



Fundraising and Spending Guidelines

What families can fundraise for
and how funds are spent

About this guide

These guidelines sit alongside our **Parents Charter**. The Charter explains how we'll work together and what you can expect from us. This guide fills in the practical detail around fundraising and spending.

As explained in the Parents Charter, all required checks must be completed before fundraising begins and before any funds are spent or released.

Please talk to us before you book, agree or commit to any treatment, service, equipment or supplier. We know this can feel frustrating, especially when things feel urgent, but it really matters – it gives us time to complete safeguarding and supplier checks and make sure funds can be used safely and in line with our charitable purpose and guidelines.

If anything in this guide feels unclear or does not seem to fit your circumstances, please talk to us.

Our charitable purpose

Tree of Hope exists to promote and protect the health of seriously ill and disabled children and young people. We do this by helping families raise funds to support medical treatment, therapy, specialist equipment and adaptations that are not reasonably available through statutory services such as the NHS or local authorities.

Every decision we make about fundraising and spending sits within this purpose, and within our responsibility to use donated funds safely, fairly and for public benefit.

Fundraising with Tree of Hope

When you fundraise with Tree of Hope, the donations people give are donations to the charity. We then hold funds within our records for your child so they can be used for approved support, in line with our charitable purpose.

Tree of Hope is responsible for holding and managing these funds. This helps protect families and supporters, and means decisions are applied consistently and fairly.

Please don't begin fundraising in Tree of Hope's name until all the necessary checks are complete – these are explained in the Parents Charter.

How funds reach your child's campaign

Alongside your JustGiving page, you or your supporters may choose to run your own fundraising events, such as a bake sale, quiz night or sponsored walk. We're happy to talk ideas through with you.

Money raised at these events is a donation to your child's Tree of Hope campaign. Please pay it in by bank transfer as soon as is practical, using your child's campaign name as the reference.

This is how charities are expected to handle donations under the Code of Fundraising Practice and guidance from UK charity regulators. It also means donations are properly recorded and Gift Aid can be claimed where eligible.

What you can fundraise for

You can fundraise through Tree of Hope for support that falls within our charitable purpose, once the required checks are complete and we have agreed it together.

The sections below cover the main types of support we can consider.

- Medical treatment and therapy that supports a child's health or development.
- Specialist equipment that helps with care, mobility or independence.
- Home or vehicle adaptations that directly support a child's medical or accessibility needs.
- Travel and related costs where a child needs to attend approved treatment or therapy.

Medical treatment and therapy

You can usually fundraise for treatment and clinical care that supports your child's health and wellbeing, where it is not reasonably available through statutory services.

This may include:

- hospital or clinic-based treatment
- specialist consultations or second opinions where these relate directly to your child's condition

Any treatment we support needs to be clinically appropriate and backed by medical evidence.

We don't provide medical advice or recommend treatments – decisions about your child's care always sit with you and the clinicians involved in their care.

Diagnostic assessments and investigations

You can fundraise for initial diagnostic assessments or investigations that are needed to understand your child's condition or inform decisions about their care.

We'll need a completed doctor's form signed by a UK-based doctor who is registered with the General Medical Council (GMC) as early as possible. This applies in every case, without exception.

Diagnostic assessments must:

- be clinically relevant to your child's health
- be supported by appropriate medical evidence
- not be reasonably available through statutory services within a suitable timeframe

We look at every request individually.

If you are considering fundraising for a diagnosis, please speak to us first so we can explain what information is needed.

Therapies and support services

You can usually fundraise for therapy that supports your child's development and relates to their medical condition or disability.

This may include:

- evidence-based therapies such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy or speech and language therapy
- some complementary or recreational therapies, where there's a clear benefit for your child and a relevant professional supports the request

Specialist equipment

You can usually fundraise for equipment needed because of your child's illness or disability. This may include:

- specialist mobility, communication or daily-living equipment
- adapted toys or sensory items recommended by a relevant professional
- non-specialist equipment, such as tablets, where a treating professional confirms in writing that the item is needed to support your child's therapy, communication or learning

If a piece of equipment should reasonably come through statutory services such as the NHS or your local authority, we usually can't support fundraising for it.

Home and vehicle adaptations

You can usually fundraise for adaptations that directly support your child's medical or accessibility needs.

This may include adaptations that improve access, safety or care within your home, or adaptations to a vehicle where this is necessary for your child's transport needs.

Before fundraising begins, and before funds are released, we'll need some evidence to confirm that the adaptation is necessary and directly relates to your child's needs.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- confirmation from a relevant professional, such as an occupational therapist or clinician
- evidence linked to a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) application or assessment, where applicable
- plans, drawings or specifications from an architect, builder or contractor

If an adaptation is part of a wider project, we can only support the part that directly relates to your child's needs.

Please speak to us before committing to any plans or works so we can confirm what evidence is needed.

Travel and related costs for treatment

You can usually fundraise for reasonable travel and accommodation costs where your child needs to attend approved treatment or therapy away from home, in the UK or overseas.

This includes accommodation where it's needed for your child to attend treatment. It doesn't cover holidays or leisure trips in their own right.

