filed in statement number order. This information should be clearly detailed on all claim forms submitted for verification.
- Original bank statements must be provided at verification. If operating a cost centre approach, relevant transactions should be highlighted on the bank statements.
- Bank reconciliations should be completed on a monthly basis and signed by two authorised members of the group/organisation. A signed copy will be periodically requested by the funder.
- All original cheques which have cleared the bank must be submitted for verification – these are a requirement as per conditions laid in Contractual Agreement.
- Costs incurred in currency exchange are an eligible cost if within budget.

Ineligible costs are as follows:

- financial charges (e.g. overdraft charges, financial penalties, fines, copy documentation)
- costs resulting from the deferral of payments to creditors
- costs incurred using specific method of payment e.g. Chaps transfers

3.5 CASH/PETTY CASH

- Some payments may be claimed through expenses by attaching receipts to a Travel and Expenses Claim Form, which must be signed by claimant and countersigned by an authorised person (See Appendix 4).
- Cheques for petty cash should be made payable to 'Petty Cash'. Under no circumstances should cheques be made payable to individuals.
- Petty cash should only be used for small sundry items.
- It is recommended that the maximum balance of petty cash at any time does not exceed £100.
- Petty cash should be stored in a locked storage facility with a designated key holder assigned.
- A petty cash book (docket/vouchers) should be maintained, together with all original receipts. All individual dockets should be signed by the person requesting petty cash and should then be authorised by the issuer/key holder.
- Payment against petty cash related expenditure will only be made if petty cash dockets are provided which detail the purpose of the purchase, the amount, and the date, with receipts attached.
- Petty cash should be reconciled on a monthly basis.
- No cheque should be made payable to cash other than petty cash.

3.6 CHEQUE PAYMENTS

- All cheques must be authorised by two signatories who must not be direct/indirect service providers or cash beneficiaries.
- Cheque books should be stored in a locked storage facility and cheques used sequentially.
- Before cheques are signed, all supporting documentation should be examined by the signatories. They should initial the invoice/supporting documents to show that they have had sight of the documentation.
- Blank cheques should **never under any circumstances** be signed in advance (Please ensure there are sufficient signatories to avoid this happening).
- No cheque should be made payable to cash other than petty cash.
- A cheque journal/ledger (either manual or computerised), which itemises cheques paid against budget headings, should be maintained – a brief narrative as to what the cost relates to is also helpful. Cheque details should be entered into the cheque journal/ledger when the cheque is issued.
- All outstanding cheques must represent cheques that have been physically issued to payees, i.e. a cheque that has been written but is being held and has not been issued to the payee, should be excluded from both the claimed expenditure. **On no account should cheques be included in reported expenditure if they have not cleared the bank.**

3.7 CREDIT/DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS

- Payments made with personal credit/debit cards should be avoided.
- Where payment is made by personal credit/debit card, the original statement/bill or an online statement must be provided in support of the expenditure (only details of the transaction/payment along with name and address of card holder need be made visible).
- In instances where the organisation has a credit/debit card the above is also applicable.

For a more in depth explanation please see Appendix 6 – Credit Cards

3.8 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Given the importance of ensuring risks of fraud are reduced, organisations in receipt of public funding must ensure that all appropriate pre-cautions are taken and management systems in place to avoid any mismanagement or misappropriation of funds.
- Where a conflict of interest exists, or could be perceived to exist, **it must be declared** and appropriate action taken. No one should use or appear to use their position to further their own (or that of family) private interests. Procurement procedures should be followed at all times and where a decision is made which could be misconstrued as a conflict, should bear the authorisation of the organisation's/group's committee.

3.9 CONTRACTS FOR CONSULTANCY/FACILITATION (Service Delivery)

When contracting a consultant/facilitator/tutor, you should consider:

- the level of expertise/experience needed to undertake the work
- whether ancillary costs are included (travel, subsistence, report writing, etc.) (see section 3.14 on Travel/Mileage/Other) and
- what you want to get from their involvement.

