Guidance notes for the Transparency Fund application form

These notes are designed to assist you with completing the Transparency Fund application form.

The application form contains questions which will allow you to produce a bid for funding to enable you to work towards compliance with the mandatory Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities who have a turnover of less than £25,000.

If your Authority has undertaken work or bought equipment after 01 April 2015 solely to comply with the Transparency Code then this spend is eligible for grant funding. Where the already undertaken spend is in excess of the suggested thresholds we may be able to pay a proportion of the cost.

The form will alert the applicant if the amounts claimed exceed the threshold. The board will approve such claims in exceptional circumstances. For this reason, if you would like to claim an amount exceeding the threshold, please indicate why in the text box at Question 29.

Extra Burden

An authority may apply for funding for a computer/scanner if they do not possess a computer/scanner. If the authority already owns a machine capable of meeting the requirements of the Transparency Fund, then they may not apply. Additional staff costs for doing the work around compliance with the Transparency Code may be applied for. The Transparency Fund will not pay any unnecessary additional costs, for example, a standard computer may be considered, but not an expensive top of the range model. Unfortunately the argument that a better computer will serve other purposes is not valid in this case.

Costs such as connection to the Internet may be claimed if there was no facility before as may the costs of setting up a new website, but specifically for Transparency purposes. Should an authority wish for a full website with a range of information, the fund will only pay for the sections necessary for the authority to comply with the Transparency Code. However we would ask authorities to look at the long term viability of an arrangement. If after the two years costs will be too high for an authority to manage without the Transparency Fund financial support, then an application needs to be discussed first with the authority's County Association of Local Councils (CALC) or the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA), as applicable.

If you have any queries please consult the NALC Transparency Fund website here or contact your CALC or ADA.

The application form has been set up as a spreadsheet which has been locked, meaning that you will only be able to change the contents of the white boxes. Please attempt to use the spreadsheet version of the form – if you are unable to use it please contact your CALC or ADA who will be able to provide you with an alternate version.

The following table sets out some guidance on how to complete the form.

1.	Enter the name of the authority. Please note, parish meetings are NOT eligible to apply.
2.	Please select your County Association from the drop down list.
3.	Please confirm the authority has a turnover of less than £25,000. The turnover is the greatest of either income or expenditure (or receipts or payments, if you prepare your accounts that way). Authorities with a spend of over £25,000 are not eligible to apply for funding from the Smaller Authorities Transparency Fund*. However, authorities are allowed to have received a **one** off payment that took them over the £25,000 turnover, no more than one financial year.
4.	Using the drop down list, please select whether your authority has received money from the Transparency Fund. We accept multiple applications, however, you may not apply for the same item twice. For example, if you applied for staffing costs in 2015/16, you may still apply for staffing costs for the 2016-17 period. However, you may not re-apply for staffing costs for the 2015-16 period if you have previously received money to cover these costs. Please note that all applications will be checked for duplicates.
5.	Using the drop down list, select whether your authority has set up, or would like to set up, an internet connection solely for the purpose of complying with the Transparency Code. **Please only select "Yes", if your authority would like to claim grant funding for the set up costs through the current application form.**

6.	If you need to get an internet connection there may be setup costs. These might include: • Buying a router • Having a telephone line / cable installed or made live The set up costs should not exceed £300. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to claim funding exceeding this amount, please indicate why, using the text box at Question 29. For authorities who do not have their own offices and decide to set up an internet connection at an employee or member's personal address, it is best practice to sign a contract stating that should their employment or membership terminate for whatever reason, they will have to reimburse your authority the cost for moving the connection to a new address.
7.	Using the drop down list select the month you anticipate your authority to be using the internet in order to comply with the Transparency Code, i.e. to set up a website, to upload documents to the website etc. This should only cover the period for which you would like to claim grant funding through the current form – i.e. if you have claimed funding during the 2015/16 financial year, on your current form you need to select a date during the 2016/17 financial year, starting with April 2016. The Transparency Fund only covers the costs incurred once your authority commences to comply with the Code.
8.	Enter the monthly cost of the internet subscription. You can use websites such as www.uswitch.com to find out what providers and subscriptions are available in your area. Monthly costs may only be claimed for the period you are using your connection to comply with the Transparency Code. For example, if you have your internet set up in May 2015, but you only start using your connection to comply with the Transparency Code in June 2015, i.e. by starting to set up your website, you may only claim funding for the period starting with June 2015. The monthly costs should not exceed £25 per month. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to claim funding exceeding this amount, please indicate why, using the text box at Question 29.

	Please note, that the Transparency Fund will not cover a proportion of the clerk's existing internet bills.
9.	Please indicate whether the authority has a computer using the drop down list. If you are claiming funding for items bought after 1 April 2015, please select "No".
	N.B. The Transparency Fund will not pay for upgrades. You may only apply for funding to cover the costs of a computer, if your authority did not own one previously, or the current computer is incapable of performing the actions the authority requires in order to comply with the Transparency Code.
	If your authority is using the personal computer of the clerk or another member or employee, it may still apply for funding in order to purchase its own equipment.
10.	Enter the cost of the computer.
	To buy a computer capable of carrying out the necessary work should cost no more than £350.00. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to purchase a machine costing more, please indicate why using the text box at Question 29.
11.	Please indicate whether word processing/spreadsheet software is required. If yes, please indicate which software you intend to purchase in the text box at Question 29.
12.	Enter the cost of the software. This should not cost more than £200.Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to purchase software costing more please indicate why, using the text box at Question 29.
13.	Please indicate whether you have a device capable of scanning using the drop down list (This would include both scanners and combined scanner / printer / copiers). If you are claiming funding for items bought after 1 April 2015, please select "No".
	N.B. The Transparency Fund only covers the costs of a scanning device.
	If your authority is using the personal equipment of the clerk or another member or employee, it may still apply for funding in order to purchase its own equipment.

