

# ROYAL FREE CHARITY

Regulations and guidelines  
for the use of Special  
Purpose Funds

2021-2026

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# Contents

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 What is a Special Purpose Fund?
- 1.2 Roles and responsibilities - charity, trustees, and fund signatories
- 1.3 Conflicts of interest

## 2 Management and administration of funds

- 2.1 Fund management support
- 2.2 Managing committed expenditure
- 2.3 Investment return
- 2.4 Admin charge
- 2.5 Opening and closing of funds

## 3 Income

- 3.1 Income guidelines
- 3.2 Restricted and unrestricted donations
- 3.3 Thanking donors
- 3.4 What can and cannot be paid into a fund?
- 3.5 Gift Aid
- 3.6 Fundraising

## 4 Expenditure

- 4.1 Regulations
- 4.2 Timeframe and target expenditure
- 4.3 Expenditure limits and authorisation
- 4.4 Spend plans – non-research funds
- 4.5 Research funds – additional requirements
- 4.6 Equipment including medical equipment
- 4.7 Entering into contract with third parties
- 4.8 Permitted and non-permitted expenditure
- 4.9 Procurement
- 4.10 Invoices
- 4.11 Expenditure claim process
- 4.12 VAT exemption

## 5 Acknowledgements and publicity

## 6 Intellectual property

- 6.1 IP requirement

## 7 Contacts

# 1. Introduction to SPFs

## 1.1 What is a Special Purpose Fund (SPF)?

Special Purpose Funds hold charitable donations to be used for a specific department or service at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (RFL). The Royal Free Charity (RFC) is responsible for ensuring expenditure from funds fit within our charitable objectives:

For the benefit of patients through improving:

- patient experience
- staff welfare
- clinical services, including the provision of medical equipment
- supporting locally led research and development

SPFs are not individual bank accounts and cannot be used to bypass the charity, trust or UCL policies, processes, or procurement routes. The guidelines in this document are aligned to both the charity and trust processes.

## 1.2 Roles and responsibilities

This section sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Royal Free Charity, its trustees and fund signatories.

### 1.2.1 Charity role

Charity regulations, which govern the use of SPFs, are overseen by the Charity Commission. The charity reports annually on the performance of all charitable expenditure. We are audited every year and must publish our accounts on the Charity Commission's website.

### 1.2.2 The role of the charity's trustees

The role of a charity trustee is to make sure that the charity complies with its governing document; complies with charity law requirements and other laws that apply; makes sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes, and avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk (<https://www.gov.uk/set-up-a-charity>).

Trustees devolve the management of SPFs to charity staff, and staff reserve the right to:

- a prevent the withdrawal of funds which do not meet the conditions set out in these guidelines
- b authorise expenditure from a fund if the charity believes it is an appropriate use of resources
- c decline expenditure from a fund if it is perceived to be outside of the guidelines or contrary to the charity's governance or national laws
- d appoint an alternative signatory or take control of the funds directly if they believe the guidelines are not being met
- e amend the guidelines as and when necessary

### 1.2.3 The role and responsibility of fund signatories

Each SPF is required to have at least two signatories who are employees of the trust or who have honorary contracts. Signatories must be of a similar staff grade to each other. For instance, a consultant's co-signatory must be another consultant or a senior manager. **The charity staff delegate responsibility to fund signatories and as a signatory they are accountable for:**

- a actively managing the funds in line with the guidelines. As and when guidelines are updated the charity may request fund signatories to confirm they have received and read the new guidance.
- b spending the fundraised income in line with the established objectives of the fund - this includes notifying the charity of any proposed expenditure over £20,000 and providing spend plans for the expenditure.
- c spending fundraised income in a timely way. Charity Commission guidance requires that at least 25% of donated funds to the charity must be spent each year. Signatories must ensure 25% of the opening balance of the fund is spent each year (unless an approved project with spend plan is in place).
- d raising additional income. If fund balances drop below £2,000 the charity reserves the right to close the fund if there is no agreed income or expenditure plan.
- e informing the charity of any expected donation over £2,000, or any donation where a written agreement is required (for example, to meet requirements of a third-party funder or restricted gift).

The charity, not the fund signatory, has the full legal responsibility for the funds, including ensuring that all monies are received and spent in accordance with charitable law and all statutory requirements.

## 1.3 Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a fund signatory's personal interests, or interests relating to the income or expenditure of the fund result in a clash that may require the charity to protect the integrity of the signatory role in respect of charitable donations.

This example list of conflicts of interest is not exhaustive but includes:

- any involvement in any body making donations to the fund where the signatory may personally benefit
- a donation from a close relative
- a donation from an organisation or body where the signatory holds a position in any paid or voluntary or advisory capacity
- a signatory's business, family members, or friends, are personally supplying services and the signatory wishes to pay them from the fund
- where any portion of a signatory's salary is paid from the fund

Please see table 3.4 for information about consultant private practice income donations.