Projects should ensure that a contract/agreement is in place with all those providing such services. This contract should include the following:

- terms and conditions of appointment
- cost
- procedures for claiming payment, and
- disclaimer stating that HMRC contributions will be met by the individual

Contracts/agreements should be signed by the supplier of the services and countersigned by a management representative of the project and forwarded to NICRC. This contract/agreement will be put on file in support of claimed expenditure.

It is the responsibility of the organisation to insure that all service providers have the necessary qualification/experience and insurances where applicable. As per conditions laid out in your Contact you will be required to submit proof of same. (See section 5 of Contractual agreement).

3.10 DATA PROTECTION/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

It is advised that all organisations make themselves aware of and comply with their obligations in respect of the Data Protection Act UK (1998) / Data Protection Act Rol (1988 - amended 2003).

The Community Relations Council came under the UK's Freedom of Information Act from January 2005.

The Acts extend a general right of access to information held by public authorities including government departments and certain public bodies.

Some of the information to be held by the NICRC will be originally submitted by third parties, such as funded groups/organisations. This information is covered by the FOI Act and can therefore be released, as long as there is no breach of legal confidence, the Data Protection Act, or any other law or grounds of exemption. There is no legal obligation on authorities to consult with third parties before releasing such information.

In addition to records held by the NICRC, the effect of the Act is that as a funded organisation you must, if requested, immediately give to the NICRC any record as that term defined in the Freedom of Information Act relating to any action or service detailed in your Contract/Letter of Offer.

3.11 DOCUMENT RETENTION

The Organisation **MUST** retain all documentation pertaining to their award for 7 years.

3.12 EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION / POINTS OF CONTACT

As an employer, it is important to be aware of the legislation (Employment Law) which exists for the protection of employees. This governs areas such as recruitment, the employment contract, working time, leave, equality, grievances, disciplinary, and health and safety.

If you require information on any aspect of employment law you may find the following sources useful:

Northern Ireland:

Labour Relations Agency (HO)
2-16 Gordon Street
Belfast
BT1 2LG
Tel: 028 90321442
www.lra.org.uk

LRA (Regional Office)
1-3 Guildhall Street
Londonderry
BT48 6BJ
Tel: 028 7126 9639

Fixed term contract regulations information

<http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/publications/pubs-employment-rights/erpublications/fixed-term-work-a-guide-to-the-regulations.htm>

HM Revenue and Customs
Beaufort House
31 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6BP
02890 532755
<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>

Department for Employment & Learning
Adelaide House
39-49 Adelaide Street
Belfast
BT2 8FD
Tel: 028 9025 7777
www.delni.gov.uk/er
(Employment rights)

The Equality Commission for NI
Equality House
7-9 Shaftsbury Square
Belfast
BT27DP
028 90500600
www.equalityni.org

It is the Organisation's responsibility to correctly determine the employment status of its workers i.e. whether they are employees or self employed. It is important that the organisation gets the workers employment status correct as it affects the way tax and National Insurance/PRSI contributions are calculated and also determines whether or not you have to operate PAYE (Pay As You Earn) on their earnings.

3.13 PURCHASING/TENDERING

E.g. Trips that involve bus/boat/hotel (combined or single)
Tutor/Counsellor/Consultant/Facilitator*
Equipment

Table 1

Value	Procedure
Up to £1,500	2/3 oral Quotations (fax or email)
>£1,500 <£10,000	4 Selected Tenders /quotes
>£10,000 < £30,000	5 Selected Tenders /quotes
>£30,000 <EU Thresholds	Publicly advertised tender competition

*In the event of a unique/bespoke provider of a service or only one provider in one location the Council will accept one quote alongside the rationale for this service.

