



Frequently Asked Questions

Notes:

1. This FAQ document was produced after consultation with clients and we hope it will be useful. It is split into 3 sections:

Section 1 - General questions about Ecas **common to grants and classes**.

Section 2 - FAQ affecting **classes**.

Section 3 - FAQ affecting **grants**.

2. This document is reviewed annually. Proposed amendments are passed to the Board of Directors for consideration, usually at their meeting in June.

3. This version reflects changes made at the Board meeting in June 2008.

Section 1 General Questions

1.1 What is Ecas and what does Ecas do?

Ecas is an Edinburgh based charity (number SCO102790), established in 1902 to help those who have a physical disability. We provide grants, run activities and classes, and conduct research and campaigning.

1.2 How do you define "those who have a physical disability?"

We mean any person who is long-term and significantly disabled through a physical impairment of the musculo-skeletal, neurological or cardio-respiratory system of the body.

We regret that the following conditions, on their own, do not meet our criteria: psychiatric disorders, learning difficulties, behavioural disorders, developmental delay, Down's syndrome, autism, visual or hearing impairment, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, back pain and chronic fatigue syndrome.

1.3 Where must I live to receive help from Ecas?

You must be resident in Edinburgh or the Lothians.

1.4 What forms require to be completed?

We currently have 2 forms:

- i. One covering grants
- ii. One covering classes and financial support for classes.

1.5 How can I get a form or find out more?

You can get a copy of the form you need, or get more information, by:

- i. Going to www.ecas-edinburgh.org
- ii. Phoning the office on 0131 475 2344

- iii. Sending a FAX to 0131 475 2343
- iv. Visiting the office at Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY

1.6 Do you have appropriate data protection procedures?

Yes. We are registered with the Information Commissioner and we have clear data protection policies and procedures. If you need more information about this please contact the office.

Section 2 Classes

2.1 Who can attend classes?

Anyone who lives in the City of Edinburgh or Lothians and who is physically disabled (see FAQ 1.2 for definition). You should normally be unable to access other classes in the community but, subject to space, consideration will be given to allowing those who meet the criteria at FAQ 1.2 and who could access other classes in the community to attend.

2.2 What classes and activities are there?

Art, craft, swimming, yoga and computing are all run by qualified and experienced Group Leaders. These classes operate for 43 weeks per year.

We also have an internet café which is available to those who can use it without support from the staff.

2.3 Where are the classes and activities run?

Locations do change occasionally, so check with the office (0131 475 2344) for an up to date list. As at May 2007:

Yoga and art take place at Norton Park, Albion Road (off Easter Road) and at Firrhill Day Centre.

Craft, computing, computer art and the internet café are all at Norton Park. Swimming is at the Thistle Foundation.

2.4 Do you charge a fee?

We charge a fee for classes which is payable termly in advance. It is currently £4 per week and is only refundable if Ecas cancels a class or if a client is in hospital for 3 weeks or more.

Clients who provide evidence that they are in receipt of Income Support or Pension Credit AND DLA (Mobility Component) or a taxi card are not charged class fees. This does not count as an Access grant application for the 2 year rule referred to in 3.12.

2.5 Are there any concessionary fees?

Yes. See FAQ 2.4.

2.6 Can I attend more than one class?

Ecas classes are heavily subsidised. Clients can normally attend 1 class from each of the following groups:

Group 1: Swimming, yoga.

Group 2: Art, craft, computing, computer art.

Attendance at an additional class will be subject to availability of a space and may be reviewed should attendance be preventing a new client from joining.

2.7 Will you assist with transport costs?

Ecas provides transport back home from classes, usually a taxi, for those clients who need it and who live in Edinburgh. Ecas may also be able to provide transport costs to get a client to a class if they meet certain criteria (currently the criteria for the class fee waiver at paragraph 2.4). If you wish to use Ecas funded transport for a subject for which there is a choice of location, then we will expect you to attend the closest class to your home. If you choose to attend a class that is further away, we will not cover the extra travel costs.

2.8 Will Ecas provide physical support and personal care?

Ecas staff are not trained to provide personal care, nor can they provide physical support (such as support for mobility impaired clients). Clients are welcome to bring their personal assistants, and Ecas may provide a grant to assist in the cost of having a personal assistant for classes. Clients must bring appropriate mobility aids to allow them to move between their transport, the classroom and other facilities unaided. Staff can provide only limited (and not intimate) assistance. Staff have no training in moving and handling.

2.9 What if I require personal assistance?

Ecas does not provide personal assistants, but would welcome a personal assistant if you bring your own. Ecas is not registered with the Care Commission to provide intimate care. More details are given in FAQ 2.7, 2.8 and 2.10.

2.10 Is financial assistance available for a personal assistant?

If you need to employ a personal assistant to attend Ecas classes then Ecas may be able to help you identify funding from another source or, in exceptional cases and following consultation between Ecas and your care manager, provide funding for a set number of hours at a rate acceptable to Ecas which will be within the range of social care and ILF rates.

2.11 How long can I attend a class?

Ecas is building up a database of other organisations who would welcome people with mobility problems. This will help clients to move on to community groups. Group Leaders will monitor clients and we reserve the right to ensure our services are well targeted by asking you to leave if your ability and/or confidence have reached a level where you could use other community services. To remain in the classes you must continue to meet the criteria in FAQ 1.2.

