

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

Membership Fee Policy

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1. About WAGGGS's Membership Fees

The [Constitution](#) of WAGGGS states that Member Organisations may be required to pay reasonable membership fees. These fees are established by the World Conference.

Membership fees are therefore a constitutional obligation deriving from membership of WAGGGS and should not be confused with an individual fee per Girl Guide / Girl Scout or a return on investment through the provision of services.

The fees collected are used to meet some, but not all, of the costs required to achieve the WAGGGS Global Strategy, as approved by Member Organisations at World Conferences.

It is up to each Member Organisation to determine how it will raise the funds needed to pay its fee.

Where applicable, it is up to each Federation to determine how it will divide the membership fee across its Component Associations.

2. Background

The 'rate-per-member' membership fee model was introduced following the 35th World Conference in 2014 and most recently amended at an Extraordinary General Meeting in September 2024.

This model is designed to distribute fees in the most equitable manner possible, considering the size and means of all Member Organisations of WAGGGS.

The methodology will be applied on an ongoing basis until such time as the World Board or Member Organisations, via World Conference, deem it necessary to review.

Changes to the membership fee model require World Conference approval.

3. Membership Fee Principles

The membership fee model is designed to meet three principles which were approved by the World Board in May 2024, following extensive consultation with Member Organisations:

- Support the delivery of WAGGGS's strategy, adopted at World Conferences.
- Use an equitable, transparent and objective methodology.
- Deliver a sustainable model to support a strong and thriving Movement now, and in the future.

4. Membership Fee Methodology

Membership fees are calculated triennially. This aligns to WAGGGS's global strategic planning process and supports financial planning for Member Organisations.

Membership fees for the next triennium are, therefore, generally calculated in the year that the World Conference occurs using the most recent available data from the WAGGGS Census and World Bank.

Fees are calculated on the 'rate-per-member' membership fee model following a three-stage process described below:

STAGE 1 – Basic formula

The basic formula used to calculate fees is:

Standard rate-per-member x WAGGGS wealth band discount x membership numbers

Therefore, the following key variables are applied:

- Standard ‘rate per member’ (most recently established as £0.52 GBP at the 38th World Conference in 2023, but subject to inflation in future years)
- WAGGGS wealth band¹ discounts based upon Gross National Income - per capita (GNI-pc), Atlas method² (currently published on 1 July each year by the World Bank)³
- Membership numbers (captured as of 31 December each year and reported by MOs via WAGGGS’s Census submitted in the first quarter of the subsequent year)

STAGE 2 - Adjustments

Once fees have been calculated using the basic formula, several additional parameters and adjustments are applied, in the following order:

1. Following their admittance to membership of WAGGGS, new Associate or Full Member Organisations will be given one full year of free membership. This will not apply to any Member Organisations moving from Associate to Full Membership.
2. The membership fee paid by Associate Members in the first triennium of their membership will be calculated based upon a reduction of 50 per cent. In subsequent triennia, and until Full membership is achieved, the membership fee paid by Associate Members will be calculated based upon a reduction of 25 per cent.
3. To incentivise growth and support larger Member Organisations, for the purposes of calculating the membership fee, the membership numbers of Member Organisations are capped as follows:

¹ Each MO, based upon its GNI-pc (Atlas method), is assigned to one of eight WAGGGS wealth bands (calculated from the World Bank’s four income groups):

WAGGGS Wealth Band	Percentage of discount	World Bank income groups
1	100%	World Bank Low Income – lowest 50%
2	90%	World Bank Low Income – upper 50%
3	80%	World Bank Lower Middle Income
4	70%	World Bank Upper Middle – lowest 50%
5	60%	World Bank Upper Middle Income – upper 50%
6	50%	1 to 2 x World Bank High Income
7	25%	2 to 4 x World Bank High Income
8	0%	>4 x World Bank High Income

²The World Bank's official estimates of the size of economies are based on Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. GNI per capita is the gross national income, converted to U.S. dollars using the World Bank Atlas method, divided by the midyear population. The [Atlas method](#) smooths exchange rate fluctuations using a three-year moving average, price-adjusted conversion factor.

