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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Branch allows members to make a claim for financial support in cases of hardship. The hardship payments are intended to help under specific circumstances, recognising that members occasionally fall into financial difficulties.
- 1.2. Each claim will be assessed on a case-by-case basis with the aim of helping members wherever possible and funds allow.
- 1.3. Members are also encouraged to use Unite's national **Benevolent Fund**. This can be accessed via the Unite website ([www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org), then 'How We Help', then 'Member Offers', then 'Benevolent Fund', or use the link [here](#)).

## 2. Criteria

- 2.1. The member making the claim must have been in membership for six months.
- 2.2. There has been no previous hardship payment to the member in the last three years.
- 2.3. There are sufficient funds in the branch account to make the payment.
- 2.4. The member has completed the application form in **Appendix A** and provided supporting evidence for their claim.
- 2.5. The claim and supporting evidence show that the member can be assisted by either:
  - 2.5.1. A loan to be used usually in cases where the crisis is only temporary and sufficient income is expected in the future; or
  - 2.5.2. In exceptional cases, a member has a financial crisis that can be assisted by a one-off payment.
- 2.6. If a loan is awarded, the member must agree to repayment within one week of their back-pay or other source of income being processed.

## 3. Process and Guidance

- 3.1. It is the Branch Secretary's responsibility to set up a sub-group of the Branch Committee to assess the claim.

# Unite LE111 Branch Hardship Claim

## Appendix I – Claim Form

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- 3.2. The sub-group will usually consist of the Branch Chair or Vice Chair, plus two other members of the Committee.
- 3.3. The group will usually reach a decision within one week of agreeing to consider the claim.
- 3.4. The group may decide on the following outcomes:
  - 3.4.1. Further information or evidence is needed
  - 3.4.2. The hardship claim does not meet the criteria and cannot therefore be awarded; or
  - 3.4.3. A hardship payment would meet the criteria and can therefore be awarded.
- 3.5. It is expected that a payment of either type will not exceed £200, although it may be less than this.
- 3.6. The outcome will be based on a majority decision of the sub-group.
- 3.7. In each case, the group will advise the Secretary who will contact the member to convey the decision and process any follow-up, including payment if awarded.
- 3.8. The decision will usually be conveyed to the member within one week and payment processed as soon as possible thereafter.
- 3.9. The decision of the sub-group is final and there is no right of appeal.

### **4. Evidence**

- 4.1. As each case is different, it is impossible to list exactly what evidence should be supplied, but to avoid delay and help the sub-committee in their decision, members should submit anything that that supports the claim they are making.
- 4.2. The evidence might include (the list is not exhaustive)
  - 4.2.1. Correspondence with the employer or other organisation.
  - 4.2.2. Payslips.
  - 4.2.3. A bank account statement demonstrating the current finances.
  - 4.2.4. Invoices or bills that the payment is intended to help with meeting.

# Unite LE111 Branch Hardship Claim

## Appendix I – Claim Form

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See overleaf for Appendix I – Claim Form

### Your Details

Member name: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership number: \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Claim date: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Claim (please use extra sheets if necessary)

**How has the financial difficulty come about?**

*(eg. your employer has underpaid your wages due to a processing error)*

**What is it that you want the payment to cover or contribute towards?**

*(eg. rent, energy bill, travel, food, etc.)*

**How much are you asking for?**

**Are you claiming for a loan or a one-off payment?**

**Please list all sources of income for you and those in your household:**

- Own wages
- Other householder wages
- Benefits
- Pension
- Lodger or tenant rent
- Other (state which):

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Agreed at Branch Meeting:

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