14.	Enter the cost of buying a device capable of scanning. To buy a scanner capable of carrying out the necessary work should cost no more than £100. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to purchase a machine costing more, please indicate why using the text box at Question 29.
15.	Please state whether your authority has its own website, selecting an answer from the drop down list.
16.	Please state whether your authority has access to another organisation's website, such as: - A community website - The website of a principal authority Please select your answer from the dropdown box provided
17.	If you are working with a partner, e.g. community website or principal authority, and they charge you for either: • Hosting your documents • Uploading files for you Enter the total yearly charges for using the partner's website. Many community groups make no charge – if this is the case please enter 0. The yearly charges for the website should not exceed £300. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to claim funding exceeding this amount, please indicate why, using the text box at Question 29.
18.	Enter the amount it will cost to set up the website – e.g. Web design costs, charges to carryout initial uploads – Training is NOT included in this section.* The website set up costs should not exceed £500. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to claim funding exceeding this amount, please indicate why, using the text box at Question 29.
19.	Please select from the drop down box the month when you expect your website to be available to the public. This should only cover the period for which you would like to claim grant funding through the current form – i.e. if you have claimed funding during the 2015/16 financial year, on your current

	form you need to select a date during the 2016/17 financial year, starting with April 2016.
20.	Enter the amount it will cost to maintain the website (excluding staffing costs) – e.g. hosting * Costs will be covered for the current financial year, starting with the website go live date. The monthly website costs should not exceed £25 per month. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to claim funding exceeding this amount, please indicate why, using the text box at Question 29.
21.	Indicate if training is required using the drop down list on the spreadsheet.
22.	Type in a description of any training required e.g." one hour basic computer training "or "Two hours from the web developers on how to upload files to our site" the box will expand to fit your text.
23.	Enter the overall cost of training. This should not exceed £400. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you would like to claim funding exceeding this amount, please indicate why, using the text box at Question 29. *N.B. The Transparency Fund will cover basic computer training and training on how to upload documents onto a website. One person can be trained per authority. The fund will NOT cover learning to code a website or training on the Transparency Code.*
24.	How many hours in total will it take paid staff members to achieve transparency – e.g. setting up a website, uploading the initial documents.* Please note the maximum number of hours you may claim is 50 hours per year. Claims exceeding this amount are only approved by the board in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to claim costs for more than 50 hours, please indicate why using the text box at Question 29.
25.	Enter the gross hourly rate including on costs. This may not exceed £15. If you would like to submit a claim exceeding this amount, please provide details in the text box at Question 29.

26.	How many hours per month will it take paid staff members to keep compliant with the transparency regulations – e.g. uploading documents to a website. The funding does not cover over 3 hours per month. If you wish to claim costs for more than 3 hours, please indicate why using the text box at Question 29.
27.	Enter the gross hourly rate including on costs. This may not exceed £15. If you would like to submit a claim exceeding this amount, please provide details in the text box at Question 29. *N.B. This will only be paid from when the website goes live.*
28.	Please select the month from the drop down list when you expect to launch your website. Please note, we can only cover staffing costs for the current financial year, starting with the go live date provided. The selected date should only cover the period for which you would like to claim grant funding through the current form – i.e. if you have claimed funding during the 2015/16 financial year, on your current form you need to select a date during the 2016/17 financial year, starting with April 2016.
29.	If the authority has exceeded any of the thresholds, please indicate why in the text box provided. In addition, if your authority requires grant money for anything not included in the form above, please indicate what is required and the costs in the box below. Any form with this section completed will take longer to process. Items not covered by the fund include: - Projector - Camera/video camera - Voice recorders - External storage/ USB Drive - Anti-Virus Software - Laptop Case - Upgrades to computers, internet package or website upgrades.
	Please ensure you add the authority's finance details at the bottom of the page and **NOT** your personal bank details.

Once completed, please submit this form in Excel format to your CALC or ADA for approval. The association will then undertake a first assessment of the form before either submitting to NALC for processing or returning to the authority for discussion.

Grants will be run on a monthly basis. Please refer to Key Actions Dates 2016/2017.

Any unsuccessful bids will be returned to the authority with details of which part(s) caused the bid to be unsuccessful and why. Any authority where a bid is returned is welcome to submit an updated bid.

The CALC or ADA will be contacting you approximately three months after the funds have been released as part of the DCLG mandated monitoring to review how the grant has been spent and if it has resulted in the authority becoming compliant with the code.

* If you have any queries please first consult the NALC Transparency Frequently Asked Questions page here or contact the county association or the Association of Drainage Authorities. Once you have completed the form please return it to the CALC or ADA, as applicable.

Application Form Assessment Criteria

	Green	Red
Internet		
Set up cost	£0-£300	£300+
Monthly cost	£0-£25	£25
Computer		
Cost	£0-£350	£350+
Software		
Cost	£0-£200	£200+
Scanning		
Cost	£0-£100	£100+
Website		
Website - Set up costs	£0-£500	£500+
Website - Monthly costs	£0-£25	£25
Training		
Cost	£0-£400	£400+
Staffing		
Set up costs		
Hours	50	50+ hours
Hourly rate (Gross)	£0-£15	£15 +
Monthly costs - for months up to and including March 2017		
Hours	3 Hours per month	3+ hours
Hourly rate (Gross)	£0-£15	£15+
Additional information	£50 for peripherals	Additional line items: data back up or transefer, data storage devices, anti virus software, projectors, voice recorders, video cameras, additional computers & tripods.

Green: All criteria in the application are within the guidelines

Red: These applications will need individual consideration by the board. They may contain high costings or additional hardware not covered by the Transparency Fund

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