³ The World Bank does not publish GNI per capita Atlas method data for a small number of Member Organisations (e.g. currently, Taiwan). In these cases, an appropriate alternative measure will be agreed on a 1:1 basis.

WAGGGS Wealth Band	Cap (any members above this number are not included in the Member Organisation fee calculations)
1	>100,000
2 & 3	>250,000
4 & 5	>500,000
6 & 7	>1 million
8	>1.5 million

In addition, no Member Organisation will pay for less than 20 per cent of their total membership once these caps have been applied.

4. The minimum membership fee for a Full Member is £170 GBP per annum. The minimum membership fee for an Associate Member is £85 GBP per annum.
5. The minimum and maximum rate-per-member contribution for any Member Organisation (both Full and Associate Members) is £0.01 GBP and £1.00 GBP respectively.

The exception to this adjustment are Member Organisations paying the minimum fee of £85 GBP / £170 GBP with very small membership numbers, who may still have a residual rate-per-member of more than £1 GBP.

6. No individual Member Organisation pays more than 50 per cent of the total global membership fee, before the application of transitional relief.
7. To ensure that the membership fee model is sustainable, inflation⁴ can be applied each triennium, subject to the recommendation of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee and the decision of the World Board.

Inflation may be applied to different elements of the model but will generally affect the standard rate-per-member.

8. In exceptional cases, where a Member Organisation is unable to meet its membership fee obligations, steps will be taken to provide support, where possible.

Decisions on membership fee assistance will be based on clear and transparent guidelines as set out in Annex 1 (Membership Fee Assistance Guidance).

Exceptional circumstances could include, but are not limited to, external forces such as hyperinflation, conflict, natural disasters, or circumstances in the MO such as extraordinary expenses⁵, membership growth that exceeds the rate of income growth⁶, or loss of significant income streams.

⁴ Inflation is the term used to describe rising prices. In the [UK](#), a measure known as the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) is generally used to measure inflation.

⁵ An expense is deemed extraordinary if it is not part of a Member Organisation's ordinary operations and has a material financial impact.

⁶ Generally, Member Organisations would be expected to absorb such changes within their own reserves, but WAGGGS would seek to provide support in extreme cases.

STAGE 3 – Transitional relief

Transitional relief is applied to Member Organisations who face significant fee changes between triennia.

Increases and decreases in membership fees of 33 per cent or more between triennia are phased.

Phasing is applied by adding or subtracting one-third of the increase or reduction to the fees paid by the MO in each year of the triennium. The full new fee amount is therefore reached in the final year of the triennium.

In addition, any *increase* between triennia is capped at 100 per cent⁷, except where this falls below the minimum payment of either £0.01 GBP or the £170 GBP / £85 GBP threshold for Full / Associate Members.

Decreases between triennia are not capped.

5. Membership Fee Process Timeline

WAGGGS calculates membership fees for a whole triennium and communicates this to Member Organisations ahead of the World Conference.

Based on these fees, established at the World Conference, each membership fee year subsequently runs from January to December.

WAGGGS's Finance Team prepare invoices and distribute them to Member Organisations by 31 December latest each year.

The deadline for payment is 31 January each year.

In line with the global strategic planning processes, the Senior Management Team may propose an inflation rate which will be reviewed by the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee, prior to a recommendation being made to the World Board. The World Board may then decide on the appropriate level of inflation.

The World Board will explain their rationale for any inflationary change, including how the uplift impacts on both WAGGGS and Member Organisations, when the triennial membership fees are published.

6. Membership Fee Payment Process

Membership fees are invoiced in Great British Pounds (GBP) before 31 December each year.

Member Organisations will pay their annual membership fees by 31 January each year, preferably via bank transfer.

⁷ For example, a Member Organisation whose fee is due to change from £250 GBP to £600 GBP is capped at a 100 per cent total increase, phased over each year of the triennium, and would therefore pay £333; £416 and £500 GBP in each year of the subsequent triennium.

