

Lady Grover: supporting officers' families since 1911

Kirsty Turnbull traces the history of the Lady Grover's Fund, which has recently formed a partnership with the Officers' Association.

Lady Grover's Fund, founded in 1911, operates as a Friendly Society. Members pay an annual subscription for the opportunity to draw on financial support for their dependants to assist with the costs of nursing home or hospital accommodation, home nursing, recuperation or home help.

Lady Grover was born Helen Grace Lawrence in 1868 at Avoch on the Moray Firth. Her father was a civil servant in India and it was there she married Captain Malcolm Henry Stanley Grover in 1891. He reached the rank of Lieutenant General and

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was knighted in 1911. Their son, Major General John Grover, led the 2nd Infantry Division in Burma between 1941 and 1944.

In the early 1900s, it was common for British officers and their families in India to be referred to the UK for medical treatment at their own expense. The officers were able to subscribe to schemes to offset the cost, but there was nothing for their wives or female dependants. Lady Grover began lobbying for a solution.

By 1911, she had arranged for the Florence Nightingale Hospital for Gentlewomen in London to reserve two beds at 40 shillings each per year, paid for from annual subscriptions in



India to the Officers' Family Hospital Fund. There were plans to secure a further six beds as the fund grew.

For an annual subscription of 10 rupees (13s 4d), members would pay a subsidised rate of £2 10s per week for a room or £1 5s for a cubicle. This covered all treatment and medicines; an extra guinea was payable for surgery. The rules also stipulated that patients pay for their laundry.

In the years to come, regiments were able to subscribe on behalf of their ladies, and the fund was opened to chaplains and Naval officers in India. In 1923, it was extended to retired officers and widows. Today, officers of all three Services – serving, Reservist or retired – can join.

Lady Grover died on 24 April 1912, barely a year after the scheme was launched. After her death, the committee renamed the fund the Lady Grover Hospital Fund for Officers' Families.


General Sir Malcolm Grover – then the Army Department Secretary to the Government of India – was invited to become its President in her place.

Although he retired from the Army in 1919, the fund remained close to his heart and he was responsible for building up its resources and enlarging the scope to include officers serving anywhere in the world.

The fund today

Today the annual subscription starts at £50 for those under 50, rising to £80 for those aged 70 and over. The maximum grant payable to a member cannot exceed £8,000 in any 12-month period and the maximum for any one week cannot exceed £1,750.

Last year, Lady Grover's Fund embarked on a close partnership with the Officers' Association – the only charity to specialise in supporting tri-service officers with welfare and financial grants.

It is hoped that this alliance will mean more officers will be able to benefit from the security that comes from being a member of Lady Grover's Fund. 



For more information, visit ladygrover.org.uk and officersassociation.org.uk