

**General**

All loan and grant applications must be made on the Building Works Application Form, obtainable from District Secretaries, and have attached copies of the three most recent sets of church accounts.

**Building Repairs**

A special policy currently applies (➤ 042).

**Building Works**

Where local church resources are inadequate, financial assistance towards the cost of construction and alteration of church buildings may be provided by the Synod on the following conditions:

- loan and grant applications will only be considered by the Synod Finance Committee following review by the District Council concerned and the receipt of its recommendations;
- the percentage grant varies according to the cost of the project as shown in the table, with a maximum grant of £50,000

Under £1,000	£1,001 - £3,000	£3,001 - £10,000	£10,001 - £30,000	£30,001 - £100,000	over £100,000
nil	12%	14%	16%	18%	20%

- reserve funds and investments will be taken into account when awarding a grant. If reserves are greater than six-months' normal expenditure (M & M plus utility bills), the rest of the reserves, other than those set aside for the project, will be deducted from the expected cost, before the grant is calculated. However, account will be taken of any special circumstances, particularly with regard to Listed Buildings. In order to make sure that this policy is applied fairly, churches will be asked to show all the reserve funds and investments they have. The status of funds restricted by the benefactor will then be decided, and these may be excluded from the calculation;

## **BUILDING WORKS – GRANTS & LOANS POLICY**

- churches will be expected to raise at least 20% of the project cost. Loans will normally be limited to the difference between the sum of the money available, including that promised (including any grants) and the total cost. They will also be limited by their expected ability to repay;
- loans will normally be repaid over a period of 5 years at an interest rate of 3% p.a.

### **New Projects Fund**

The Synod Strategy, "Towards 2000 and Beyond", envisaged the creation of a substantial capital fund which could provide generous financial assistance to churches in the implementation of major projects, not necessarily related to buildings. Six grants have so far been awarded for projects which were expected to be completed in the period up to 2004.

The Synod has not yet determined the basis for a second round of grants.

### **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The first part of the Act came into force in December 1996, making it unlawful for churches to discriminate against disabled people by refusing a service, providing a worse standard of service to disabled people than able-bodied people or offering service on worse terms (➤ 631).

In order to assist churches to meet the cost of works consequent upon this legislation, grants and loans are available from the Synod. Grants of 90% of the cost of the works, subject to a maximum grant of £18,000, may be awarded. Means testing will be applied on a similar basis to that set out under 'Building Works' above.

Before grants are approved, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the proposed work responds to the full implications of the Act for all parts of the premises and for all kinds of disabilities. The guidance of the local authority's Access Officer should be sought when drawing up proposals.

### **Special Grants**

Subject to the normal procedures, a grant of up to 50% of the cost may be made for the installation of a water supply and/or toilet in a church which previously did not have these facilities.

## **BUILDING WORKS – GRANTS & LOANS POLICY**

### **Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs)**

Grants for building works and for facilities for those with disabilities may be awarded in proportion to the United Reformed Church participation in the LEP. Such a grant would first be calculated on the basis set out in the relevant sections above and then the appropriate percentage would be applied to reflect the URC share of the building as explicitly stated in the Sharing Agreement or, if there is no such share so stated, as implied in the sharing.

LEPs may alternatively apply for grants from the New Projects Fund, but the basis of awarding such grants will differ from that for sole-URC situations.

### **VAT**

Where works are eligible for non-standard rating for VAT, the local church is responsible for ensuring that the correct rate of VAT is paid. Grants will not cover VAT incorrectly paid (> 481).