The fund signatory must notify the charity of any conflicts of interest. Any disclosures of interest will be reported to the charity's trustees, who will take a view as to whether the conflict of interest is properly and openly managed. They may decide that the individual should be removed as signatory, or that expenditure claims are signed off by alternative signatories if deemed appropriate.

Signatories are not permitted to sign-off their own expenditure reimbursement requests.

# 2. Management and administrative costs

## 2.1 Fund management support

The charity provides practical support to fund signatories through the SPF administration team and the dedicated SPF inbox [SPF@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org). Please use this as the first point of call for all enquiries and expenditure processing. Each month, statements are sent by email to the two principal signatories of each fund, who should check that the information is accurate. Any queries or discrepancies should be reported to [SPF@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org) who will liaise with the charity finance team if required.

## 2.2 Managing committed expenditure

Signatories are responsible for ensuring that funds do not become overdrawn, and the balance covers all expenditure including commitments for restricted projects, research projects and associated salary costs. From July 2022 the charity may move committed expenditure (over £10,000) out of the SPF; it will then be ring-fenced as restricted in the charity's accounts. This has the benefit of:

- ensuring the fund balance shown on the monthly statement more accurately reflects the available balance.
- keeping committed money separate from other money in the fund.
- ensuring donations for restricted projects and research projects are ringfenced in our financial accounts.
- reducing the administration fee (see 2.4) on the fund balance, as the committed expenditure will not sit in the fund.

If a negative balance arises, the charity will stop all payments from the fund until a credit balance is restored. The charity is not liable for any overspend from funds.

## 2.3 Investment return

As of 2021 the charity no longer shares investment gains with SPFs. The charity invests its funds, including those held in SPFs, in a range of assets including property, equities, bonds and cash. The charity historically has shared investment gains with SPFs through annual payments but has absorbed investment losses from its free reserves. In recent years, those losses have been substantial and have damaged the charity's financial sustainability. The Board of Trustees is committed to preserving SPF balances but will now bear all of the risk and reward (i.e., the losses and gains from investments).

## 2.4 Admin charge

The charity incurs a range of costs to effectively administer over 200 SPFs. This includes costs associated with financial processing, the use of banking facilities, audit, and legal costs. In addition, the charity incurs costs across other departments involved in the management of funds and therefore we apportion part of our running costs against each fund by way of the admin fee.

From 1 April 2022 the charity has updated its policy on fund charges by increasing the charge to 2.5% per year on the monthly balances of each fund. This will allow the charity to recoup a proportion of the costs necessary to effectively administer its SPFs. The annual charge will be calculated based on the average monthly balance across the year divided by 12.

This charge is benchmarked against other NHS charities who administer similar funds on behalf of NHS trusts, to ensure the amount we charge is fair and proportionate. The charge is subject to review on an annual basis.

## 2.5 Opening and closing funds (See also section 1.2)

Please contact [SPF@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org) to discuss opening a new fund, new funds are only opened in exceptional circumstances.

### 2.5.1 Dormant funds

Funds are considered dormant if there has been no income or expenditure for a 12-month period or if funds are just accumulating. In these instances, signatories will be asked to provide proposals for the use of the fund. If no suitable proposals are supplied, or funds have not been used effectively for two years without good reason, the charity reserves the right to assume direct control of the funds and determine the best way to apply them in a manner compatible with charity law and the fundraising code of practice.

### 2.5.2 Signatory retirement or leaving the trust employment

After leaving the employment of the trust a signatory may not remain without the charity's approval. This will only be granted if the signatory holds an honorary contract with the trust or UCL and is either carrying out research in line with the purpose of the fund or is involved with treating NHS patients.

Money donated to the charity may not be transferred to another organisation when a signatory leaves the trust. This includes consultant donations from private patient fees.

## 3. Income

### 3.1 Income guidelines

All income paid into a SPF must be charitable; not commercially generated; and given freely, under no obligation by the donor.

Please contact [fundraising@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org) for bank details, donor support and further guidance on how donations can be made into an SPF. Cheques should be made payable to "Royal Free Charity fund xxx" and the fund number should be referenced on **all** correspondence to ensure the money is credited to the appropriate fund.

When income appears on our bank statement the purpose is not always clear. Therefore, if a signatory is expecting money to come into a fund, please inform

[fundraising@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org). Unknown donations where we have been unable to identify the correct fund number after three months may be credited to the charity's general funds and considered unrestricted; these funds may not be available to be transferred to an SPF at a later date.

The charity is required to carry out due diligence on all donations over £10k to reduce the risk of accepting a donation which may later bring the charity and trust into disrepute, and the charity has a gift acceptance policy to enable this. By notifying us in advance of a donation, this can be signed off before income is received.

## 3.2 Restricted and unrestricted donations

Unrestricted donations are those given freely to an SPF but for general use in line with the purpose of that fund. Restricted donations are those given freely but for a restricted purpose or specific service or project, and usually within a specified time period, for example, research funding from pharmaceutical companies or grants from third-party funders.

