

**The Carers of East Lothian Time for Me Fund**

**Guidance Note for Applicants**

**April 2023 – March 2024**

**Background**

Carers of East Lothian (CoEL) has been awarded a grant from the Scottish Government, administered by the carers’ charity Shared Care Scotland, for the purpose of increasing the range and choice of breaks from caring opportunities for unpaid carers.

This grant has enabled us to set up The Carers of East Lothian Time for Me Fund and means that we can offer individual grants with an average amount of **£300** (this will vary according to individual needs and circumstances) to carers across East Lothian who are looking for support to get a break from their caring role.

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 defines a carer as anyone who provides or intends to provide unpaid care and support to another person. The people they care for may be family members, friends or neighbours affected by disability, physical or mental ill-health, frailty or substance misuse.

**Eligibility**

* All unpaid carers are eligible to apply for a Time for Me grant – including **adult carers** (aged over 18 and not attending school), **parent carers** (caring for a child/ren up to age 18) and **young carers** (aged 18 and under, or over 18 and still attending school)
* All applicants must either live in East Lothian or live outside the area and care for someone who lives in East Lothian
* Applicants can take the break with or without the person they care for, and the break should also benefit the cared-for person, even if indirectly
* Applicants do **not** need to be living at the same address as the person they care for
* Applicants do **not** need to be providing a certain number of hours care and support to the cared-for person
* Applicants do **not** need to be in receipt of Carers Allowance or other means-tested benefits
* Applicants must be willing to tell us how they would benefit from a grant towards the cost of a break
* Applicants are accountable for how they spend the money awarded and should be willing to provide feedback and receipts following the break
* Where the carer or cared-for person has a terminal illness, the application can be fast-tracked
* Only **one** grant will be awarded in any 12-month period

**Aims**

The aims of the Fund are that:

1. Carers will have more opportunities to enjoy a life alongside their caring role
2. Carers will feel better supported to sustain their caring role
3. Carers and the people they care for will have improved wellbeing

**What you can spend a Time for Me grant on**

The funding can be used flexibly to pay for a range of activities or items that can give carers a break from the day-to-day caring situation, for example:

* Replacement care for the cared-for person to give the carer some time to him/herself
* Break away from home or day trips with or without the cared-for person
* Entertainment e.g. meals out, theatre, cinema or concert tickets
* Relaxation or complementary therapies/spa days
* Leisure or fitness activities or memberships
* Fees for classes, courses or activities
* Hobby or craft materials
* Subscriptions e.g. films, books, TV
* Equipment or adaptations (so long as these contribute to a break from caring in some way)
* Anything else that will give the carer a break from their caring role

**\* Please note that we cannot pay for breaks that have already been taken, or activities / equipment / items that have already been paid for \***

**The Application Process**

To apply for a Time for Me grant, you will first need to have a conversation with our Building Better Breaks Development Worker; this can be happen in person, on the phone or virtually. If you prefer, you can complete an online or paper application form instead.

If you are not eligible for The Carers of East Lothian Breaks from Caring Fund for any reason, we will explain this to you and try to help you to find other sources of funding.

Grant applications will be considered by senior staff within Carers of East Lothian and applicants will usually be informed of the outcome within 2 weeks. An Advisory Group meets regularly to look at strategic issues, monitor progress and discuss any major issues or challenges that arise in connection with the Time for Me grants scheme.

If your Time for Me grant application is approved, we will contact you and ask for your bank account details to enable payment. We will also ask you to provide receipts and feedback after you have taken your break.

***To find out more or to apply: Phone Carers of East Lothian on 0131 665 0135***

***or email:*** ***centre@coel.org.uk***