



Finance Policy

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Finance Policy

This document was created because the staff and trustees of Autism Bedfordshire have legal obligations to protect our finances. Each of us is personally responsible for ensuring that all monies are protected, transactions recorded promptly and that the interest of the organisation is our priority at all times.

Financial records are kept so that the Autism Bedfordshire can:

- Meet its legal and other obligations, e.g. Charities Acts, Inland Revenue, Customs & Excise, Companies Act, Common Law etc.;
- Enable the Board to have control of Autism Bedfordshire's finances.
- Enable Autism Bedfordshire to meet contractual obligations and requirements of funders.

Autism Bedfordshire will keep proper accounts, which will include:

- An electronic record of all the transactions in Autism Bedfordshire's bank account, supported by an audit trail of hard copy records for example invoices, expense claims etc.
- The financial year will end on the 31st March.
- Accounts will be drawn up after each financial year within three months of the year, externally audited, and presented to the next Annual General Meeting.

- Before the start of each financial year, the Board will approve a budgeted income and expenditure account for the following year.
- The financial performance will be reviewed and presented to the Board at least every two months.

Autism Bedfordshire banks with the following banks:

CAFCASH LTD CAF GOLD

Kings Hill West Mallings
Kent
ME19 4TA

CAFCASH LTD

High Interest Account
Kings Hill West Mallings
Kent
ME19 4TA

HSBC

12 Allhallows
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK40 1LJ

Autism Bedfordshire will require the bank to provide statements every month for the current account and quarterly for all other accounts and these will be reconciled with the computer record at least every month and the Finance Director will audit that this reconciliation has been done at least twice a year.

Receipts (Income)

The aim is to demonstrate that Autism Bedfordshire has received all the income to which it is entitled and that it is all reasonably evidenced.

All monies received will be recorded promptly, banked and then entered into the accounts without delay (note this includes sundry receipts such as payment for telephone calls, photocopying etc.) Autism Bedfordshire will maintain files of documentation i.e. letter from funders to back this up. There must be a supporting document for every transaction.

It is against Company Law to use receipts for any purpose until they have been banked and recognised in the accounts. No staff member or trustee may use cash receipts instead of petty cash or cheque payment through the office.

Payments (Expenditure)

The aim is to ensure that all expenditure is on Autism Bedfordshire's business and is properly authorised and that this can be demonstrated.

Staff members and individual board members may be given delegated authority up to certain budget limits; these will be recorded in Board minutes. Under no circumstances will these authorities be exceeded.

The Finance Officer will be responsible for the security of the cheque book (unused and partly used cheque books) should be kept under lock and key when in the office.

Blank Cheques will NEVER be signed

The same person should not be responsible for ordering, processing and checking invoices as well as raising cheque requisitions, signing cheques and authorising payments.

The relevant payee's name will always be inserted on the cheque before signature; the cheque will always be filled in.

No cheques will be signed without original documentation.

Money will only be spent to meet conditions and requirements of the funders within the objectives of the constitution.

The Chairperson and/or the Finance Director with (in either case) one other board member may approve expenditure of not more than £1,000 or an overspend on a particular budget heading of not more than 5% so long as this is written down, signed by both people approving it and reported to and minuted at the next management committee meeting and the next full trustee meeting.

Payment & Documentation

Every payment out of Autism Bedfordshire's bank account will be supported by an original invoice. The original invoice will be filed and kept for seven years.

The person who signs the cheque should ensure that the following is written on the invoice or expenses sheet: cheque number, date cheque drawn, amount of cheque, who authorised the payment.

Wages and salaries – there will be a clear trail to show authority and reason for every payment authorised and what it is for i.e. salary, Inland Revenue. All employees will be paid within the PAYE National Insurance rules.

All staff appointments/departures will be authorised by the Board with dates and salary level. Similarly all changes to hours and other payments such as overtime etc. will be authorised by the Board.

Petty cash records will be maintained on the finance system. The Manager and/or Senior Team Leaders are trusted with a float as agreed by the Manager or Finance Officer.

Petty cash will be reconciled at least once a week by the Finance Officer. This means that the petty cash with receipts must be seen by an officer or trustee on a weekly basis. Petty cash will be provided to take to one off activities and not for ongoing activities.

Expenses/Allowances – Autism Bedfordshire will, if asked, reimburse expenditure paid personally by staff providing:

- Fares are evidenced by tickets.
- Other expenditure as evidenced by original receipts.
- Car mileage is based on local authority scales.

Cheques, signatures and cash cards

Each cheque will be signed by at least two people.

A cheque must not be signed by the person to whom it is payable.

Other undertakings

Autism Bedfordshire does not accept liability for any financial commitment unless properly authorised. Any orders placed or undertakings given, the financial consequences of which are prima facie, likely to exceed the total of £50 must be authorised and minuted by the Board. (This covers such items as the new service contracts, office equipment, purchase and hire).

All fund-raising and grant applications undertaken on behalf of the organisation will be done in the name of the organisation with the prior approval of the Board or in urgent situations the approval of the chairperson who will provide full details to the next management committee.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the employee's financial circumstances will be respected at all times.

Board members, staff and volunteers will at all times act in the best interest of the organisation and if they experience a conflict of interest they will not divulge sensitive information.

Other Rules

The trustees will consider the level of reserves that is prudent for the charity to have at its AGM meeting every year. Consideration will be given to redundancy liabilities, lease agreement, and any other significant factors that should be taken into account were the charity to close.

Autism Bedfordshire will adhere to good practice in relation to its finances at all times, e.g. Autism Bedfordshire has set up and maintains a fixed asset register stating the date of purchase, cost, serial numbers and normal location of the asset(s). It holds records of all stocks of goods of significant value.