WAGGGS recognises that bank transfers are not practical for some Member Organisations and will discuss alternative arrangements, where necessary.

For financial transparency and to promote peer-to-peer support, Member Organisations will receive from WAGGGS a regular report of membership fee income received and any outstanding debts.

Please note that Member Organisations are responsible for any bank charges relating to the international transfer of their funds.

7. Support for Member Organisations

Where a Member Organisation faces challenges in meeting their membership fee obligation, they should immediately notify their relevant regional staff and/or committee member.

The regional staff and/or committee member will provide appropriate advice in a timely manner in line with the Membership Fee Assistance Guidelines (Annex 1) with support from the Head of Membership and Regional Support, if required.

7.1 Payment Process Adjustments

Member Organisations who wish to request to pay their fees in instalments within the year or make payment by a different method other than bank transfer, should first approach their relevant regional staff contact to discuss this. Any request should be sent to the relevant regional staff contact before 31 January.

Where it is agreed that the Member Organisation can pay in instalments, a schedule of payments will be prepared, and the regional staff contact will work with the WAGGGS Finance Team to ensure all (including the Member Organisation) are clear of when the payments are due.

7.2 Membership Fee Assistance

Where appropriate, the regional team will support the Member Organisation to complete a Membership Fee Assistance Form, available in the four WAGGGS languages.

Applications will be reviewed by the Director of Finance and Head of Membership and Regional Support in the first instance and decisions will be taken in line with the WAGGGS Scheme of Delegation.

Wherever possible, Member Organisations will be informed of the outcome of their application within six weeks.

7.3 Opportunity to Contribute to Support Member Organisations

Member Organisations and other stakeholders, such as individual donors, are encouraged to consider providing financial assistance towards those Member Organisations facing financial challenges and struggling to meet their membership fee obligations. Donations can be made via the [WAGGGS website](#).

8. Implications of Non-Payment

The Audit, Finance and Risk Committee will receive periodic reports of membership fee adherence. The Audit, Finance and Risk Committee will highlight any significant issues to the World Board via the Risk Register.

Member Organisations are only eligible to vote at General Meetings, including World Conferences, and at Regional Conferences, where their membership fees are paid in full up to, and including, the preceding year (or where a repayment plan has been authorised and is being adhered to).

Where non-payment of fees occurs for two years in succession and no approved repayment plan is in place, there will be an immediate automatic suspension.

Member Organisations will receive a three-month notice of automatic suspension.

If payment is received, or a repayment plan agreed and actioned, automatic suspension will be immediately lifted.

Sanctions of suspension are described within the Membership Policy and include the removal of:

- WAGGGS financial assistance and support, including contributions from regional and Friends' funds
- The right to attend (both in person, or online) World and Regional Conferences or participate in any WAGGGS events and programmes, other than those which may be targeted at suspended Member Organisations
- The right to be considered for new grant agreements, as per the WAGGGS Grants Policy
- The right to nominate a candidate for any WAGGGS volunteer roles, including the World Board or Regional Committees

Aligned to the WAGGGS Scheme of Delegation and in consultation with the relevant Regional Committee Chair, the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee will recommend to the World Board further ensuing action in the event of persistent non-payment after the automatic suspension has been applied.

The World Board will consider making a recommendation to World Conference for removal from membership of WAGGGS for Member Organisations who have been automatically suspended for two years, or more.

Annex 1: Membership Fee Assistance Guidelines

Operational Guidelines, supporting the implementation of the WAGGGS Membership Fee Policy

Responsible: Head of Membership and Regional Support

Accountable: Director of Finance

General Principles

Exceptional circumstances can affect a Member Organisation's ability to pay their membership fee to WAGGGS.

These guidelines serve to support the staff and volunteers assisting Member Organisations who are struggling to pay their membership fees.

What constitutes exceptional circumstances?