These donations are likely to require a contract or gift agreement to be in place. The charity should be informed in advance if a restricted donation is expected, and independent evidence will be required before the money will be credited to the fund to ensure the required formal agreements are in place and documentation is held on file. **See also 1.2.3. and table 3.4.**

## 3.3 Thanking donors

The charity prioritises donor stewardship and therefore wherever possible a letter of acknowledgement and thanks will be sent on receipt of a donation. The charity may at times contact signatories to help identify unknown donations.

When a donor is known to a signatory, please ensure that you have the donor's permission to pass their details on to us, and let them know that you are doing so, in order that we can appropriately acknowledge their gift.

Good donor stewardship enables us to build longer term relationships with supporters. In addition, where a donor has specified a particular use for their gift, and where this has been agreed, then it is best practice to report back to the donor on the impact of their donation.

## 3.4 What can and cannot be paid into an SPF?

Please read the following guidelines before accepting any income into an SPF. If you have any questions regarding income or donations, please email [fundraising@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org) who will be able to provide guidance.



**Table 3.4: What can and cannot be paid into an SPF / unrestricted**

**UNRESTRICTED INCOME**

Given freely with no legal restrictions or formal agreement/contract

Type of income	Permitted?	Further information
Donations from grateful patients/families to say thank you for their care	Yes	The public can donate to an SPF. For bank details or alternative payment options please contact <a href="mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org">fundraising@royalfreecharity.org</a> .
Donations received via on-line giving facilities such as JustGiving, Facebook	Yes	Contact <a href="mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org">fundraising@royalfreecharity.org</a> for guidance on how on-line pages can be set up to ensure donations come directly into the charity bank account. Pre-approval is required for some platforms.
Donations from businesses/corporate organisations	Yes and No	<p>Yes, as long as the donations are freely given. Yes, if for charitable purposes (e.g. research, and pre-approval has been given by the trust/UCL and the charity and where there is a signed agreement in place).</p> <p><b>No</b>, if it is to provide a commercial service.</p> <p><b>No</b>, if it is for sponsorship. However, please contact <a href="mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org">fundraising@royalfreecharity.org</a> to discuss this as in some cases sponsorship for charitable activities is permitted.</p>
Private patient fees	Yes	<p>Patients cannot pay a fee for services directly into an SPF. However, a consultant may choose to make a donation into an SPF. Once the money reaches the charity, it is no longer the consultant's fee, and is, legally, a sum of money that the consultant has donated to the charity. Therefore, any expenditure must remain in line with the guidance in this document.</p> <p>Consultants should note that donating private patient fees into a charitable fund can only claim tax relief if the Gift Aid procedure is followed.</p> <p><b>See section 3.5</b> See also Primary Trading Income (below).</p>

**Table 3.4: What can and cannot be paid into an SPF (continued)**

**UNRESTRICTED INCOME (continued)**

Given freely with no legal restrictions or formal agreement/contract

Type of income	Permitted?	Further information
Primary trading income	No	<p>Charities may not carry out commercial trading, and so income from the sale of goods or services derived from an individual's employment (and which are generated either in NHS time or by using NHS facilities) must be paid to their employer (either the NHS trust or UCL). However, the employer NHS trust/UCL or an individual can make a donation into an SPF.</p> <p>Funds may not be used to organise large scale conferences where delegates are charged a fee, this is likely to be considered a commercial activity. Please contact us to discuss this if you are considering holding an event: <a href="mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org">SPF@royalfreecharity.org</a>.</p> <p>Where staff provide goods or services (for example, medical reports, training courses, laboratory fees), any income generated belongs to their employer, either the trust/UCL as appropriate.</p> <p>This type of income can only be transferred to an SPF in the form of a donation with the written consent of the funder/employer.</p> <p>To transfer this type of income from the trust or UCL to an SPF may require an invoice from the charity. Please email <a href="mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org">SPF@royalfreecharity.org</a>.</p>
Income from running courses/study day	Yes	<p>If the remit of a fund includes education, fees may be accepted for running courses and can be put into a fund. The fund must be used for educational purposes, and the associated costs of the meeting (for example, catering) can be claimed.</p> <p><b>Please note:</b> fees are considered a charitable donation and are non-refundable. Please ensure your communications are clear with any prospective applicants/students that refunds are not permitted.</p>

**Table 3.4: What can and cannot be paid into an SPF / restricted**

**RESTRICTED INCOME**

Given freely for a specified purpose, usually requiring a contract agreement or gift agreement - MUST BE pre-approved by the charity before receipt

