**Gender Expression Fund Guidance Document**

**What is the Gender Expression Fund?**

We have created the Gender Expression Fund to alleviate financial strains for trans, non-binary, intersex, and any gender non-conforming students to break down some of the barriers they face in their daily lives. Whilst the fund cannot assist with medical or legal costs, we hope this financial assistance can contribute to students’ wellbeing and make resources for gender expression more accessible.

**What does the Fund cover?**

Awards can be used to purchase gender affirming products such as clothing, shoes, binders, packers, minor cosmetic procedures such as haircuts, laser hair removal, and beauty products. *\* Please note that medical or clinical procedures such as lip fillers or any similar treatments are not covered under this fund. For any uncertain cases, the Students Union will review this on a case-by-case basis.*

Award can also be used towards travel to medical or therapy/counselling appointments as well as postage for any legal documents and certificates, but **we are not able to provide funding for treatment, contributing to fundraising platforms for medical treatments such as GoFundMe pages, other medical procedures or legal costs.**

Students can apply for a maximum of £100.

*\* Please note that there is no requirement for financial status; this fund is not means-tested.*

**Who is eligible to apply?**

To be eligible for help from the Gender Expression Fund, a student should:

* Be currently registered as an LSE student
* Identify as trans, non-binary, intersex, or otherwise gender diverse
* Have reasonable need for items or transport expenses to be covered by the fund. Including but not limited to:
	+ Requesting a new binder or packer because the current one is worn out or no longer fits.
	+ Requesting items you do not have in adequate quantity such as make-up products.
	+ Covering the cost of travelling to a clinic that is not available locally.
* NOT include:
	+ Requesting multiple items without a justified need for replacements.
	+ Requesting items not related to gender expression such as electronic products.
	+ Requesting funding for non-essential short distance trips.
* Have not used the fund excessively before (with the option to justify if there is a reasonable explanation like extreme hardship, or change of circumstances, clothing size, etc.)
* Not be requesting items with excessive costs (e.g. custom products), unless explicitly necessary for reasons of sizing or access needs to be considered
* Not be requesting funding for medical treatment (such as hormone therapy or surgical procedures) or to fund private counselling/therapy.
* Not be requesting a contribution to a Go Fund Me or other savings funds for private treatments.

**Application process**

Students applying to the fund just need to fill out our **Gender Expression Fund Application Form** and include their **Certificate of Enrolment** which can be automatically generated [via this link](https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/services/student-status-documentation/certificates-letters). To submit your application, send the documents via email tosu.advice@lse.ac.uk.

Please note, all applications are treated sensitively, and all information is kept on our secure Advice Pro platform.

This is a trust-based process based on self-declaration by the student, not investigation by the Union.

**What happens next?**

Once a decision is made, an adviser from the Advice Service will be in touch via email to inform the application of the outcome. Payment will usually be authorised via BACS (bank transfer).

**Further Support Resources**

If you are interested in applying for the Fund for gender-affirming products, please take a look through the safety guidance for the item(s) you are interested in, so you have all the information you need before submitting your application.

**Binding Safety**

Please ensure the binder you apply for is the right size and from a reputable company to avoid any discomfort or any harm. If you are unsure how to use a binder safely please visit [this guide](https://www.rainbow-project.org/safe-binding-and-packing/#:~:text=You%20should%20avoid%20wearing%20a,out%20your%20muscles%20and%20chest.). If you aren't sure how to measure yourself for a binder, G(end)er Swap have [a handy video guide](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTNhdMsqeJ8) which will walk you through the process.

**Tucking Safety**

Please ensure the tucking garments you apply for are the right size and from a reputable company to avoid any discomfort or any harm. If you are unsure how to tuck safely please visit [this guide](https://www.pointofpride.org/tucking).

If you would like to access further wellbeing support we have included a list of internal and external resources below.

**Internal Resources**

1. **Safe Contacts**

Safe Contacts offer confidential sign posting. They will be able to listen, refer to other services and help people decide if they would like to report their experience to LSE. They can also support with practical things such as attending meetings and providing supporting letters for extensions.

On the Safe Contact [webpage](https://info.lse.ac.uk/Making-a-choice/Safe-Contacts) each Safe Contact has written about themselves and any additional training they have had, including whether they are a member of the LGBTQ+ community or had training in supporting LGBTQ+ students.

1. **Student Wellbeing Service**
* **Wellbeing Adviser:** You can request a 30 minute Wellbeing Appointment with a member of the Wellbeing team. During this appointment a member from our team will work with you to identify the best support that meets your mental health & wellbeing needs to support you and your studies at LSE. In addition, you will be provided with a Student Wellbeing Toolkit to further support your wellbeing. This will include reflective activities, information and signposting.
* **Peer Supporters:** Peer Supporters are trained student volunteers who can offer support, give a fresh perspective and listen to whatever is troubling you, from academic stresses to relationships.
* **Spectrum LIFE**: If you need to speak to someone on the phone immediately or outside of working hours, call our partners Spectrum.Life. Accessing 24/7 support via Spectrum.Life Freephone: 0808 189 01 03 SMS or WhatsApp: 00353 873690010

**External Resources**

**Galop** - LGBTQ+ sexual assault casework and support

Contact:

* Tel: 020 7704 2040
* Email: referrals@galop.org.uk
* Website: galop.org.uk/sexualviolence

**National LGBT Domestic Abuse Helpline** - Support for LGBTQ+ individuals subjected to domestic abuse.

Contact:

* Helpline: 0800 999 5428
* Email: help@galop.org.uk Monday to Friday 10am–5pm Wednesday and Thursday 10am–8:00pm
* Website: galop.org.uk/domesticabuse

For further information and resources you can also read this [support and report guide](https://info.lse.ac.uk/Making-a-choice/Assets/Documents/LSE-guide-to-reporting-and-accessing-support-2023-v3.pdf).