



SPECIAL DAY CRITERIA Q&As

1. What is changing?

From October 2011, the Willow Foundation has implemented revised eligibility criteria for special days. The charity is now prioritising applications from those younger adults living with serious and life-threatening illnesses in most urgent need. All applications from this date must be made on our new application form and must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Individuals who are receiving treatment for recurrent cancer and/or metastatic disease
2. Individuals in palliative care
3. Individuals with a terminal prognosis
4. Individuals in the advanced stages of a progressive degenerative condition including:
 - Muscle wasting diseases
 - Diseases of the nervous system
 - Auto-immune disorders
 - Neurological conditions
 - Chronic organ-specific conditions

Special day applications will be valid for six months from the date the completed application form is approved by the charity. All applicants must be aged between 16 and 40 inclusive and be resident in the UK.

A medical professional (e.g. nurse, consultant, GP, etc) involved in the applicant's care and treatment must provide relevant medical information and verify the application. In order to process the application the referring medical professional must be available to speak with the charity to clarify any medical information required.

2. Why are we making these changes?

At Willow we are facing ever increasing demand for our service. In order to make the most effective use of our resources, we need to prioritise special days for those beneficiaries in most urgent need and revise our eligibility criteria accordingly. Applications will now be valid for a period of six months to ensure that special days, wherever possible, have the most immediate impact on the lives of those in most urgent need.

3. By 'most urgent need' do we mean a terminal prognosis?

The revised criteria have been agreed in consultation with medical professionals and aim to identify those patients who are considered in most urgent need. This does **not** imply only those living with a terminal prognosis.

4. What do we classify as 'advanced stages of a progressive degenerative condition'?

This part of the eligibility criteria hasn't changed and applications will be continue to be treated on a case by case basis in consultation with the applicant's medical professional.

5. Is there a new application form?

The revised application form is available to download from the charity's website, or in hard copy by contacting the charity direct (where people do not have access to the internet). This includes the changes relating to the eligibility criteria.

6. When will the changes come into effect?

From 1 October 2011 all applications must meet the revised eligibility criteria and be made on our new application form. In order to provide an efficient service the charity requires accurate information on the



applicant's medical condition and daily needs plus full details of the medical referrer (including a daytime contact). All such information is treated in the strictest confidence.

7. Can we still use old application forms before the criteria changes?

Old application forms or applications from individuals who fall outside of the revised eligibility criteria will not be accepted after 1 October 2011.

8. What about the applications currently in the system for individuals that fall outside the new criteria?

Any applications approved before the changes come into effect will be processed as normal providing applicants are eligible. These applications will remain valid for one year but we will encourage earlier uptake where possible.

9. Are there any exceptions to the rule?

Demand for our service is at an all time high. In order to make the most effective use of our resources, Willow must prioritise those applications from individuals in most urgent need. If a medical professional has a patient that falls outside of the revised eligibility criteria but feels there are extenuating circumstances they should contact a member of Willow's nursing team via medical@willowfoundation.org.uk or by calling 01707 259777 and asking for a nurse advisor who will discuss the case with their manager and the chief executive, if appropriate.

10. Following this date who exactly will no longer be eligible for a special day?

Refining the eligibility criteria means that those in the earlier stages of diagnosis and treatment for cancer and other serious illnesses will no longer be eligible for a special day.

11. We thought Willow wasn't just for those in most urgent need but offered quality of life for all those in current treatment aged 16-40. If a patient/ individual falls outside of the new criteria what can Willow offer them now?

Our eligibility criteria have been revised in consultation with medical professionals because we need to focus our resources at this time on those in most urgent need. Throughout our 11 year history, as demand has increased year on year, Willow has continually had to prioritise its service. However, in 2011 it has become necessary to refine the eligibility criteria. We are planning to grow Willow's funding and develop other services that will be of benefit to a wider range of younger adults living with life threatening conditions and will announce new developments in summer 2012.

In the meantime we would advise the individual to speak to their medical professional who may be aware of other charities that issue grants and might fund a holiday or equipment.

We would also recommend Turn2us - its website is excellent and offers a service which helps people access the money available to them – through welfare benefits, grants and other help.
www.turn2us.org.uk

12. Will the criteria be changed back in 2012?

No. Willow is currently reviewing its plans for the future. In the longer term, we are seeking to grow our funding and develop a wider range of services to meet the needs of more 16-40 year olds living with serious and life-threatening conditions at different stages in their illness, and to provide greater support for them and their families. We will also seek to work in closer partnership with our beneficiaries, the medical professionals supporting them and other provider organisations in developing these services. We will communicate these planned developments in Summer 2012.

13. Will these future developments offer something for all those 16 to 40 year olds in current treatment for a life-threatening condition?



We recognise the importance of emotional, psychological and social support for those living with serious illness whatever the individual circumstances. We are working in consultation with medical professionals, beneficiaries and their families, to develop our current service and new services so that we can provide a wider range of support to seriously ill younger adults and their families at different stages in their illness.

14. Is all Willow literature still valid?

The only literature that will be invalid is the old application form and patient flyer. We would be grateful if you would dispose of all outdated materials.

15. What if I have more questions?

If you have any queries please contact one of our nurse advisors via medical@wf.org.uk or contact the Willow Foundation on 01707 259777.