If your family needs accessible accommodation as part of attending treatment, this may be considered.

Additional day-to-day costs linked to treatment

(Daily Living Allowance)

In some circumstances, you can fundraise for a contribution towards the extra day-to-day costs that come up because your child needs to stay away from home for approved treatment.

This support:

- applies only during the treatment period
- is not ongoing support
- must be agreed in advance

It's there to help with the extra costs that come from being away from home for treatment – it isn't designed to cover your usual household living expenses.

This is currently set at £65 per day per family in the UK, or £85 per day per family if you are abroad. It goes towards your meals and other costs while you are away from home and your child is receiving treatment or therapy.

Care support linked to your child's healthcare needs

In some circumstances, you can fundraise for care support where this is directly related to your child's disability, health or care needs.

This may include:

- short-term childcare for your child or their siblings, where this enables parents or carers to attend appointments, treatment or provide care
- support from carers or nurses who are part of your child's established care arrangements
- care support needed during travel for approved treatment
- associated costs, such as accommodation for carers where this is required to meet your child's needs

Any care-related support must:

- be directly linked to your child's assessed care needs
- form part of established or professionally supported care arrangements where appropriate
- be limited, proportionate and related to a specific situation or period of need
- be agreed in advance with Tree of Hope

We may ask for supporting evidence, such as a care plan, medical documentation or confirmation from a relevant professional, to confirm what support is needed and how this relates to your child's needs.

This support is not intended to replace statutory services or provide ongoing funding for care.

Other support linked to your child's health needs

If a clinician or relevant professional has told you that a particular intervention, adaptation or item would benefit your child's health or wellbeing, and it isn't available elsewhere, please come and talk to us. We'll look at whether it sits within our charitable purpose.

We're always happy to talk things through and to be clear about whether something fits within these guidelines.

Treatments Tree of Hope does not currently support

There are some treatments we don't currently support, because the medical evidence isn't strong enough or because of safeguarding concerns.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy

We don't currently fund Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapy. This reflects the ongoing professional and ethical debate around it, and concerns about whether it aligns with a child-centred, evidence-based approach.

Stem cell therapy

We don't fund stem cell therapy unless it's part of a recognised and legitimate clinical trial. Many stem cell treatments offered internationally are unregulated, carry significant risks, or don't yet have enough clinical evidence behind them.

We keep our position on treatments under review, and it may change over time as new evidence becomes available.

What you cannot fundraise for

There are some things we can't support fundraising for, because they sit outside our charitable purpose:

- Legal costs or court proceedings
- Education-related costs, including schooling and support such as Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Costs that should be met by the NHS or local authorities
- Holidays or leisure activities in their own right
- Repayment of loans, debts or personal borrowing
- Payments to family members for care, support, salary, supervision, or loss of earnings.
- Costs that were already incurred before your campaign began, or before approval has been confirmed, unless we have agreed in writing that an exceptional circumstance applies.
- Treatments or interventions considered unsafe, unregulated, unlawful, or lacking appropriate evidence, or where a qualified medical professional has not endorsed the approach.

If you are unsure whether something can be fundraised for, please speak to us before starting fundraising.

Spending funds

Funds raised through Tree of Hope are used to pay for approved support in line with these guidelines.

Before any funds are spent or released:

- the required medical confirmation must be in place
- all necessary checks must be completed
- the request must be approved by Tree of Hope

Please talk to us before you book, agree or commit to any treatment, service, equipment or supplier. We know this can feel frustrating, but if costs have already been booked, agreed or paid for before approval is in place, we may not be able to pay them, as we are required to complete safeguarding and supplier checks before any funds can be approved or released.

We are not normally able to release funds for costs incurred before approval is in place.

We do not normally backdate funding for costs incurred before approval, unless this has been agreed with us in advance in exceptional circumstances..

Evidence, supplier checks and international providers

When we look at spending requests, we may ask you for supporting information – things like medical letters, professional recommendations, quotes or invoices.

We carry out proportionate checks on suppliers before any funds are released. If a supplier is based overseas, or treatment carries higher risk, we may need to do additional checks. These checks are there to keep children safe and to make sure donations are used responsibly.

International checks and payments can take longer, and we ask families to allow extra time in these cases.

If funds can no longer be used

We understand that circumstances can change, sometimes unexpectedly. If this happens, we will talk things through with you.

If funds can no longer be used for the approved support for your child, any remaining funds must be applied by Tree of Hope to support other children and young people, in line with our charitable purpose and our legal duty to apply funds for public benefit.

We know this can feel sensitive, and we will always aim to explain decisions clearly and handle this with care and compassion.

To ensure transparency for donors, this approach must also be clearly reflected in fundraising messaging. When fundraising through Tree of Hope, families are expected to include wording on fundraising pages, such as JustGiving, explaining that funds raised are donations to the charity and may be used to support other children and young people if they cannot be used for the approved support.

Talk to us

We know families often read documents like this at difficult moments. This guide is here to provide clarity and reassurance, not to create barriers.

If something doesn't feel clear, if circumstances change, or if your situation doesn't fit neatly into the sections above, please talk to us. We're here to work alongside you and support your family wherever we can.