For a more in depth explanation, please see Appendix 7 – Quotes

3.14 TRAVEL/MILEAGE/OTHER (by employee/volunteer/sessional worker consultants/facilitators)

- Travel/mileage and other expenses will be paid in line with budgets laid out in the contract. Organisations should ensure that all persons receiving travel/subsistence costs are fully aware of the need to exercise economy and efficiency. Authorising officers must satisfy themselves that all travel & subsistence costs are essential to the effective progress of the funded activity.
- Claims for travel and subsistence should be submitted on a pro-forma which details the following information (Appendix 4):
 - name and address of person receiving payment
 - date of journey
 - depart time, return time
 - destination and reason for journey (please indicate names and addresses of organisations)
 - mode of Transport
 - miles/distance travelled or cost of transport (taxi, bus, train)– please note that all taxi receipts must be dated, signed with full travel details
- Original receipts for all non-mileage related claims (e.g. car parking) should be attached to the travel and subsistence claim.
- The claim pro-forma should be signed by the claimant and approved by a supervisor/director/committee member.
- All staff and Board members who use their cars for business purposes must ensure that their motor insurance is appropriate for this use. The organisation should get a signed undertaking from each person who claims mileage expenses,

to the effect that their car has appropriate insurance cover and that the organisation is not liable for any loss or damage resulting from the use of the person's car on official business.

- Where travel/mileage costs are being claimed by a consultant/facilitator, mileage/travel claim forms **must** be submitted. **Simply documenting a total amount on an invoice for mileage/travel costs incurred is inadequate.** At the very least, invoices should make reference to dates, journeys made, mileage incurred and rate/mile.
- It is noted that consultants/facilitators are not paid employees and for this reason invoices must be submitted in order to claim costs/expenses incurred in connection with work undertaken. This also applies to costs incurred for materials, stationery etc.
- **Invoices submitted with claims which lack sufficient detail or supporting information/documentation will NOT be reimbursed.**

4.0 BEFRIENDING

4.1 HOSPITALITY

This extends to:

- Light refreshments for meetings e.g. tea/coffee and biscuits (valid receipts must be submitted).
- Light lunches taken on medical visits and simple outings in company of a befriender/befriender (valid receipts must be attached to Expenses Claim Form).

Anything not detailed in the Contract/Letter of Offer will be disallowed.

4.2 MILEAGE/CAR PARKING

- Travel costs may be claimed for the following purposes:
 - home visits
 - hospital/medical appointments for befrienderes
 - attendance at befriending meetings with co-ordinator
 - attendance at befriending training sessions authorised by the Council
- It is recognised that car parking charges can be incurred when a befriender is accompanied on medical visits however they must be in relation to that visit. Such charges seen to be at a distance from hospital/medical centre will be disallowed unless a satisfactory rationale is provided. Valid receipts must be attached to the Travel and Expenses Claim Form (See point 3.14).
- Mileage is claimed at 40p per mile for the first 10,000 miles after which 25p per mile (as stipulated by HMRC and is considered tax free).

- Car insurance is an ineligible cost.
 - The organisation should get a signed undertaking from each person who claims mileage expenses, to the effect that their car has appropriate insurance cover and that the organisation is not liable for any loss or damage resulting from the use of the person's car on official business.
- Mileage for visits to befriendeds and/or training may be considered separately or combined.

Please note – budget headings must be strictly adhered to. Any changes must be requested in writing and approved by a Development Officer. Please ensure you receive approval of any changes in writing before implementing same as any variation from budget will be disallowed in verification if no record of that change is on file.

4.3 RECOMPENSE FOR SUPERVISORS/COORDINATORS

- Any recompense received for supervision/coordination and/or administrative time may be considered earnings and could be eligible for HMRC contributions. Therefore it is necessary that each group/organisation hold on file a contract/agreement regarding same, complete with disclaimer. Persons receiving such monies must invoice the group/organisation complete with all relevant details (See point 2.0 – Invoices).

APPENDICES

1. Expenditure Claim Form
2. Cheque List
3. Required Documentation Checklist
4. Travel and Expenses Claims Form
5. Cash Withdrawal From Bank
6. Credit Cards - Extended Explanation
7. Quotes - Extended Explanation
8. Bank Details
9. Projected Expenditure

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION CHECKLIST

A mini guide to expenditure and the information required for verification.