Exceptional circumstances could include, but are not limited to, external forces such as hyperinflation, conflict, natural disasters, or circumstances in the Member Organisation such as extraordinary expenses¹, membership growth that exceeds the rate of income growth², or loss of significant income streams.

The exceptional circumstances will have a severe impact on the affected Member Organisation.

When a Member Organisation applies for Membership Fee Assistance, it should include appropriate documentary evidence to support its application. This may include annual financial statements, relevant correspondence or copies of relevant regulatory / legal decisions.

What membership fee assistance is available?

Member Organisations can request (by 31 January) to pay their membership fees in instalments within the financial year, as per the WAGGGS Membership Fee Policy.

Where an MO requires additional support to paying in instalments, a Membership Fee Repayment Plan (MFRP) will be explored next.

MFRPs can be established to provide temporary³ financial relief to Member Organisations who are experiencing financial challenges making it difficult or impossible to pay their membership fee within the current financial year.

MFRPs do not reduce the overall membership fees due but can provide a staggered payment plan across several years to enable a Member Organisation to meet their membership fee obligations in an achievable way.

Current year and / or historic fee payments can be supported by MFRPs.

¹ An expense is deemed extraordinary if it is not part of a Member Organisation's ordinary operations and has a material financial impact.

² Generally, Member Organisations would be expected to absorb such changes within their own reserves, but WAGGGS would seek to provide support in extreme cases.

³ For MFRPs ≥£5,000 GBP the maximum period for payment is two years; for MFRPs of £5,001 - £15,000 GBP it is three years. MFRPs > £15,000 or which last more than three years, will be reviewed and confirmed by the Chair of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee and WAGGGS Chief Executive, as per the WAGGGS Scheme of Delegation. MFRPs > £50,000 will require approval of the World Board or its members with the appropriate delegated authority.

Where an MFRP is insufficient to support a Member Organisation to pay its fees, additional membership fee assistance may be considered.

WAGGGS has three further options available:

1. MO Membership Fee Assistance Fund (previously known as the Hardship Fund) – managed by the Head of Membership and Regional Support, this Fund consists of restricted donations to support Member Organisations struggling to meet their membership fee obligations. Current year / triennium and/or historic fees can be supported in this way. Member Organisations and other donors may contribute to the MO Membership Fee Assistance Fund via the [WAGGGS website](#).
2. Membership Fee Support Fund – managed by the Head of Membership and Regional Support, this Fund consists of an annual unrestricted budget allocation to support Member Organisations struggling to meet their membership fee obligations. Membership fees within the year / triennium can be supported in this way, but not historic debts. As the MFSF is budgeted on a triennial basis, any funds unused in one year may be rolled over into the next within the three-year cycle. Funds are not transferred between triennia.
3. Membership Fee Reduction⁴ or Cancellation – on the advice of the Director of Finance and Head of Membership and Regional Support, the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee can recommend to the World Board that a Member Organisation's membership fee be reduced or, in very exceptional circumstances, cancelled. Current year / triennium and/or historic fees can be supported in this way.

Suspended MOs cannot access this assistance.

Criteria for assessment

Membership Fee Assistance applications will be assessed in a consistent way using an agreed scoring matrix against the following criteria by the Finance Director and Head of Membership and Regional Support:

1. Impact on the Member Organisation and its membership of the exceptional circumstances affecting them.
2. Engagement of the Member Organisation in developing capacity to pay membership fees in the future, including seeking alternative funding sources and support.
3. Level of assessed risk to the Member Organisation's sustainability.
4. Impact on WAGGGS's sustainability with assessment of resources available⁵ and demand from other Member Organisations.
5. Duration that the support is likely to be required for.

⁴ Note that the World Bank provides some alternative Gross National Income – per capita (Atlas method) data, for example, for countries in 'Fragile and conflict affected situations' which may be a useful tool when considering membership fee adjustments in these exceptional circumstances.