Type of income	Permitted	Further information
Research grants from other organisations	Yes	<p>You must inform the charity if you are expecting a grant from an external funder into an SPF.</p> <p>Any research grant must fit within the purpose of the SPF and an agreement must be in place between the trust/UCL and the donor. The charity must be noted as the recipient of the funds but hold no liability.</p> <p>Please see also entering into contract with third-parties section 4.7, and IP section 6.</p> <p>For more information, please email <a href="mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org">SPF@royalfreecharity.org</a>.</p>
Pharmaceutical companies	Yes	<p>Income received from pharmaceutical companies must be in line with ABPI guidance.</p> <p><a href="https://www.abpi.org.uk/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-pharmaceutical-industry-2021/">https://www.abpi.org.uk/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-pharmaceutical-industry-2021/</a></p> <p>A written agreement must be in place between the trust/UCL and the pharmaceutical company and must recognise the charity as the recipient of the funds but hold no liability. See also entering into contract with third-parties section 4.7.</p>
Sponsorship	No	<p>Sponsorship is not classed as a freely given donation and creates legal, tax and administrative implications for the charity.</p> <p>Signatories must not make financial agreements with sponsors – any income of this type will be refunded to the sponsor.</p>
Legacy	Yes	<p>Legacy income is only accepted once it has been confirmed by the charity that it can act on the wishes of the deceased. The charity works with a legacy partner that manages the legalities of legacy administration.</p>

### 3.5 Gift Aid

Donors who are UK taxpayers should be encouraged to use the Gift Aid scheme, which increases the value of the gift at no cost to the donor. The charity fundraising team contacts donors where appropriate and asks that they complete a Gift Aid form if eligible. From July 2022 all tax relief claimed in this way is credited to the charity's general fund and not to individual funds. This income is used to support the charity to provide its core services to support the patients and staff of the trust. This does not apply to donations made by consultants into their funds.

### 3.6 Fundraising

If you would like to discuss fundraising for an SPF, please contact [fundraising@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org) or visit the [fundraising page](#) on our website. Any costs associated with holding or running a fundraising event will come out of the SPF.

If you are hoping to solicit gifts of £10k+, please contact the charity before negotiating the terms of the gift. We can support you to shape this appropriately, ensuring the donor's expectations are managed from the start and delays to the gift reaching you are reduced.

For smaller donations please encourage the donor to visit the charity website to make a donation towards general charity funds where appropriate.

To pay money into an SPF please contact [fundraising@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org), and they will provide our bank details and alternative payment options. The relevant fund number must be referenced on all correspondence to ensure the income is accrued to the correct fund. The charity accepts cheques, but these must be made payable to 'Royal Free Charity Fund xxx'. Cheques made payable to the trust cannot be accepted.

#### Engaging supporters:

If a patient or visitor expresses a wish to donate or fundraise to thank the hospital, please mention to them that the charity can support them. You can introduce us via email or provide them with our contact details and we can discuss their wishes with them. Our fundraising team is experienced in donor stewardship and aims to build long term relationships with supporters. They can also support with any donation or fundraising queries that may arise. Please contact [fundraising@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org).

# 4. Expenditure

## 4.1 Regulations

While day-to-day fund management is delegated to signatories, the trustees remain ultimately responsible for the use of charitable funds. A purpose is not charitable if it is wholly or mainly for the benefit of specific individuals. All expenditure must meet the charity regulations which govern the use of SPFs and are overseen by the Charity Commission. This includes charity fund accounting regulations and compliance with HMRC. All money sitting in an SPF is considered charitable funds. Charitable funds cannot be used for anything that should be NHS funded or covered by your departmental budget.

## 4.2 Timeframe and target expenditure

At least 25% of the opening balance of the fund should be spent each year (unless an approved project with spend plan is in place) [see 1.2.3](#). The charity may request more than 25% is spent if the income in the fund is committed to an approved project, or to meet the requirements of the gift agreement. Note that in this case the starting balance of the donations would be used not the annual starting balance of the SPF.

The exception to this is when a SPF is accruing funds to be spent on a project. In this case we would require a project spend plan setting out the expected start and end date of the project, and expected expenditures, to ensure that funds will be actively used in a timely fashion.

Claims for payment or reimbursement should be made immediately. If claims are not made within four months of the expenditure the charity reserves the right to refuse the backdated claims.

## 4.3 Expenditure limits and authorisation

All requests for expenditure (other than pre-approved salaries) must be signed and countersigned as follows:

- up to £5,000 – one signatory
- above £5,000 and up to £50,000 – two signatories
- above £50,000 – two signatories and the charity CEO
- above £100,000 – two signatories and two trustees

There may be occasions where we ask for additional approval at a higher level in the trust (for example, clinical or divisional director) to ensure that expenditure is aligned with trust priorities. Signatories are not permitted to sign-off their own expenditure reimbursement requests.

## 4.4 Spend plans – non-research funds

A spend plan will be required for all committed expenditure over £5,000. A spend plan template is available and should outline the project plan, timescale for spend, and budget.

## 4.5 Research funds – additional requirements

The charity is updating its research funding governance as a result of joining the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). The AMRC helps ensure that its members fund high quality research that has the maximum impact for beneficiaries by ensuring that members' research funding processes adhere to its requirements.

For research funded via charity funding schemes and initiatives, research applications will be reviewed by an independent expert panel and applications sent for external peer review, when necessary.

As an NHS charity that oversees SPFs and a research funder, we are subject to AMRC's requirements relating to all research funded from SPFs, and SPF research applications must be reviewed by the expert panel and, where necessary, peer reviewed. This does not mean that research funding from SPFs will be open to competition, unless specified by the signatory. This step ensures that research funded from SPFs has gone through the same quality review process. In the event of an unfavourable opinion by the panel, the charity will work with the signatory to ensure that the application is of a fundable quality.