2.12 Are there any circumstances under which you would stop providing classes for a client?

We expect clients to behave in an appropriate manner, showing respect for each other, the staff and the volunteers. Should a client not adhere to these basic principles we would discuss this with them and warn them. We reserve the right, in the interests of other clients and to protect our staff and volunteers, to withdraw our services if a client does not behave appropriately. We would normally do this as follows:

- a. A recorded verbal warning from the Administrator

- b. A written warning by the Chief Executive
- c. A panel of 3 Directors meeting to consider withdrawing or suspending Ecas services for the client.

In exceptional circumstances the Chief Executive can suspend a client with immediate effect pending a panel of 3 Directors considering the case.

It is emphasised that Ecas hopes never to use these procedures, but the Directors do have a duty to protect volunteers and staff from abuse.

2.13 Are there any circumstances in which you would stop providing transport to a client?

The same rules for behaviour (see FAQ 2.12) apply to taxis and other transport. The other area of concern with transport is waiting time. Whilst we appreciate that some waiting time can be unavoidable, clients who incur excessive bills will be asked to reimburse Ecas. If they decline to do so then Ecas may withdraw the transport service.

2.14 How does Ecas consult its clients?

We have a Client Consultation Group (CCG), chaired by an Ecas Director. Each class can appoint a representative. The CCG meets twice a year, and the representatives can contact the Chief Executive between meetings as required. The office staff regularly visits classes to see the staff and clients and welcomes comments from clients. They also receive feedback from the Group Leaders. The full roles and responsibilities of the CCG are readily available to clients, as are the minutes of meetings.

2.15 Is there a complaints procedure?

We have a detailed complaints procedure with problems initially handled by the Group Leader or Administrator, and if necessary being passed to the Chief Executive and ultimately the Board of Directors. Copies of the procedure are readily available to clients.

Section 3 Grants

3.1 Who can apply for a grant?

Anyone who lives in the City of Edinburgh or Lothians and who is physically disabled (see FAQ 1.2 for definition).

3.2 What can a grant be for?

The grant must be for something that is not being provided by the NHS or council or other publicly funded body and which will enhance your life. This would include holidays (to include carers' costs but not spending money), special equipment, white goods, special furniture, household equipment.

3.3 Will I be reimbursed for an item or holiday I have already bought?

No, we do not provide grants for items you have already bought or holidays you have already paid for.

3.4 How much can I apply for?

Awards of up to £500 may be considered. More may be awarded in some exceptional circumstances. If the item you are seeking a grant for costs more than £500 we may

offer an award which we will hold for up to 6 months to allow you to obtain the balance.

3.5 Do we always give monetary grants?

Grants are normally given in the form of a cheque made payable to the sponsor's organisation (a sponsor is the person supporting your application as described at FAQ 3.7). However, cheques can be provided to the supplier of the goods or holiday. The principal exception is for electrical goods as Ecas can sometimes purchase these at a discount directly from the supplier. Ecas will not make cheques payable to the applicant.

3.6 Do you help with additional holiday costs?

Consideration will be given to the costs involved when a carer or personal assistant is required or when a couple wishes to holiday together. Spending money will not be included.

3.7 How must my application be supported?

Our grants form requires a section to be completed by your sponsor (such as an NHS Community Health Worker, Practice Nurse, Social Worker or Health Visitor). You may also require a medical section to be completed by a GP or hospital doctor (see FAQ 3.8 for exceptions to this). If in doubt please consult the office. Ecas is not responsible for any fees incurred.

3.8 Do I have to provide a medical certificate?

Those who receive DLA (Care and/or Mobility Components), Attendance Allowance or who have a taxi card due to a physical disability (see FAQ 1.2) will be considered medically eligible without providing further evidence provided that the sponsor (see FAQ 3.7) confirms that the applicant's impairment meets Ecas' criteria and that the applicant submits a copy of their annual award letter/taxi card. Other cases will be discretionary and the applicant will be required to have the medical certificate section of the Ecas form completed, unless we have a recent report from a previous application. If in doubt please consult the office. Ecas is not responsible for any fees incurred.

3.9 Do I have to provide details of my and my partner's income?

We need to try and ensure that the charity's money is spent to best effect, but we also try not to ask you too many personal details. In general, if you can provide evidence that you are in receipt of income support or pension credit then we will ask no further financial questions. If you cannot provide such evidence, or choose not to do so, then you can fill in a more detailed questionnaire and we will then look at those details.

3.10 Do I need to be assessed for specialised equipment?

Yes. Your sponsor will be able to advise you on this.

3.11 How long do applications usually take?

We ask that you apply at least 12 weeks before a holiday. We usually aim to provide an answer within 6 weeks. If it will take longer than that we will let you or your sponsor know. If your application happens to arrive, fully completed, just before a meeting then it will be processed sooner. If you need to know when meetings are then you can

ask the office for advice. In extenuating circumstances a grant may be fast-tracked; please phone the office for details if required (you will still need a medical report or copy of the appropriate DLA/Attendance Allowance letter or taxi card).

3.12 How often can I apply?

Every 2 years.

3.13 Can I appeal against a decision?

Yes. If you wish to appeal against a grant decision you may write to the Chief Executive asking him to take your case to a panel of 3 Directors for a final decision. The Directors' decision is final.

3.14 Do we ever give grants to organisations?

Yes, we occasionally give grants to organisations for purposes that meet the general criteria above. These are usually for projects or research. Applications for such grants will be considered by the Finance & Personnel Committee and/or Board of Directors and should be in the form of a letter with supporting documentation. In the first instance we recommend that you telephone or email the Chief Executive on 0131 475 2344 or info@ecas-edinburgh.org

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