

## **Sir Arthur Pearson Memorial Fund Guide**

Revised September 2026

### **1. About the Pearson Fund**

The Sir Arthur Pearson Memorial Fund (Pearson Fund) is a trust fund administered by Blind Low Vision NZ. Established in 1923, it was named in memory of Sir Arthur Pearson, founder of St Dunstan's in the United Kingdom.

The Fund operates under rules adopted on 27 January 1994. Its primary object is the “aftercare of the blind”, with other objects relating to the prevention and cure of blindness and the amelioration of the lot of blind persons.

The Trustees prioritise assistance that meets additional costs arising from blindness or low vision and supports rehabilitation, habilitation and personal development. The Fund does not generally meet ordinary living or general welfare costs. Applications outside these priorities may be considered where consistent with the Fund's objects.

### **2. Who Can Apply**

- Fully eligible Blind Low Vision NZ clients may access all Pearson Fund programmes.
- Partially eligible Blind Low Vision NZ clients may access equipment subsidies and the Equipment Rental Programme only.
- Parents or caregivers may apply on behalf of a registered, fully eligible client.
- Legally constituted organisations of or for people who are blind or have low vision may apply.

#### **Community Services Card**

Applicants must provide evidence of a current Community Services Card (CSC). A SuperGold Card alone does not meet this requirement. A combined SuperGold and Community Services Card is accepted where “CSC” and a current CSC expiry date appear on the back of the card.

Holding a CSC confirms eligibility to apply but does not guarantee funding.

### **3. How the Fund Works**

#### **Fund of Last Resort**

The Pearson Fund is a Fund of Last Resort. Applicants are expected to make reasonable use of personal, family, government, community and other available resources before seeking assistance. The Fund will not normally assist where another agency or funding source has responsibility for the requested item or service.

Relevant alternatives may include Work and Income, Accessable or Enable New Zealand, ACC, Ministry of Education, Workbridge, tertiary education funding and other

local or charitable funds. Applicants should advise which relevant sources have been explored and the outcome, or explain why they are not appropriate.

## **Applicant Contribution**

Applicants are expected to contribute towards the requested item where they are reasonably able to do so. As a general guide, a contribution of approximately 25% of the total cost may be required, particularly for higher-cost items.

Where this is not affordable, applicants should state what they can reasonably contribute. The applicant's circumstances will be considered, and inability to meet the guideline does not automatically make an application ineligible. The amount approved by the Fund may differ from the amount requested.

Applicants employed for 30 hours or more per week are required to provide an IRD Summary of Income. The Fund may also request supporting financial information from other applicants where necessary to understand their financial circumstances.

## **How Applications are considered**

The Fund has limited resources, and not all applications will be approved or funded in full. When considering an application, the Fund may take into account the identified need, how the requested item addresses a need arising from the applicant's blindness or low vision, the purpose and cost of the proposed solution, alternative funding, the applicant's contribution and any previous Pearson Fund assistance.

Each application is considered on its individual circumstances. Approval of an item or level of assistance for one applicant does not create an entitlement or precedent for another application.

## **Apply Before Purchasing**

Applications must be submitted and approved before an item is purchased or any financial commitment is made. The Fund does not reimburse goods or services already purchased or paid for.

## **4. Grant Programme**

The Grant Programme assists with items that align with the Fund's priorities and cannot reasonably be met through another source. There is no fixed list of items that will be funded; applications are considered on their individual merits and against the Fund's criteria.

## **Assessment Reports**

Where an assessment is required, it must identify an appropriate and cost-effective solution and clearly explain the client's need, how it relates to blindness or low vision, why the proposed solution is suitable, and whether reasonable lower-cost alternatives have been considered.

The Fund may request further information, comparisons or additional quotes before making a decision.

## **Technology and Adaptive Equipment**

Technology and adaptive equipment applications, including video magnifiers, adaptive software or hardware, must be supported by an appropriate Blind Low Vision NZ assessment and a current quote. For higher-cost or specialised items, a second quote or suitable comparison may be provided where practicable. Where the solution relies on Wi-Fi, internet or mobile data, the application should confirm how access will be provided.

## **Prescription Glasses**

Applications for prescription glasses must include a current quote, prescription and lens information, and visual acuity information before and after correction.

## **5. How Applications Are Decided**

Applications are reviewed as they are received. Where specialist input is required, the appropriate subject matter expert group reviews whether the assessment demonstrates the client's need, the proposed solution is appropriate and cost-effective, and the Fund's criteria are met.

Eligible applications requesting up to \$2,000 from the Fund may be approved by the Pearson Fund Administrator under delegated authority, subject to any required specialist review. Applications requesting more than \$2,000, and applications that are complex, unusual or require further consideration, are referred to the full Pearson Fund Committee.

