**Guidance for Applicants**

**Please read this before beginning to complete the application form**

1. **General information**

This Short Breaks Fund is intended to benefit carers and the people they care for living in Edinburgh. It is anticipated the average grant award will be in the region of £300. For those in great need the panel will consider an application of up to £600.

Applications can be submitted any time from 1st October 2019 and 20th September 2020. However, if demand is high, funds may run out before this date so we advise getting your application in as soon as you can.

All grants must be spent and receipts received by 31st October 2020. A Panel will meet fortnightly to review applications. The Panel is a group of carers with a wide range of caring experiences supported by Carer Support, Lead Officer (Edinburgh). Failure to provide receipts may lead to future access to funds being restricted.

1. **What can be funded?**

The Panel are keen 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. However, the fund is unable to fund items which can be funded through other means, e.g. white goods, furniture, furnishings etc. Please consult the list of examples in the application pack before completing the form. If you feel the item you wish to apply for might not meet these criteria, please contact the Carer Support Team to discuss your application.

1. **Who can apply?**

The Panel are 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.

1. **Eligibility criteria**

All 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 must live Edinburgh 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.
* Where the request is for a holiday, (an overnight stay in purchased accommodation) the carer’s household must be in receipt of a means tested welfare benefit. This means a benefit where income and savings are part of the eligibility criteria.
* If the request is for a holiday in which the carer will participate, the carer has not had a holiday in the previous five years.
* If the request is for a holiday then the holiday must be taken in the UK
1. **Priority areas**

As funds are limited the Panel will consider applications against some priority areas, which include;

* Priority will be given to carers who have not previously received financial support from the fund
* 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 improve or strengthen family relationships – spending some quality time together or apart. This could be attendance at an important family or social occasions such as 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 the intervention.
1. **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

**Please note if you do not meet the criteria for a grant please contact the**

**Edinburgh Carer’s Hub on 0131 622 6666 or at** **centre@vocal.org.uk** **as other support may be available to assist you to get a break from caring.**

1. **Completing the form**

The following sections relate to the questions of the application form

**G1 – Question 1: Information about the Carer**

Please ensure you provide accurate contact details and that these will continue to be so for at least a month. Please remember to notify VOCAL 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 queries.

**G2 – Question 2: 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. We want to be flexible and respond to carers’ needs and recognize different services or items might lead to a break.

Please tell us who will benefit from the break either directly by participating or indirectly.

**G3 – Question 3: Reason for break**

Please outline your need for the break. Mention any issues which have placed increased risks or pressures on you or any factors that might increase the likelihood of the caring situation breaking down (e.g. changes in your health or that of the person you care for, changes in personal circumstances, sudden events, a change in working role, a recent hospital admission, etc.)

**G4 – Question 4: Making arrangements for the break**

You may apply for up to £600 but this will only be awarded in exceptional circumstances. The average grant awarded is £300. **Please ensure you provide a breakdown of the costs do not simply apply for the average grant of £300.** The Panel require to know what you will be purchasing and exactly how much it costs.

 If the total cost of the break is more than £300 please tell us how you might make up the short fall.

VOCAL’s Carers Support Team can assist carers to make arrangements for a break, or suggest other organisations to help. If the applicant is able to make their own arrangements, they should indicate so.

Please note that the Panel will not fund breaks provided by a person getting paid cash in hand – whoever provides the break or gets paid for their service must be registered for tax purposes and must provide receipts.

The panel strongly recommends providers have public liability insurance, and if providing support to the cared for person, are in the position to provide disclosure information.

***Please note you are required to provide receipts for the full value of the grant awarded and to return any underspend. Failure to provide receipts may lead to future access to funds being restricted.***

**G5 – Question 5: Break outcomes**

This section is about the difference the break will make. The Panel is primarily interested in the benefits to the carer but is also keen to hear about benefits to the cared for person or to the wider family.

**G6 – Question 6: Information about the 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 this section does not ask for a diagnosis and 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.

**G7 – Question 7: Help with the caring task**

The Panel is keen to learn what, if any, support you currently receive. This information may help VOCAL make suggestions about how to access longer term support. Please provide as much detail as possible about types and sources of support. You can still be eligible for funding, even if you receive a lot of support.

 **G8 - Question 8: Finances**

Please answer all of the questions in this section using the tick boxes. Please feel free to provide additional information on a separate sheet if you feel the Panel would benefit from hearing more about how your caring role has impacted on your financial situation or the welfare benefits you receive.

**G9 - Question 9: Referee**

Applicants should provide the name and contact details of one referee, preferably someone who knows you and the person(s) you care for in a professional capacity e.g. a GP, District Nurse, OT, Social Worker, CPN, teacher. Please do not provide the details of a family member or friend.

The role of the referee is to confirm your caring role and to recommend a break would be of benefit to you and the person(s) you care for.

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

**G10 - Question 10: Signatures**

All applications must be signed by you, the carer. In signing the form you are consenting to the sharing of personal information with the Panel.

If the form has been completed by a third party - with you or on your behalf – the Panel requires that the third party, 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.

**In addition a signed copy of the award agreement must accompany the application form.**