⁵ Generally, MOs with annual fees of less than £1,000 GBP may have the whole figure covered and those with higher fees tend to be offered up to a maximum of 50 per cent. No single MO may claim more than 50 per cent of the total available MFSF available at the beginning of each year.

Process

1. Where a Member Organisation faces challenges in meeting their membership fee obligation, they should immediately notify their relevant regional staff and / or regional committee member.
2. The regional staff and / or regional committee member will provide appropriate advice in a timely manner, with support from the Head of Membership and Regional Support.
3. Where appropriate, the regional team will support the Member Organisation to complete a Membership Fee Assistance Form, available in the four WAGGGS languages (see Appendix).
4. Membership Fee Assistance Forms will be reviewed by the Director of Finance and Head of Membership and Regional Support in the first instance. In consultation with the relevant regional staff and / or regional committee member, a package of support will be agreed, based on the Member Organisation's specific situation and WAGGGS's available resources.
5. The relevant Regional Chair and regional staff and / or regional committee member liaising with the Member Organisation will be informed of the outcome of the application first. A formal communication will then be sent by the Region to the Member Organisation to inform them of the outcome of their application.
6. Wherever possible, Member Organisations will be informed of the outcome of their application within six weeks of it being submitted.
7. Being granted membership fee assistance in one triennium will not affect the calculation of membership fees for the next triennium.
8. There is no automatic entitlement to membership fee assistance. Each application will be considered individually on its own merit. The Audit, Finance and Risk Committee is responsible for ensuring consistency and transparency in decision-making and reporting.
9. Where it has not been possible to offer membership fee assistance, efforts will be made by the relevant regional staff and / or regional committee member to support the Member Organisation to seek assistance from other, non-WAGGGS, sources.
10. Membership Fee Repayment Plans can be approved according to the WAGGGS Scheme of Delegation⁶.

⁶ WAGGGS Scheme of Delegation includes a specific section on the approval of Membership Fee Repayment Plans:

Sum	Approval required
≤£5,000 GBP	Head of MaRS and Finance Director
£5,001-£15,000 GBP	CE or Deputy CE
£15,001-£50,000 GBP	CE or Deputy CE AND AFR Committee
>£50,001	World Board

11. As budgeted expenditure, Membership Fee Fund and Membership Fee Support Fund allocations can be approved by the Head of Membership and Regional Support, within the Scheme of Delegation limits.
12. Membership fee reduction or cancellation can only be approved by the World Board, on the recommendation of the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee.
13. For financial transparency and to promote peer-to-peer support, membership fee assistance allocations will be shared on a regular basis with Member Organisations.

Appendix

Membership Fee Assistance Form

Before completing this application, please read the WAGGGS Membership Fee Policy and liaise with your regional staff and/or committee contact.

Your application will be reviewed by the Head of Membership and Regional Support and the Director of Finance.

You will receive an immediate automated response to confirm WAGGGS's receipt of your application.

WAGGGS will seek to provide a formal response to your application within six weeksⁱ of submitting this form.

1. Your name
2. Your position within MO
3. Name of MO
4. Region of MO
5. Your email
6. Date of application
7. Name of the regional staff and / or Regional Committee member that you have been liaising with about this application
8. Please give your reason for applying for assistance (social, political and economic context; financial stability of the MO (include annual financial statements); membership strength of the MO etc.)
9. What assistance have you already sought, before approaching WAGGGS (e.g. fund-raising events, grant applications, increasing income from sources such as membership fees etc.)?
10. Please indicate which type of support you would like WAGGGS to consider (you may select more than one):
 - Pay in instalments within the current year
 - Membership Fee Repayment Plan over a longer period
 - Financial aid for fees
11. Please attach a proposal for the support that you feel would be most helpful, indicating your preferred timeline if you are requesting to pay in instalments or via a repayment plan.
12. Have you received support toward payment of WAGGGS Membership Fees in the past three years? If so, please provide details of the support received.

Thank you for submitting your application.

ⁱ Requests that require the approval of the full World Board, may take longer than six weeks to respond, due to the more extended period between meetings.