

Guidance for Applicants

2021/2022

A. Background

The Visit Scotland ScotSpirit Holiday Scheme (SSHVS) is funded by Scottish Government and forms part of the Scottish tourism pandemic recovery programme. The new scheme will enable low-income families, unpaid carers and disadvantaged young people to enjoy a 2-3-night subsidised break or day out in Scotland. The Scheme offers a contribution towards an overnight stay in hotels, campsites, bed and breakfasts, hostels and guest houses or day visit activities in Scotland from October 2021 to December 2022.

The ScotSpirit Holiday Scheme is focused on supporting individuals and families who have been particularly adversely affected by the impact of the pandemic, while at the same time providing financial support to the Scottish tourism sector.

B. What's Being Offered

The ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme will enable unpaid carers across Scotland to have a short overnight break, or enjoy a day out at a visitor attraction in Scotland. The Scheme will run until April 2022 and all breaks need to be booked and taken by the 31st December 2022.

Funding for overnight breaks will be capped at £400 for a two or three night stay, but a higher capped amount of £500 is available to eligible families or carers who have children of school age and take an overnight stay during school holiday periods (i.e., Festive period, Easter, Summer, October). There are no restrictions on the number of people attending the over night break, as long as it is within budget.

Funding for day visits will be capped at a maximum value of £200 for day tickets or passes both during the peak and off-peak season. There are no restrictions on the number of people attending the visit, as long as it is within budget.

Carers will be able to choose from an accommodation or visitor attraction venue from a range of participating businesses within the hospitality and tourism sector across Scotland. Carers will be asked to indicate the type of break they would prefer and what region of Scotland they would like to visit on their application form.

C. Application Process

ScotSpirit applications can be submitted up until the end of April 2022, (dependent on funds being available). Application forms are available on VOCAL's weebreaks.com website or carers can request a paper copy of the form by contacting VOCAL directly. Carers can apply for overnight breaks or days out in Scotland and VOCAL staff will help them identify a suitable break that is available through the ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme. The application must be supported by someone who has supported the carer and/or the person they care for in a professional capacity. VOCAL's ScotSpirit Funding Panel will meet regularly to review applications and ensure break requests are processed quickly and efficiently.

D. Who Can Apply

The following eligibility criteria applies:

- ✓ Applications are open to all unpaid carers regardless of age or caring responsibilities, including young carers and parent carers.
- ✓ The carer must provide care for someone who lives in Edinburgh or Midlothian (out with a long-term residential care setting) A carer is someone who provides unpaid care to a family member, partner, relative or friend who needs help to manage a long term condition, disability, physical or mental health problem or addiction.
- ✓ The application must be supported by someone who has supported the carer and/or the person they care for in a professional capacity e.g. a GP, District Nurse, OT, Social Worker, CPN, Carer Support Worker, Teacher, Youth Worker.
- ✓ Carers who have not benefited from a VOCAL Wee Breaks grant within six months of their ScotSpirit application.
- ✓ Only one ScotSpirit award will be made to the same household during the funding period and carers who have benefited from ScotSpirit support through another agency are not eligible to apply to VOCAL.
- ✓ The application should complement, and not replace or duplicate, services which local authorities, the NHS and other agencies already fund or provide.
- ✓ Carers must demonstrate they are **NOT** able to fund the break themselves and are willing to provide a breakdown of their household income/expenditure, if necessary.

Please Note: VOCAL has a broader Fundraising 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 and will take measures to reach carers in **greatest need** of a break or of financial support.

By **carers in greatest need** we mean carers at risk of isolation, exclusion or disadvantage, whose caring role and lack of support impact on their

- physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing
- ability to balance the caring role with a life of their own
- financial wellbeing and ability to afford basic necessities

VOCAL allows carers to self-define need, by asking and assessing what difference the support they apply for would make to their lives

We do not apply **formal** means-testing, i.e. a process which qualifies a person for support only if their own financial means are below a threshold where they do not need to contribute to the cost of a service. VOCAL does, however, ask carers if they are in receipt of any welfare benefits. These are key indicators of risk of financial exclusion, and critically, allow VOCAL staff to explore a range of income maximisation measures in addition to assessing one-off support.

Particular priority areas will 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 experiencing extremely challenging caring roles.
- ✓ 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 carer finds it difficult to cope and may be unable to continue in their caring role without intervention.
- ✓ The health and wellbeing of the carer or the person receiving care is under strain and is likely to be improved by a break.
- ✓ The demands of the caring role threaten the balance with the carer's work or social life and a break is likely to improve this balance.

F. Desired Outcomes

The 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 on the application form:

G1 – Question 1 - Carer's Details (Lead Applicant)

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 - Previous Funding Awards

Please tell us if you have had a previous funding award from ScotSpirit or if you have an application pending. Please also indicate whether you have received a VOCAL Wee Breaks funding award within the past six months and, if so, what you used the grant for.

G3 – Question 3 - Information about the person you care for/caring situation

Please tell us about your main caring role(s), the condition(s) of the person(s) you care for and what you hope to get from applying for this break. This question should be completed as fully as possible, with emphasis on the following:

- ✓ It's important that you provide as much detail as possible so panel members are able to make informed decisions and don't have to return your application, asking for more information.
- ✓ It's important that you also include the difference the break will make to you, as a carer.

- ✓ It's particularly important that you provide as much information as possible about the person(s) you supports condition(s), how the condition(s) impact on them on a day to day basis and what additional care and support you need to provide for them.
- ✓ You can provide any additional information on a separate sheet and submit it with the form, if necessary.

G4 – Question 4 - Short Break Details

It's important that you tell us who will be going on your break with you, their age and status (is it a friend, family member, the person you care for etc.). Let us know if there are any special requirements that we need to take into consideration when looking for a break for you i.e. disabled access, pet friendly, distance etc. It's also important you give us as much information as possible about the type of break you are looking for. Is it a day visitor attraction or an overnight stay, are there particular dates that you would like to go and is there a particular area of Scotland, visitor attraction or accommodation that you would like to go to. It's equally important that you let us know if there are any additional costs that might restrict you going on a particular break, such as transport. The ScotSpirit Holiday Scheme can cover the cost of a particular break but is not able to meet the costs of any additional charges e.g. room service charges, room upgrades, spa treatments, activities etc.

G5 - Question 5: Who have you spoken to (Supporting Professional)?

All applications should include the name and contact details of one supporting professional, preferably someone who knows the you and/or the person receiving care in a professional capacity e.g. a GP, Nurse, OT, Social Worker, CPN, Carer Support Worker, Teacher, Youth Worker.

The role of the supporting professional is to confirm the description of the caring role is accurate and that a break would be of benefit to the carer and the person receiving care. As well as ticking the box, we also expect supporting professionals to indicate why they are supporting the application and how their organisation has supported the carer previously. **Applications without a statement from a supporting professional will not be considered.** The panel may not contact the supporting professional in all cases but reserves the right to do so.

G6 – Question 6: Terms & Conditions/Signatures

All applications must be signed or agreed by **you/the carer**. In signing or agreeing the form you are consenting to the sharing of all the information contained in the form with VOCAL's Funding Panel, Shared Care Scotland and any other stakeholders supporting the break. In addition, by signing or agreeing the application form you are confirming that the information they have provided is accurate and correct.

You/the carer will also need to read and accept the **beneficiary terms & conditions** at the end of the application form, as these T&C's will be applicable should your application be successful.