

Guidance for Applicants

Please read carefully before applying

A. General information

This Short Breaks Fund is aimed to benefit carers and the people they care for in Aberdeen City. Applications for up to a maximum of £400 will be considered.

Applications can be submitted any time from November 2012 until 20th September 2013 (or subject to availability of funding).

All breaks must be taken by 31 October 2013. A Short Breaks Panel will meet monthly to review applications. The panel is made up by a member of VSA Carers Support Team, a carer and health and social care practitioners.

Please check you meet the eligibility criteria before applying to this Fund. Carers looking after a disabled child or young person aged 0 - 20 years should apply to Take a Break which is administered by the Family Fund. The number is 01904 571093. The website is www.takeabreakscotland.org.uk

B. What can be funded?

The panel are 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. Examples of how funds can be used include, **but are not limited to:**

❖ the purchase of sitter services	❖ equipment such as a computer
❖ care provision at home	❖ family occasions such as weddings
❖ residential respite	❖ gym membership
❖ help with day to day tasks such as housework	❖ alternative therapies
❖ support to take the person requiring support out of the home to activity schemes	❖ combinations of the above where appropriate

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 for grant awards.

D. Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Applicants must be an unpaid carer who provides care to a family member, partner, relative or friend **over the age of 20** who needs help to manage a long term condition, disability, physical or mental health problem or addiction.
- ✓ The carer lives in Aberdeen and will **usually provide 20** or more hours of practical or other support in an average week.
- ✓ The carer and the family are unable to finance the full cost of the break themselves.
- ✓ The health and wellbeing of the carer or the person receiving care is under strain and is likely to be improved by a short break.
- ✓ 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 carer and the person receiving care, or the wider family, is under strain, and relationships are likely to benefit (or maintain a positive relationship) by a short break.
- ✓ The carer and/or the person receiving care are able, possibly with support, to make necessary arrangements for the break.

E. Priority areas

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

- ✓ The carer's financial situation would not allow a break without financial support.
- ✓ 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 benefit family relationships – spending some quality time together or apart. This may be attendance of 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.
- ✓ The carer has not previously had support from the Short Breaks Fund.
- ✓ If the request is for a holiday and the carer has not had a holiday in the last year.
- ✓ Carers who care for someone with a mental health problem.
- ✓ Carers from minority ethnic groups.

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.

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. We therefore did not set restrictions on the nature or length of the break(s).

Please note that requests for holidays/breaks/equipment/sitter services etc should be accompanied by a quote outlining the dates and costs relating to for eg. accommodation. travel equipment or a leisure activity.

G3 – Question 3: Reason for break

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

G4 – Question 4: Making arrangements for the break

VSA's Carers Support Team can offer support with form filling and signposting to organisations that may be able to assist with suitable breaks.

If the applicant is able to make their own arrangements for a break, they should indicate so.

The sections in *italics* are *not essential* for an application to be processed, but completing the question will help these sections and may speed up decisions. 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.

The panel strongly recommends that providers have public liability insurance, and if providing support to the cared for person, are in the position to provide disclosure information and are registered with the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS).

The panel, however, will consider funding transport costs or accommodation and housekeeping costs

G5 – Question 5: Break outcomes

This section is about the difference that 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.

The panel has listed five key benefits that they can foresee occurring as a result of a break. Please indicate which, if any, apply and tell us how you think the break will impact on these areas.

The three suggested outcomes are not the only ones possible so please tell us about any other benefits that you foresee occurring as a result of the break.

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 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.

G7 – Question 7: Help with the caring task

The panel is keen to learn what, if any, support carers currently receive. This information may help the panel to make suggestions about longer term support. Please provide as much detail as possible about types and sources of support.

The fund does not have an upper limit of support above which carers become ineligible for support.

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 how your caring role has impacted on your financial situation or the welfare benefits you receive please feel free to provide additional information on a separate sheet.**

G9 – Question 9: Ensuring the break is a success

This section is to help and encourage the carer to identify potential problems or barriers to a good break and to overcome them.

Caring situations are often complex and things can change suddenly. A great many planned breaks do not happen due to unexpected events or a lack of cooperation from the cared for person.

G10 – Question 10: After the break

VSA's flexible Short Breaks Fund for carers is a short term intervention. The panel is keen to ensure that carers and the person(s) receiving care are supported to consider their future needs. These questions are designed to help consider the need for further or regular breaks and how they might be accessed.

G11 – Question 11: 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, teacher. However, we also accept a reference from a minister, neighbour or friend.

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.

G12– Question 12: 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 and true at the time of signing.