

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Tornado Fund launched by Foundation to assist in aftermath chaos**

The Birmingham Foundation has launched a Tornado Personal Hardship Fund appeal to provide direct assistance to those affected by the disaster which has left an aftermath of hardship for hundreds of families in the worst hit areas of the city.

An official local residents' representatives panel, unveiled this week, will administer the fund, which has already attracted around £50k in pledged donations. The 10-strong committee will work with the Foundation to identify the worst struggling and allocate grant aid to relieve suffering.

Harvey Mansfield, Director of the Birmingham Foundation said: "The tornado hit some of the poorest areas of the city. Hundreds of people who were already struggling to make ends meet lost their homes and their possessions. Eventually large scale funding may come but meanwhile there is an emergency situation for many families. Just because the effects of the Tornado are no longer reported on a daily basis does not mean that the misery caused has gone away.

"This is not a matter of people forgetting to insure their property. Many people are tenants. The local advice agency has been inundated with people asking for help. The welfare state has many gaps and people are told to stand on their own two feet. Many of these are elderly, disabled or struggling to bring up young children. They have no money for bus fares from where they have been located, no school uniform for their child and no help in making their home to save to move back."

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## **Tornado Fund launched by Foundation to assist in aftermath chaos/2**

The 135 mph tornado which swept through parts of King Heath, Moseley, Sparkbrook, Highgate and Sparkhill on 28 July, wreaked havoc on buildings, vehicles and gardens in the summer and injured 19 people.

The clean up process is well underway with regards to structural damage but the issues affecting the local community still need to be addressed. All money received will go to people in personal hardship as a direct result of the Tornado.

Mr Mansfield added: "It is great news that the residents committee is now in place. All committee members live in the affected area and have suffered tornado damage to their home and so understand what they are dealing with. They also have a knowledge of what is needed on the ground and will ensure that grants go to those who have nowhere else to turn to."

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### **Notes to the editor**

- The Birmingham Foundation is a charitable trust set up in 1995 raising funds from businesses and individuals to promote and support local voluntary / community groups and projects within the area of Greater Birmingham.
- It serves as a conduit between the region's donors and do-ers and provides support through a programme of constructive grant making for people living within deprived and disadvantaged areas of Birmingham and the Black Country, reaching individuals through small grass-roots groups.
- 2004-2005 The Birmingham Foundation has awarded almost £2.9 million in grants to over 750 local voluntary and community groups