Any research funding from an SPF above £5,000 will require a research application to be submitted and reviewed by the charity's research review panel. Where additional expert review is needed, applications will be externally peer-reviewed.

Research funded from SPFs will be awarded as a spend commitment and will follow the charity's post-award process. The funds for the awarded project will be transferred from the SPF and ring-fenced as committed expenditure to be solely used for the project. Any underspend at the end of the project will be transferred back into the SPF.

Any future research that is being carried out that has not gone through this process will need a retrospective application to be submitted and reviewed by the research review panel. Invoices will not be paid by the charity without this step.

Please email [SPF@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org) to request a research application form.

## 4.6 Equipment including medical equipment

All equipment including medical equipment must be purchased via the trust e-procurement process to ensure it is safe for use; to guarantee any insurance policies; to ensure ongoing consumable and maintenance costs are considered and covered; to ensure the charity identifies VAT exempt or zero-rated items and provide the appropriate VAT exemption certificates where applicable. [See 4.12.](#)

All equipment purchased with charitable funds will become the property of the trust /UCL. The charity will not normally pay for equipment which will not ultimately belong to the trust/UCL. This includes medical equipment and all other equipment including IT equipment and devices.

## 4.7 Entering into contract with third parties

Any external research grant must fit within the purpose of the SPF and an agreement must be in place between the trust/UCL and the third party. The charity must be noted as the recipient of the funds but hold no liability. [See also table 3.4.](#)

Once the contract has been signed a copy must be received by the charity before any income can be accepted.

The trust/UCL is ultimately responsible for fulfilment of the contractual agreement. If needed, please insert clause below into any contract:

“The Royal Free charity is acting as the recipient of these funds. The Royal Free Charity holds no liability, and it is the RFL/UCL (delete as appropriate) that is ultimately responsible for the fulfilment of the contract and holds all liability. This includes delivery and financial contractual obligations.”

## 4.8 Permitted expenditure

The table below sets out expenditure permitted from funds, and any expenditure must fit within the objectives of the fund (e.g. for staff welfare or patients or research).

The charity is committed to supporting RFL’s Green Plan and commitment to delivering a net zero NHS. All expenditure should be considered for sustainability, and environmental impact. More information can be found here <https://freenet2.royalfree.nhs.uk/SitePage/68643/greener-royal-free>, and here <https://www.royalfree.nhs.uk/news-media/news/royal-free-londons-green-commitment/>

Please email [SPF@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org) for further information. These guidelines have not changed significantly from the previous version of the guidance (dated 2011) however they have been clarified to remove a number of ‘grey areas’, and approved expenditure limits for meals and expenses have increased.

Table 4.8: Permitted expenditure

No	Type of expenditure	What is permitted
1	Medical equipment	<p>Medical equipment must be ordered using the trust's e-procurement system, or UCL's procurement system (for research funds).</p> <p>Like-for-like replacements of trust equipment are not permitted. Purchase may require approval by the trust medical equipment board.</p> <p><b>SPFs cannot be used to bypass trust or UCL procurement processes.</b></p>
2	Research project costs	<p>All consumables must be ordered using the trust's e-procurement system, or UCL's procurement system. SPFs cannot be used to bypass trust or UCL procurement processes.</p> <p>All research projects should be costed on Worktribe at UCL. At the trust, please contact <a href="mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org">SPF@royalfreecharity.org</a> for more information - certain applications will need to go through the trust R&amp;D finance department.</p>
3	IT equipment and devices	<p>Computers, laptops, tablets or phones are considered the same as other equipment purchases.</p> <p>They must be ordered using the trust or UCL processes and procurement systems. This is to ensure they have the required configuration set-up and security protection as well as guarantees and support provision.</p> <p><b>SPFs cannot be used to bypass trust or UCL procurement processes.</b></p>
4	Staff social events and social activities	<p>Events and activities that are purely social are <b>not permitted</b>. Staff entertaining is not a charitable purpose.</p>
5	Christmas	<p><b>* Please note:</b> guidance for the use of funds for Christmas parties/decorations will be updated annually and is agreed in consultation with the trust.</p> <p><b>Until further notice, funds cannot be used to pay for staff parties/dinners/lunches.</b> Tree/decorations will only be approved with evidence of IPC approval. If in doubt, please contact <a href="mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org">SPF@royalfreecharity.org</a> before making any purchases. Unauthorised purchases will not be reimbursed.</p>



Table 4.8: Permitted expenditure (continued)

