
Guidance for Applicants

April 2018-2019

A. General information

Parent/carers can apply for up to 35 hours of respite support to be used flexibly. The fund aims to increase the number of breaks available to parents and carers of children and young people with a disability or/and additional support needs aged 20 and under. Please see the Better Breaks Information Sheet for more details.

A Grants 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, VOCAL representatives and is supported by the Midlothian Carer Centre Co-ordinator.

B. How is respite provided

If respite hours are awarded they must be used as follows:

- Hours can only be redeemed with one of our partner agencies, Lothian Autistic Society, Positive Paths or The ACTION Group.
- Hours can be used in blocks of no less than two hours and in blocks of 30mins thereafter
- If hours are to be used within the family home, then a parent must remain at home during the whole visit
- The worker will only provide support to the child named on the form and no other children
- The sessional workers can have limited availability so most respite hours will need to be used in late afternoon, early evening or at the weekend
- All support packages must be completed within 4 months of the award being made
- All support packages must be completed by the 31st March 2018
- If you do not begin using the hours within 2 months of the award then hours will be withdrawn.
- If your child has specific medical needs or requires 2:1 support then there may be a delay before your award can be started.
- If your child requires a 2:1 staffing ratio then this may result in a reduced number of hours of respite being provided. Our partner agencies will have the final decision on appropriate staffing ratios.
- If your child is a wheelchair user then respite sessions can last no longer than 3 hours.

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 a carer and providing care for a child or young person aged 20 and under who has a disability and/or additional support needs (a carer is an individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual).

- ✓ The parent/carer must provide care for a child or young person who lives in Midlothian, and will usually provide 20 or more hours of practical or other support in an average week.
- ✓ Applications must be supported by someone who knows the parent/carer and has supported the child/young person in a professional capacity e.g. Children & Families Worker, Social Worker, Carer Support Worker, GP, Teacher, Youth Worker etc.
- ✓ The health and wellbeing of the parent/carer or the person receiving care is under strain and is likely to be improved by a short break(s).
- ✓ The balance of caring and a life outside caring is seriously compromised and a short break will assist the carer to re-dress the balance.
- ✓ The relationship between the parent/carer and the person receiving care, or the wider family, is under strain, and relationships are likely to benefit and improve by a short break(s).
- ✓ The parent/carer and/or the person receiving care are able, possibly with support, to make necessary arrangements for the break(s).

E. Priority areas

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

- ✓ Priority will be given to those who have **not** received an allocation from the fund previously.
- ✓ The parent/carer receives little or no break from caring in an average week.
- ✓ The demand of the caring role threatens the balance with the parent/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 parent/carer finds it difficult to cope and may be unable to continue in their caring role without intervention.
- ✓ The parent/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.
- ✓ Parent/carers who are unable to fund the break/support themselves, due to low income or those living in areas of Midlothian which fall into the most deprived 20-30%.

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

G. A note on further support

VOCAL and our partner agencies take no responsibility for any private employment arrangements that parent/carers and their families may enter into with the support worker following the conclusion of their award.