

## Guidance for Applicants

### A. General information

This Short Breaks Fund is aimed to benefit carers and the people they care for, in Midlothian. It is anticipated that average grant awards will be in the region of £200-£350, however for those in great need the Panel will consider an application of up to £500.

Applications can be submitted any time from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 and 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018. All grants must be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018. The Panel will meet monthly to review applications. The Panel is made up of former carers with a wide range of caring experiences, Health & Social Care professionals and is supported by Pauline Quinn, Carer Centre co-ordinator.

### B. What can be funded?

The Panel is keen that the fund is used as creatively and flexibly as possible to help carers achieve the kind of break that will be most effective for them. Please consult the list of examples in the application pack before completing the form.

### C. Who can apply?

The Panel is keen to support as many carers as possible, but due to limited funds, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria. The panel will also consider some priority areas when making grants.

### D. Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Applicants must be carers. A carer provides unpaid care to a family member, partner, relative or friend of any age who needs help to manage a long term condition, disability, physical or mental health problem or addiction.
- ✓ The cared for person must be aged 21 or over.
- ✓ The carer lives or cares in Midlothian, and will usually provide 20 or more hours of practical or other support in an average week.
- ✓ A grant will not be awarded, to the same carer, for the same purposes during any two year period.
- ✓ Only one grant will be made to a household/caring situation in a year.
- ✓ If you fail to provide receipts evidencing expenditure has been spent on agreed purposes then a new grant will **never** be awarded.
- ✓ Carer can evidence entitlement of a means tested welfare benefit such as Universal Credit, Housing/Council Tax benefit, Pension Credit, Working Tax Credits
- ✓ If not in receipt of a means tested benefit, the carer is open to discussing their personal finances with the professional supporting their application and is aware that this may include providing household income/expenditure.
- ✓ If the request is for a holiday in which the carer will participate, the carer will not have had a holiday in the previous two years.
- ✓ If the request is for a holiday then the holiday must be taken in the UK.

### E. Priority areas

The panel will consider applications against some priority areas, which include:

- ✓ Priority will be given to carers who have not received financial support from the fund previously.
- ✓ Applications from people in receipt of a means tested benefit will be given priority. A list of means tested benefits is provided below:
  - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
  - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
  - Income Support
  - Pension Credit
  - Child Tax Credits or Working Tax Credits
  - Housing Benefit
  - Council Tax Reduction (not single occupancy discount)
  - Universal Credit

In exceptional circumstances, VOCAL may consider applications from people who are not in receipt of a means tested benefit; however applicants will need to provide a full breakdown of household income and expenditure.

- ✓ Priority will be given to applications that evidence a long term benefit of the award.
- ✓ The carer has been providing support for more than 2 years.
- ✓ The carer has required hospital or sudden medical treatment in the last 12 months, or supports someone who has been in hospital within the last 12 months.
- ✓ The carer receives little or no break from caring in an average week.
- ✓ The demand of the caring role threatens the balance with the carer's work or social life and a break is likely to improve this balance.
- ✓ The break will help to foster family relationships – spending some quality time together or apart. This may be attendance at important family or social occasions i.e. weddings, birthday parties, family visits or weekend breaks.
- ✓ The carer finds it difficult to cope and may be unable to continue in their caring role without intervention.

### F. Desired outcomes

A Short Break should help to achieve at least one or more of the following outcomes and your application should demonstrate to the panel how this will be achieved.

- The carer and the person receiving care will benefit from improved physical and emotional wellbeing.
- The carer will be better able to sustain their caring role.
- The carer will be better able to balance the caring role with a life outside of caring.
- The carer will be more confident dealing with the impact of the caring role on their relationships.

## **G. COMPLETING THE FORM**

The following sections relate to the questions of the application form

### **G1 – Question 1: Information about the carer**

Please ensure that you provide accurate contact details and that they will continue to be so for at least a month. Please remember to notify the panel if there are any changes to your contact details. Where possible, please give your mobile phone number and email to help the Panel make contact if they have any queries.

### **G2 – Question 2: Is this fund for me?**

Please ensure you answer all questions to ensure you meet the eligibility criteria and priority areas required.

### **G3 – Question 3: Information about the person you care for/caring situation**

All parts of this question should be completed. Please provide any additional information which may be beneficial to the panel on a separate sheet and submit it with the form.

Please note that this section does not ask for a diagnosis, carers supporting someone without a diagnosis are welcome to apply. The panel is primarily interested in how the person receiving care is affected by the condition.

### **G4 – Question 4: Proposed break**

Please provide as much detail about your planned break as possible, and how you wish to spend the money you are applying for. Please ensure you complete what break you are applying, where and when you plan to take the break and also a breakdown of the costs involved. It is important that you also include the difference the break will make to the carer.

### **G8 - Question 8: Finances**

Please answer all of the questions in this section using the tick boxes. If you feel the panel would benefit from some additional information about your how your caring role has impacted on your financial situation or the welfare benefits you receive then feel free to provide this information in the space provided.

### **G9 - Question 9: Who have you spoken to (referee)?**

Applicants should provide the name and contact details of one referee, preferably someone who knows the carer and the person receiving care in a professional capacity e.g. a GP, District Nurse, OT, Social Worker, CPN, Carer Support Worker etc..

The role of the referee is to confirm the caring role and that a break would be of benefit to the carer and the person receiving care, or at the very least will not be detrimental to the person receiving care.

The Panel may not take up references in all cases but reserves the right to do so.

**G10 - Question 10: Terms & Conditions/Signatures**

All applications must be signed by **the carer**. In signing the form the carer is consenting to the sharing of personal information with the panel.

If the form has been completed by a third party, with or for the carer, the panel requires that the supporter, whether a professional or friend, also signs the form.

In addition, by signing the form both signatories are signing to confirm that the information they have provided is accurate.