No	Type of expenditure	What is permitted
6	Staff welfare activities/purchases	<p>If staff welfare is a stated purpose of the fund, the following are permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities or items connected to welfare that are accessible to all staff eligible to benefit from the fund. Maximum of once per year.</li> <li>• Expenditure must be reasonable and not lavish. This is because HMRC sometimes regard these gifts and activities as taxable benefits.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cash cannot be given.</b> For vouchers see no. 7.</p> <p>Always confirm whether a purchase is acceptable expenditure with <a href="mailto:spf@royalfreecharity.org">spf@royalfreecharity.org</a>.</p>
7	Gift vouchers	<p>In recent years HMRC have become much stricter on the purchase of gift vouchers, as they are viewed the same as cash and can be considered a taxable benefit. We have received updated guidance (February 2023) that gift vouchers are acceptable expenditure from an SPF as long as they meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum amount is £50 for any individual, but please see no. 9 and 10 for further guidance on limits for patient and staff gifts and recognition.</li> <li>• Acceptable vouchers are only multi-purpose vouchers, e.g. vouchers that can be used at more than one retailer. For example, Amazon, Love2Shop gift card, One4all.</li> <li>• <b>Not permitted:</b> vouchers that can only be used at one retailer. For example, WHSmith, M&amp;S, John Lewis.</li> </ul> <p>Please email <a href="mailto:spf@royalfreecharity.org">spf@royalfreecharity.org</a> before purchasing any vouchers to confirm your purchase is acceptable. Vouchers that are bought that fall outside of the above guidelines will not be reimbursed.</p>
8	Away days/team building	<p>The opportunity must be available to complete teams, or all staff eligible to benefit from the fund.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maximum of once per year</li> <li>• must have an educational element</li> <li>• up to £40 per member of staff (inclusive of all costs)</li> </ul> <p>An agenda of the day must be provided when claiming expenditure.</p>

Table 4.8: Permitted expenditure (continued)

No	Type of expenditure	What is permitted
9	Leaving/retirement parties/gifts	<p>Staff must have completed five years of service with the trust. Leaving gift: £50 maximum</p> <p>Leaving party: refreshments up to a maximum of £200. Alcohol cannot be purchased.</p> <p>For staff who have been with the trust for 20+ years there is a leaving/retirement parties grant available, please email <a href="mailto:grants@royalfreecharity.org">grants@royalfreecharity.org</a> for more details.</p> <p><b>Cash cannot be given.</b> For vouchers see no. 7.</p>
10	Patient gifts	<p>If it's within the remit of the fund, gifts for in-patients can be purchased, but are limited to: in-patients only, on their birthday, or at Christmas. Maximum £15/patient.</p> <p><b>Cash cannot be given.</b> For vouchers see no. 7.</p>
11	Guest hospitality	<p>Hospitality is the reception and entertainment of guests and visitors. It relates to people not employed by the trust. This might include visiting researchers or lecturers.</p> <p>It must be connected to bona fide visits for meetings or seminars when it would be discourteous to fail to offer hospitality. Evidence will need to be provided when you submit your claim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breakfast: up to £10 per person</li> <li>• lunch: up to £20 per person</li> <li>• evening meal: up to £40 per person</li> <li>• alcohol: up to £20 per person.</li> </ul> <p>If a service charge is included on the bill this is HMRC compliant and will be reimbursed. The charity cannot reimburse any tips, gratuities or service charges that are not included on the bill. Please note all receipts must be VAT receipts.</p> <p>The costs of hospitality for partners, friends or family will <b>not be reimbursed.</b></p> <p>(Occasional exceptions can be made for visiting dignitaries and distinguished visitors, with trust and charity approval).</p>

Table 4.8: Permitted expenditure (continued)

No	Type of expenditure	What is permitted
12	Staff refreshments for departmental meetings	<p>Day-to-day purchase of on-going refreshments for staff are not permitted. However, refreshments can be purchased for staff and team meetings on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the opportunity must be available to whole teams, or all staff eligible to benefit from the fund</li> <li>• refreshments should be reasonable and value for money</li> <li>• you will need to submit an agenda or copy of the email invite that went out to all staff with the expense claim.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alcohol is not permitted.</b></p>
13	Office/departmental sundries	<p>We receive frequent requests from departments wishing to purchase small everyday items. Trust guidance is that all purchases must be made through the e-procurement process.</p> <p>The charity reserves the right not to re-imburse items that have been bought directly via alternative sources for example, Amazon, stationary suppliers.</p> <p><b>Not permitted:</b> everyday snacks, coffee, tea, milk etc. (see 12).</p>
14	Subscriptions	<p>Subscriptions to publications are allowed provided the publication relates to the main objective of the fund. However, the publications must be accessible to all members of a department and not just an individual.</p> <p>Personal subscriptions to institutions may not be claimed, as they cannot be transferred from one person to another and are seen by HMRC as a personal expense.</p> <p>Subscriptions must be work-related. For subscriptions relating to on-line or website hosting platforms please note the charity will require evidence that these expenses are trust approved (for example, Zoom, Panopto, Squarespace).</p>
15	Salaries & bank hours	<p>Generally, salaries are only permitted when related to research projects. Please contact us directly to discuss: <a href="mailto:spf@royalfreecharity.org">spf@royalfreecharity.org</a>.</p> <p>Charitable funds may not be used to increase a person's NHS salary.</p> <p><b>An individual paid via an SPF cannot be a signatory on that fund (see 1.3).</b></p>