The Committee comprises Blind Low Vision NZ staff appointed by the Chief Executive and two Blind Low Vision NZ Board Directors. It meets quarterly to oversee the Fund's activities, financial position, application trends and sustainability. Decisions made under delegated authority are reported to the Committee.

Incomplete applications may be held while further information is obtained. Applicants will be advised of the outcome once a decision has been made.

## **Approved Applications**

Approval applies only to the specific item or service and does not indicate that future requests will be approved. Any required client contribution and documentation must be received before the Fund arranges purchase.

Once an approved item becomes the client's property, the client is responsible for its care, security, maintenance and, where appropriate, insurance. The Fund has no obligation to replace an item that is later lost, stolen or damaged.

## **Declined Applications, Reviews and Appeals**

Applicants will be advised why an application was declined. A review may be requested where new or additional information is available that may materially affect the decision and addresses the reason for decline. A review is not a reassessment of the same information and does not guarantee a different outcome.

If the application remains declined following review, the applicant may request information about the formal appeals process through the Blind Low Vision NZ Board of Directors.

## **6. Equipment Rental Programme**

The Equipment Rental Programme provides equipment, primarily desktop video magnifiers, where this supports a client's independence and cannot reasonably be provided through another source.

A functional assessment from an appropriately qualified Blind Low Vision NZ assessor is required. The assessor submits the rental referral; a separate grant application is not required.

Rental equipment remains the property of the Pearson Fund. Clients pay an agreed rental charge, including GST and a contribution towards maintenance. Rates may be reviewed from time to time. The Fund determines the equipment supplied based on assessed need and availability.

Clients experiencing financial hardship may request a temporary reduction or waiver of the rental charge, considered by the Pearson Fund Administrator under delegated authority.

Repairs and maintenance must be arranged through Blind Low Vision NZ. Equipment must be returned promptly when no longer required. Full payment, care, cancellation and return requirements are contained in the rental agreement.

## **7. Subsidised Equipment Sales Programme**

The Subsidised Equipment Sales Programme assists eligible Blind Low Vision NZ clients with the additional cost of selected equipment available through Equipment Solutions and the NZ Vision Store.

Subsidy levels vary and are determined by the Pearson Fund. Eligible subsidies are applied at purchase, so a separate grant application is not required. Subsidies are not available where another agency or organisation is funding the purchase.

## **8. Specific Funding Guidelines**

The following guidelines apply to commonly requested items and should be read with the general criteria above. Exceptional circumstances may be considered where clearly explained and supported by appropriate evidence.

### **Prescription Glasses**

Applications will normally be considered no more than once every two years unless a significant change in vision requires new lenses. The Fund may contribute up to \$200 including GST towards frames, and reuse of suitable existing frames is encouraged.

Normally one pair of glasses will be considered. A second pair requires a clearly identified and supported need. Safety goggles, swimming goggles, contact lenses, specialist eye appointments, additional specialist testing, eye surgery and sight-restoring procedures are not normally funded.

## **Technology and Adaptive Software**

Technology must address an identified need arising from blindness or low vision. Standard laptops and devices that would ordinarily be purchased regardless of disability are not normally funded, although exceptional circumstances may be considered where an assessor demonstrates an additional vision loss-related need.

Protective screens, covers, bags and phone wallets for smartphones, tablets or laptops are not normally funded. Accessibility or adaptive apps/software may be considered case by case where there is a clearly identified need.

## **Hearing Aid Fitting**

The Fund may contribute the lesser of 25% of the total hearing-aid fitting cost or \$375 including GST. Further hearing-aid assistance will not normally be considered within three years of a previous grant unless exceptional circumstances apply.

## **Personal Development and Education**

General educational courses and personal development programmes are not normally funded. Other Blind Low Vision NZ administered trusts or funds may be more appropriate for tertiary education, music-related activities and some personal development opportunities.

## **Items and Costs Not Normally Funded**

- ordinary living or general welfare expenses;
- repayment of debts, including debts owed to the Pearson Fund;
- business establishment costs;
- vehicle repairs;
- Guide Dog fencing;
- school uniforms;
- workplace safety equipment that is the responsibility of an employer or another funding source;
- wage subsidies;
- eye surgery or sight-restoring procedures;

This list is not exhaustive. Applications are considered against the Fund's objects, priorities and Fund of Last Resort principles.

## **9. Further Information**

For further information about the Sir Arthur Pearson Memorial Fund, contact the Trust and Fund Administrator on 0800 24 33 33 or at [pf@blindlowvision.org.nz](mailto:pf@blindlowvision.org.nz).