Type of Expenditure	Documentation/Information required
Work Plan Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices • Quotations (where applicable) • Where facilitators/counsellors/tutors are involved. agreements/CV's • Hospitality – details of event and numbers of attendees
Travel	Claim form containing the following details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, address, miles travelled, to/from, purpose of journey, mileage rate, receipts (where applicable) signed by claimant.
Running costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices/receipts (if applicable)
Cash Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices/Receipts/expenses form
	Bank statements will be required to show all claimed expenditure has been paid. If the project has been paid from a non-designated account, then the relevant transaction should be highlighted on the statements. Only expenditure that has cleared the bank statement can be claimed for.
	It is advisable that the use of personal credit cards be avoided. Where project costs have been paid using a personal credit card please be advised that the original credit card statement will be required for verification.
	Invoices will only be accepted if they adhere to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be original. Under no circumstances can photocopies or faxed copies be accepted. • Contains full contact name, address and contact number of supplier. • Clearly addressed to the project (name and address of group/organisation OR person acting for the group/organisation) as detailed on your application for grant aid. • Clearly detail the goods/services acquired • Invoices are stamped/marked paid, detailing cheque number, date of payment and signed by person authorising same.

TRAVEL AND EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

Name of group: _____ SSF reference: _____
 Name of person making claim: _____
 Address of person making claim: _____

Day	Date	Journey From	Made to	Business conducted	No of miles claimed	Details of other outlay: subsistence, transport etc	Other costs (attach receipts)

Total other costs expenditure: £
 Total no miles: x _____ pence per mile: £

Declaration:

I declare that the expenses claimed have actually and necessarily been incurred by me in the course of eligible project activities.

Overall total claimed: £

Signed: _____

Countersigned: _____

Signature of certifying officer: _____

CASH WITHDRAWAL FROM BANK

Cash payments are only to be used in exceptional circumstances but where they are unavoidable this form should be used to document the withdrawal and re-lodging of funds from the group’s account.

Group Name: _____

Work Plan: _____

Ref No: _____

Withdrawal date: _____

Amount: _____

Supplier: _____

Invoice No: _____

Amount: _____

Date Paid: _____

Signed: _____ **Position:** _____
(person making withdrawal)

Signed: _____ **Position:** _____
(person making payment, if different)

Re-lodgement in bank

Date: _____

Amount: _____

Signed: _____

- Please attach withdrawal/re-lodgement slips
- These must correspond with bank statement showing withdrawal of cash and re-lodgement (if applicable)
- A valid receipt or receipted invoice must be attached marked paid and signed by authorised person.

CREDIT CARDS

Extended explanation

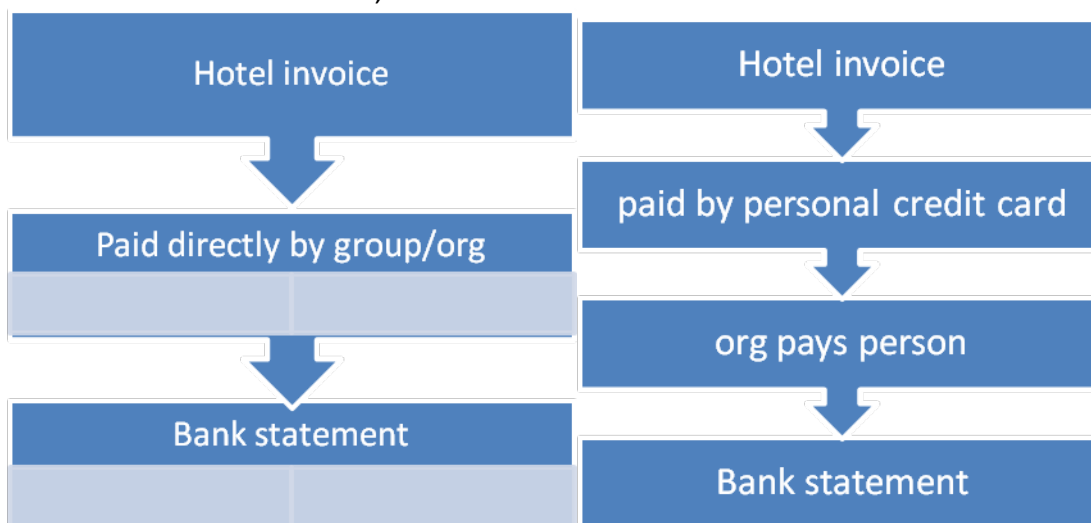
As you will be aware, it is imperative that clear audit trails are established and maintained to monitor and track all Work Plan expenditure.