Table 4.8: Permitted expenditure (continued)

No	Type of expenditure	What is permitted
16	Conferences/short courses (CPD)	<p>The topic of the course or conference must relate to the objective of the fund.</p> <p>We require: invoice or confirmation of booking and proof of payment.</p> <p>If you are claiming to be reimbursed for a course you have paid for and attended, we will need proof of attendance. For related travel, subsistence and accommodation allowances see sections 18-20 below.</p>
17	Professional qualifications training/education /career progression	<p>SPFs cannot be used to fund the education and career progression of individuals with the exception of: funds with the stated purpose of education.</p> <p>PhD costs related to a funded research project. Research related qualifications.</p> <p>For the above these must be pre-approved by the charity.</p>
18	Hotel and accommodation	<p>Hotel or alternative overnight accommodation can be reimbursed only if directly related to the objectives of the fund.</p> <p>Up to £150 per night maximum, unless part of a conference package or evidence that the cost from the three nearest hotels is above the limit.</p> <p>The cost of accommodation for partners, friends or family <b>will not be reimbursed</b>.</p>
19	Meal allowances when travelling to courses/conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breakfast: £5 per day</li> <li>• lunch: £10 per day</li> <li>• evening meal: £35 per day (<b>alcohol will not be reimbursed</b>, see no.11 for for tip/service charge information).</li> </ul> <p>The cost for partners, friends or family <b>will not be reimbursed</b>.</p>

Table 4.8: Permitted expenditure (continued)

No	Type of expenditure	What is permitted
20	Public transport and other travel costs	<p>Air: <b>first class travel will not be reimbursed</b>                      Taxi: <b>will not be reimbursed within the UK unless there are exceptional circumstances; justification will be required.</b>                      Outside of UK - taxis will be reimbursed where no other suitable form of transport is available; justification will be required.                      Train: only standard class fare will be reimbursed.</p> <p>Public transport: receipts and copies of tickets, or TFL journey histories need to be provided.                      Please note: TFL travel reimbursements will not be made based on bank statements or receipts only. Proof of destination and interchanges needs to be provided in order to be reimbursed.</p> <p><b>No weekly, monthly, or annual passes will be reimbursed</b> or journeys to and from work including cross site journeys during the working day.</p>
21	Mileage	<p>Payable only for official journeys outside normal working hours, or to attend approved work-related events (for example, conference, course). HMRC allowances are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cars at 0.45p per mile for less than 10,000 business miles travelled per annum</li> <li>• cars at 0.25p per mile for more than 10,000 business miles travelled per annum</li> <li>• motorcycles at 0.24p per mile</li> </ul>
22	Building work /refurbishment	<p>All work must receive prior approval by the trust estates department. Please visit the link below for more information:</p> <p><a href="https://freenet2.royalfree.nhs.uk/sites/corporate-directorates/estates-and-facilities-microsite/SitePage/36888/estates-landing-page">https://freenet2.royalfree.nhs.uk/sites/corporate-directorates/estates-and-facilities-microsite/SitePage/36888/estates-landing-page</a></p> <p>A costed proposal from estates must be provided and works must be approved by the trust and the charity.</p>
23	Staff/Rest space furnishing	<p>Only if within the objectives of the fund. Items must be approved by IPC and approval provided in writing to the charity. Items must be ordered using the trust e-procurement process.</p> <p><b>Not permitted:</b> toasters, fans (check latest IPC regulations), heaters, non-IPC approved furniture or soft furnishings. See also no.13</p>

## 4.9 Procurement

Please check Freenet for guidance on purchasing through PECOS. For assistance using the e-procurement system please email the helpdesk: [helpdesk@nhspps.uk](mailto:helpdesk@nhspps.uk).

It is important when ordering through PECOS that it is explicitly clear the item is being purchased through charity funds. Please email [SPF@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org) for details on VAT exemption certificates and additional information if you're using your departmental login.

It is essential you follow this guidance to ensure expenditure does not come out of your departmental budget.

## 4.10 Invoices

It is important that all invoices to be paid from funds are addressed to Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust and not to the charity. This will enable VAT to be reclaimed on contracted out services. Invoices addressed to the charity will be returned for correction, delaying processing time.

## 4.11 Expenditure claim process

All receipts for reimbursement must be VAT receipts and not card payment confirmations, these are not HMRC compliant. All payment requests must come from an NHS or UCL email address.

Please email [spf@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:spf@royalfreecharity.org) for expenditure forms and procurement guidance.

## 4.12 VAT exemption

There are tax benefits for purchasing from SPFs; this relates to the zero rating for VAT purposes of certain medical, scientific, IT, sterilising, laboratory and refrigeration equipment provided it is used for medical purposes: research, training, diagnosis or treatment. This includes certain hospital grade furniture. Therefore, it is important to purchase items via the PECOS e-procurement process. Failure to identify the item as charity funded at the ordering stage means we (your fund and the charity) will pay VAT at full rate of 20%. For example, a £5,000 purchase would solicit £1,000 in VAT which could otherwise be used for further charitable expenditure.

