

WOMEN'S ROYAL NAVAL SERVICE BENEVOLENT TRUST
(CR 206529)
THE GRANT MAKING PROCESS

This Trust exists solely for the benefit of ex-Wrens who served between 3 September 1939 and 1 November 1993. Help is not restricted to members living in this country. Exceptionally, we may consider helping a surviving family member with the funeral costs of a deceased ex-Wren. Retrospective grants of any kind are not normally made, nor can assistance be given towards settling secondary debts (eg credit cards), or debt to family members or friends.

One of our biggest problems is raising awareness; it is surprising how many ex-Wrens do not even know of our existence. If you hear of an ex-Wren who you think may be having difficulties, do please tell her about us or approach us on her behalf. Many people are too proud to ask for help, but we always stress that we are their special charity, and one that they may well have donated to during their time in the Women's Royal Naval Service. Alternatively, help us to help those in need by supporting our work through donations and legacies.

If you need help or would like to help do please get in touch:

***WRNS Benevolent Trust, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO2 8RN.
Tel: 02392 655301. Fax: 02392 679040. E-mail: grantsadmin@wrnsbt.org.uk***

The WRNS Benevolent Trust is a small Charity. We have no caseworkers of our own, and liaise (mainly) with the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) – Forces Help, or The Royal British Legion (TRBL). Their volunteer caseworkers call on any applicant on our behalf. They are discreet, knowledgeable, and can give friendly support & advice on a wide variety of matters. They complete a report (including financial details), which is then put before our Grants Committee for consideration. All applications are treated with strict confidentiality; only those involved with the case will know details. Even the Grants Committee are not given names or addresses, only a case number and the relevant details required in order to reach a decision. Members of the Grants Committee (including those now serving in the RN) are all ex-Wrens, and give their time and assistance voluntarily. Members may apply to us for help direct, or a relation or friend may approach us on their behalf. With the member's consent, we then contact the appropriate organisation in their area and ask for someone to visit. During the process, we will verify service in the WRNS.

In the report (often known as 'Form A'), you will be asked to supply the following:

- Full details of applicant and husband/other partner¹ if applicable, including any service details;
- Details of any children.
- A breakdown of income, including any State benefits, and expenditure, including savings².
- Details of Loan Agreements, Debts, Civilian Employment³ if applicable, and any previous assistance given.

SSAFA Forces Help or TRBL will provide us with a written brief, giving background information on the applicant, why they need help and other charities approached.

Note 1. These details are requested even if the applicant is widowed, divorced or separated. The service or civilian career of the husband/partner may open up more avenues of charitable help. We very often pool our resources with other charities when the amount required is beyond our limits.

Note 2. Many people consider it an invasion of their privacy to have to give financial details, but we cannot award a grant without them as a level of need must be established. Were we to award grants to every member asking for help, regardless of their finances, we would soon find

ourselves with no money left for the truly needy. However, each and every case is taken on its own merits.

Note 3. As in Note 1, previous or current employment can also provide further sources of assistance. Many trades, professions and organisations have their own charitable funds with whom we can liaise.

REGULAR GRANTS

WEEKLY MAINTENANCE GRANT – ANNUITY

To qualify for this grant the applicant would be of State pensionable age and living on a low income. Our recipients currently receive £20 a week; this award is paid quarterly in April, July, October and December (for January), normally via SSAFA or TRBL. Although only £20 per week, it can make a huge difference to someone who is finding it difficult to make ends meet, or can help to pay for a few little extras that would be otherwise unaffordable.

CARE ENHANCEMENT GRANT

Where an ex-Wren is living in a Care Home, assistance may be considered towards any shortfall in top-up fees, or to a supplement to help eke out the meagre State Personal Expenses Allowance. On occasion, we can also consider assistance with fees incurred where an individual receives care in their own home.

WEEKLY SUPPORT SUPPLEMENT

This grant is specifically for those who are below pensionable age who are too young to qualify for a State pension, and unable to find employment through no fault of their own (usually through health reasons). As with the annuity, the weekly payment of £27 can make a huge difference to someone who is finding it difficult to make ends meet, or help to pay for a few little extras that would be otherwise unaffordable. Again, paid quarterly.

GENERAL AMENITY GRANTS

These Amenity Grants can be any sum up to a maximum of £500.00 per annum, usually paid in two equal instalments. If the applicant has children of school age or below living with them there is opportunity for an additional grant of £45 per child to help with associated costs for Christmas. These grants may be used for any purpose to meet the needs of the applicant, and will sometimes be awarded where payment of an annuity or weekly support supplement are not applicable.

HELP-LINE AND TELEPHONE RENTALS

Many of our applicants are frail or immobile, and living alone. The use of a lifeline helps to give them some peace of mind as to what will happen should they fall or become ill, and the telephone means they can keep in touch with family and friends.

All Regular Grants are reviewed on an annual basis, which means we are kept informed of the individual's welfare and can reassess their needs as required.

OTHER GRANTS

As well as the regular grants detailed above, we award many 'one-off' grants. These can be to help with arrears or primary debts, removal or travel costs, convalescence care, education, household goods and repairs, medical aids, medical/dental fees and in some cases, funerals. There is an upper ceiling on these grants, so if the total cost is beyond that, with the assistance of the caseworker agencies we trawl other eligible charities for help. For example, we may be unable to meet the full

cost of a stair-lift or motorised scooter, but an amount may be pledged and the outstanding balance met by approaching other charities. If help is essential, then assistance can generally be found.

Some members may not be in financial need, but do need guidance on certain matters. If we are unable to answer their questions ourselves, we are happy to liaise with the appropriate organisations on their behalf, or put people in the right direction.