



# Finance Policy

Date of agreed policy: May 2023

Date of review: May 2026

## Standing in the Gap

Standing in the Gap is an early intervention mental health charity started in Oxfordshire in 2017. We help preschool and Primary aged children manage big emotions such as a fear anxiety, anger and grief. We bridge the gap in child mental health support with a programme of talks, workshops, online resources and bespoke support for families.

We are a local charity with a global footprint, and we aim to support children and parents before they hit crisis.

We live by our values which all our policies seek to reinforce. Our values are: We build emotional wellbeing with kindness, using empowering partnerships in a safe and professional manner, motivated by our Christian faith. We work with children and families of all faiths and none while our trustees and Clinical Director identify as Christians.

## The Aim of this Policy:

The financial policy and associated finance procedures are intended to ensure that Standing in the Gap as a charity is able to manage their finances and resources effectively to enable the mission, vision and values be carried out within the day to day work.

The policy also ensures we are transparent, accountable and compliant to the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008.

## 1. Financial Objectives

Standing in the Gap aims to:-

- ensure that its services are accessible to all irrespective of their financial circumstances or ability to pay
- keep a sensible reserves amount,
- Review pay costs for staff/ consultants on an annual basis to ensure these are fair and manageable within the financial envelope at the time of review.
- seek a core base of financial support in the form of regular individual and corporate donors
- seek funding from a range of organisations to undertake key initiatives.
- Effectively manage the restricted and unrestricted funds to maximise the benefit for the charity.

## 2. Financial accounts and records

## 2.1 Financial accounts

Standing in the Gap's financial accounts are the responsibility of the board of trustees with nominated responsibility to the Finance trustee and the Clinical Director and shall be maintained accordance with The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008.

The accounts and annual return require approval from the Board of Trustees and then filed with the Charities Commission within 10 months of the financial year end. The Charity's year end is 30<sup>th</sup> September, the filing deadline is therefore 31<sup>st</sup> July of the following year.

## 2.2 Financial controls

The Trustees are obliged to ensure the charity has effective financial controls in place. To ensure this occurs all trustees are bank account signatories and at each Trustee meeting a section on finance is included to ensure all are up to date with the financial state of Standing in the Gap.

## 2.3 Accounting records

Standing in the Gap will keep accounting records which are sufficient to explain all transactions and show the charity's financial position at any time.

All accounting records (both paper and electronic) will be kept for the statutory period of six years, plus a further year making seven years in total, from the end of the accounting period in which they were generated.

## 3. Financial responsibilities

The Board of Trustees are responsible for:

- approving the finance strategy, risk management policy and reserves policy
- approving Standing in the Gap's financial policies and key financial procedures
- establishing financial management priorities, responsibilities and levels of delegated authority
- approving budgeted annual plans
- monitoring performance against these plans and budgets
- approving the trustees annual report and accounts
- where income exceeds £25k, the trustees will be responsible for appointing the independent examiner/auditor and formal communications with them

The Finance Trustee is responsible for:

- ensuring that finance systems and processes which support these policies are set up, documented, implemented and maintained
- ensuring that sufficient records are maintained to show and explain Standing in the Gap's transactions, in order to disclose accurately, the financial position at any time
- managing the budgeting process for the annual plan
- Signing the finalised annual accounts for submission to the Charity commission.

- working in collaboration with the Clinical Director to ensure the financial controls in place are adequately met
- reporting back to the Trustees at each Trustee meeting.

The Clinical Director is responsible for:

- ensuring the smooth day to day running of the accounting system for Standing in the Gap
- ensuring that sufficient records are maintained to show and explain Standing in the Gap's transactions, in order to disclose accurately, the financial position at any time
- assisting in the budgeting process for individual projects and the overall annual plan

### 3.1 Segregation of Duties

In order to reduce the risk of errors and fraud, the processes in finance will be designed such that no individual is in a position to oversee a transaction through all its stages from start to finish. The stages are as follows:

- Initiating/authorising transaction
- Custody of assets relating to transaction
- Recording transaction in accounting records
- Reconciling accounting records

For example, a person who requests a purchase cannot authorise it, pay for it and record it in the cashbook, without another person being involved as a check and balance.

### 3.2 Annual plan and budget

The Finance Trustee and Clinical Director shall prepare individual project budgets, based upon an approved Strategic Plan agreed by the Trustees.

The project budgets plus operational costs will make up the annual budget for Standing in the Gap.

## 4. Banking

Bank accounts in Standing in the Gap's name must only be used for Standing in the Gap business. They must not be used for receiving or transferring monies for the benefit of individuals or third parties.

The opening or closing of bank accounts and the approval/removal of signatories is determined by the Board of Trustees and recorded in the minutes.

A review of the banking arrangements must be carried out every three years, alongside reviewing the finance policy to ensure that levels of service are acceptable and that bank charges and rates of interest are competitive.

Cheques, online payments, standing orders, direct debits and other withdrawals from the bank must be authorised by two signatories except that the Clinical Director may authorise payments up to a maximum of £100 other than transfers to their personal account or those of direct family members.

Standing in the Gap banks with the CAF bank. Any change to the bank mandate which lists Trustees who can sign cheques or make bank transfers or payments will be authorised by the Trustees and the minutes will record this approval.

Any loans or overdraft facilities will not be used without approval of the trustees.

#### 4.1 Gift aid claims

Gift aid claims will be completed on a regular basis, every 3-6 months by the Finance trustee and Clinical Director.

Signed gift aid declaration forms will be securely held in support of the claim.

### 5. Reimbursement of expenses

Standing in the Gap wants to ensure that staff, trustees and volunteers are not out-of-pocket for the work they do for us, while also looking to get the best use of limited funds.

HM Revenue & Customs expenses and benefits rules recognise that reimbursement of standard business expenses (such as travel) are not taxable. Standing in the Gap's policy is guided by these rules and we do not pay expenses that will give rise to tax or National Insurance.

In order to comply, any amounts claimed must be for actual costs incurred by staff 'wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of the duties of their employment', and that adequate records are submitted with each claim.

#### 5.1 General rules

- Any expenditure incurred by staff, trustees or volunteers must be necessary to achieve our goals and represent good value to the organisations that fund us.
- Each staff member, trustee or volunteer is responsible for familiarising themselves with Standing in the Gaps finance procedures and follow these for adequate reimbursement. As Standing in the Gap may not reimburse any expenses considered unreasonable or outside this guidance.
- All expenses should be itemised, with supporting receipts attached on Standing in the Gap's claim form. (See Finance procedures)

### 6. Using consultants to fulfil the work of Standing in the Gap

Delivering specific projects or delivery of services may be undertaken by paid consultants or other specialist contractors. Such activities require the approval of the Board of Trustees taking into consideration

- The impact on Standing in the Gap finances and other resources
- availability of skills required to complete the project

A written contract for each project between Standing in the Gap and the consultants or specialists, approved by the Chair of the Trustees must be in place before work commences.