# 5. Acknowledgements and publicity

## 5.1 Key requirements

Informing others that SPF funding supported a project helps demonstrate impact. This means the charity can help others to apply for funding in the future and encourage supporters to donate.

The charity requires an acknowledgement of funding in any material created about a funded project or initiative. As a minimum, this means displaying our logo and a funding statement, which should be displayed on all printed and digital materials and products. This includes - but is not limited to - promotional material, reports, conference presentations and posters. For any support or materials please email [communications@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:communications@royalfreecharity.org).

Key requirements:

- 1.** The Royal Free Charity logo should be displayed on all materials. The logo will be supplied by the charity's communications team along with the brand guidelines.
- 2.** Our preferred wording for acknowledgement should use the long form version wherever space allows. Long form: The initiative is funded by the Royal Free Charity thanks to the generosity of supporters and donors. Short form: Funded by the Royal Free Charity.

## 5.2 Press and media

The charity's funding should be acknowledged in all proactive media relations. Where the charity is the sole or main funder, press releases should be produced and issued jointly by the communications teams of the trust and the charity (and UCL if appropriate).

If you're directly approached by a journalist requesting information about your funded project, please contact both the trust and charity communications teams: [rf.communications@nhs.net](mailto:rf.communications@nhs.net), [communications@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:communications@royalfreecharity.org).

## 5.3 Plaques/badging

If the charity has provided significant funding for a capital or infrastructure project or piece of equipment, it may be appropriate to display a plaque or a badge acknowledging that support. For further guidance, please contact the charity's communications team, [communications@royalfreecharity.org](mailto:communications@royalfreecharity.org).

## 5.4 Charity communications

The charity may share stories about funded projects via its newsletters, annual reports, website, social media or other media opportunities. The charity's communications team may contact SPF signatories to find out further details or ask for photos, quotes or interviews. Signatories are asked to co-operate on these occasions.

## 5.5 Commercial value

If a project supported by a charitable fund leads to products or processes that generate commercial value, the signatory, the trust/UCL and the charity will form an agreement regarding patents, copyrights, designs and other intellectual property, including the sharing of any profits between the organisations involved.

# 6. Intellectual Property

## 6.1 IP requirement

No rights to any intellectual property arising from an SPF funded project may be sold or otherwise transferred to a third-party without the charity's written agreement. If, as a result of a project, ideas, processes or products of potential medical, scientific, commercial or other value are generated, you, the trust/UCL, or its third-party technology transfer partner will enter into a separate agreement with the charity on patent, design or copyright protection and ownership; disclosure of information acquired or obtained; and/or sharing of financial returns.



## 7. Contact details

Table 7: Contact details		
Department	Purpose	Contact
RFC SPFs	All enquiries and expenditure processing related to special purpose funds	<a href="mailto:SPF@royalfreecharity.org">SPF@royalfreecharity.org</a>
RFC Grants	All enquiries and expenditure processing related to RFC grants	<a href="mailto:grants@royalfreecharity.org">grants@royalfreecharity.org</a>
RFC Fundraising	All income and donation enquiries and fundraising support	<a href="mailto:fundraising@royalfreecharity.org">fundraising@royalfreecharity.org</a>
RFC Engagement and Communications	All enquiries related to acknowledging RFC in your funded project, or any media interest	<a href="mailto:communications@royalfreecharity.org">communications@royalfreecharity.org</a>
RFL Finance	All enquiries relating to the trust invoicing the charity	Please contact your trust departmental finance lead
RFL Communications	All enquiries related to trust communications policies, and media interest involving both the trust and RFC	<a href="mailto:rf.communications@nhs.net">rf.communications@nhs.net</a>
RFL Procurement	All enquires related to using the e-procurement system (PECOS)	<a href="mailto:helpdesk@nhspps.uk">helpdesk@nhspps.uk</a>
RFL IPC	All enquiries relating to infection prevention control advice and approval	<p>Please contact the site appropriate email addresses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RFH Infection Control: <a href="mailto:rf-tr.RFHInfectionControl@nhs.net">rf-tr.RFHInfectionControl@nhs.net</a></li> <li>BCF Infection Control Team: <a href="mailto:rf-tr.BCF-InfectionControlTeam@nhs.net">rf-tr.BCF-InfectionControlTeam@nhs.net</a></li> </ul>
RFL Estates	All enquiries related to room refurbishments or building work; to get costings and approvals	<p><a href="https://freenet2.royalfree.nhs.uk/sites/corporate-directorates/estates-and-facilities-microsite/SitePage/36888/estates-landing-page">https://freenet2.royalfree.nhs.uk/sites/corporate-directorates/estates-and-facilities-microsite/SitePage/36888/estates-landing-page</a></p> <p>or contact your estates team lead at each site.</p>

**FURTHER,  
FASTER,  
FOR ALL.**

**ROYAL FREE  
CHARITY**

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