

Guidance for Applicants

A. General information

VOCAL's Short Breaks Fund aims to benefit carers and the people they care for and seeks to support carers who provide unpaid care to someone in Midlothian stay in good health, despite the pressures of their caring role. It is anticipated that average grant awards will be in the region of £200-£350, however for those with the most significant needs the panel can consider grants awards of up to £750.

Applications can be submitted at anytime (dependent on funds being available). Grants must be spent within three month of receiving the funding and receipts returned within four weeks of completing the break. 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, VOCAL representatives and is supported by the Midlothian 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, but you do not need to restrict yourself to these examples and we encourage carers to be as creative as possible when considering what would be the ideal break.

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 applicant must fulfill the following caring role: carers of adults (aged 21 years and over), carers of older people (aged 65 years and older).
- ✓ The carer must provide care for someone who lives in Midlothian.
- ✓ Only one grant will be made to a household/caring situation in a twelve month period.
- ✓ If you fail to provide receipts evidencing expenditure has been spent on agreed purposes then a new grant will **never** be awarded.
- ✓ Carers can demonstrate that they are **NOT** able to fund the break themselves and are willing to provide a breakdown of their household income/expenditure, if necessary.
- ✓ If the request is for a holiday or overnight stay the carer will not have had support from VOCAL to have a holiday or overnight stay within a 24 month period.
- ✓ If the request is for a holiday or overnight stay then the holiday or overnight stay must be taken in the UK.

Please Note: VOCAL has a broader Short Breaks, Respite, Grants and Goods Policy which sets out the level of support carers can receive from VOCAL over specific periods of time. The eligibility criteria outlined above is governed by this broader policy.

E. Priority areas

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

- ✓ Carers who have not received financial support from the fund previously.
- ✓ Carers who are unable to fund the break themselves, due to low income or those living in areas of Midlothian which fall into the most deprived 20-30%.
- ✓ Applications that can 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.

SHORT BREAKS FUND

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 indicate what you are applying for, 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.

G5 - Question 5: 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, Teacher, Youth 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.

G6 – Question 6: Terms & Conditions/Signatures

All applications must be signed by **the carer**. In signing the form the carer is consenting to the sharing of all the information contained in the form with VOCAL's Funding Panel, Midlothian Council, Shared Care Scotland and any other funders supporting our Short Breaks Fund.

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 confirming that the information they have provided is accurate.