In order to do this, a clear audit trail can only exist if the following is available for inspection and conditions are met:

- Original supplier’s invoice, with date paid and cheque number specified;
- Original bank statement, clearly identifying cheque has cleared the bank;
- Claimed expenditure is in line with approved budget.

NICRC strongly advises against the use of personal credit/debit cards but understands that in some instances, there may be no viable alternative. Please be aware however, that should a personal credit/debit card be used, proof of payment can only be verified by production of an original credit/debit card statement. Failure to produce this will result in the associated expenditure not being vouched or reimbursed to you. This is in the case where a person has used a personal credit card to pay the group’s meal/flight/hotel/etc.

For audit purposes this creates the link between invoice paid by credit card and the reimbursement of monies due, i.e.



It is recognised that the use of personal credit cards are used for personal expenses, this is acceptable provided the receipt is attached to a personal claim form and spend validated by authorised person within the group/organisation.

QUOTES

Extended explanation

All quotes must contain all relevant information i.e. the reason for the request, who they were obtained from, numbers of persons, dates, cost etc.

Services under £1500: Two/three oral quotes are required; this information is to be kept on file by the group/organisation (possibly fax or email). It must contain the reason for the request, who they were obtained from, for what dates, cost and reason for choice, i.e. best value. (please use initiative - we do not require quotes for a packet of tea/coffee and biscuits however we do expect best price at all times).

Where there is only one choice of supplier: This may be the case, for example if there is only one exhibition venue in one location. In this case it will be impossible to obtain other quotes however you will still need appropriate information for the grant application, i.e. cost of service on appropriate date. If buses will be involved then oral quotes for costs under the threshold of £1500 must be acquired.

Multiple bookings/cumulative costs: Please note that whereas a venue hire/bus etc. may cost £300 (which is under £1500) if the venue/bus etc. is going to be hired, for example 6 times in the year, this will bring the total to over the threshold of £1500 when 4 written quotes must be sought. All cumulative costs must be supported by quotes. It is important for groups to forward plan their work.

Includes; venue hire, bus hire, trips, facilitation, tutoring, entertainment, bands, catering etc. This list is not exhaustive but **all must be reputable traders/companies, trained, self employed, etc.**

All quotes must be like for like:

Whereas there may be a valid rationale for using one particular venue, bus hire company, tour organiser, caterer, etc., it must be stressed that the rationale is only the reason behind the choice not the reason for not acquiring quotes. In accordance with the requirements laid out in the Financial Guideline quotes must be sought at all times.

Please note:

The chosen supplier must be one of the quotations provided

4 Insurance quotes may be provided by one broker

Tenders for Auditors may be on a 2 to 3 year basis

Please note that when your application will be verified, quotations will be required to substantiate your claim.

Community Relations Council



**Strategic Support Fund for Groups Working with Victims & Survivors of the Troubles
Dedicated Bank Account Details**

Ref: _____ Amount of Grant: _____

The Strategic Support Fund award will be paid into the Organisation’s Bank Account. The Account must be in Northern Ireland. The NI Community Relations Council cannot transfer monies into a personal account. Please provide details as follows:-

Name of Organisation: _____

Bank Name: _____

Address: _____

Bank Sort Code: _____

Account Number: _____

Account Name: _____

Signed for and on behalf of the Organisation (two signatures are essential).

1. _____ Office _____ Date _____

2. _____ Office _____ Date _____

Signature: _____
Chairperson/Board Member ONLY

Date: _____

Please send claim form to:

Community Relations Council
Victims & Survivors Programme
6 Murray Street
Belfast
BT1 6DN
Ph: 02890 227500
Fax: 02890 227551