

Time for Carers Fund

Helping carers take a break

Information and Guidance Notes for completing Time for Carers applications

We can support carers who have additional communication needs, because English is not their first language, or because they have a disability. If you would like support to complete the Time for Carers Fund application process please contact our Carers Advice Line on 0113 380 4300 or email advice@carersleeds.org.uk.

What is Time for Carers?

The Time for Carers fund can provide an unpaid carer with a payment of up to £250 so that they can have a break from caring. The scheme is funded by Leeds City Council and administered by Carers Leeds. Please note that it is a condition of the grant that your details will be shared with Leeds City Council who may contact you about services for carers.

Who is a carer?

A carer is someone who, without payment, provides support to a friend or family member who due to illness, frailty, disability, mental health issues or substance misuse cannot manage without their help.

What does Carers Leeds do?

Carers Leeds offers free support and information to carers across Leeds aged 16 and over. We can help with how you are feeling, managing at home, taking a break, finances, grants and benefits, your rights at work and your health.

Who can apply for a Time for Carers Grant?

- **Unpaid carers** aged 16 and over who are providing regular care for a family member, close friend or neighbour who could not manage without the support you give them. The person with care needs **must** live in the Leeds area.
- **Any** unpaid carer is potentially eligible for a grant, it is not means tested. Unpaid working carers and carers who receive benefits carers can apply.

- **Former carers** can apply for a grant up to a year after the person with care needs has died or gone into permanent residential care.
- **Paid Care Worker** e.g. Foster Carer, Respite Carer or Support Worker etc **cannot** apply as they are not unpaid carers.

How can I apply?

- To apply, you'll need to fill out **all** sections on the Time for Carers Fund application form.
- You can complete a Time for Carers Fund application form online here www.carersleeds.org.uk, *or* print the form to complete by hand *or* contact Carers Leeds on 0113 380 4300 to request a copy in the post.
- Section 5 of the application form **must** be completed by an Agent who can support your application. **During the current lockdown, we can accept an email or letter from your agent in support**
- Return your completed application in the post to the address shown on the form. We do not accept email applications – please use the online version.

Who can I ask to be my Agent?

- Your application must be supported by an Agent who can verify your caring role.
- The agent should be a **professional who has regular involvement** with you, the carer.
- **Not** a family member, friend or work colleague.
- Some GP practices will charge patients for signing certain forms. If you want to use your GP as your Agent we would suggest that you ask them whether or not there will be a charge. Unfortunately, Carers Leeds is not able to contact your GP to ask them to waive any fees. You may wish to consider if there is anyone else who could act as an Agent for you. A practice nurse or community nurse would be able to sign the application and would not charge.
- If you have any difficulties asking a professional to support your application, please contact our Carers Advice Line on 0113 380 4300 or email advice@carersleeds.org.uk. We may be able to act as the agent but we would need to speak with you about your caring role.

How often can I apply?

- Only one application can be made every 3 years.
- If you have already received a grant from this fund within the last 3 years you cannot make a new application.
- If you have received a grant from this fund in the past and you did not return receipts then you are unable to apply again.
- Where more than one carer in a household cares for the same person, only 1 application can be made every 3 years.
- Receipts totalling the amount of the grant and a completed Report Back form must be received from each successful application before a further application can be made.

What can I apply for?

A Time for Carers grant can be used for something that clearly gives a carer a break from their caring role.

***Please note** Carers Leeds is operating in accordance to COVID Government Guidance; should you wish to use your grant for an activity that is not permitted at the time of your application, your application form will not be processed until Government Guidance allows such activities*

- A holiday (with or without the person with care needs)
- A weekend break (with or without the person with care needs)
- Complementary therapies e.g. massage, reflexology, relaxation session
- Training course fees, books or equipment e.g. adult education course, evening class, leisure course
- Health and wellbeing sessions e.g. gym membership or exercise classes
- Day trips e.g. coach trip, visiting friends or family
- Social outings e.g. concert, theatre, cinema, restaurant, coffee with friends/family
- Driving lessons e.g. lessons, theory test, provisional licence
- Purchase of items for a leisure break e.g. a tent or a bike
- A laptop or tablet/ipad/smartphone (**not** a phone contract/bills)
- Items for hobbies e.g. art and crafts materials, gardening items, exercise equipment

How can I spend the grant?

- A Time for Carers grant **cannot** be used to pay for a break/holiday, activity, outing or item **which you have already purchased**.
- **The grant is for the carer's expenses only.** However, we do accept that sometimes the only way for a carer to benefit would be to take the person with care needs with them for a break/holiday. The money could be spent, for example, on the cost of a shared caravan, shared holiday apartment or shared hotel accommodation for yourself and the person with care needs.
- The break must be taken within 12 months of the date that the award is paid.
- If you have not spent the grant 12 months after you received it then the money must be returned to Carers Leeds. If not returned and no receipts received then you will be unable to access the fund again.

Why do I need to return receipts?

We need evidence that the grant awarded is used for the purpose it was given. It is a condition of the Time for Carers grant that receipts for money spent are returned.

- You must return your receipts to Carers Leeds within 1 month of the money being spent or the break being taken and within 12 months of receiving the grant.
- **Receipts submitted must be for carer expenses only.** However, receipts for the cost of a shared caravan, shared holiday apartment or shared hotel accommodation for yourself and the person with care needs will be accepted.
- You will be sent a Report Back Form if your application is successful. Receipts should be attached to a completed Form.
- Receipts must match the details of the break/holiday, activity, outing or item requested on the application form. We will **not** accept receipts for ordinary living costs i.e. supermarket food, hairdressing, white goods (fridges etc.) and clothes.
- We cannot accept receipts for a break/holiday, activity, outing or item which you purchased before you were awarded the grant.

- If receipts are lost, duplicate receipts should be sought, if at all possible. A Report Back form should still be completed giving details of why receipts are not being submitted. Failure to provide appropriate receipts may mean that you are ineligible to apply to Time for Carers Fund in the future.
- Leeds City Council, who provides the funding for Time for Carers Fund, may request that grant payments are returned if receipts are not provided. **Please note Carers Leeds does not send out reminder letters.**
- Please note that if the grant is misused you may be asked to return the money by Leeds City Council who fund the grant.

What happens after I apply?

- At busy times, it can take up to **5 months** from the date we receive your application until the date you hear the outcome.
- All application forms that we receive are processed in date order.
- Once we receive your application form, we will check that every section has been completed. If information is missing we will have to send the form back to you which will delay your application being processed.
- All applications are considered by an Allocation Panel that meets regularly at Carers Leeds. The panel has a maximum number of applications to process at each meeting.
- You will receive a letter/email within 10 working days of the Allocation Panel sitting, advising if you have been successful or not.
- If the Time for Carers Fund runs out, Carers Leeds will return unprocessed application forms. Carers will be informed about the availability of further funding via the Carers Leeds bi-monthly newsletter. We may also make this information available on our website or on social media.

How do we award the grant?

- The grant can be paid directly into your bank account or by cheque.
- We will not issue cash and we will not authorise cheques to be cashed at quick cash outlets.

How do I check progress?

- Due to the number of applications received, we regret that we are unable to answer telephone enquiries about individual applications.
- You will receive a letter confirming whether or not your application has been successful 10 days after the Allocation Panel has met.

Contact

If you have any questions about the fund please contact the advice line on 0113 380 4300 or email info@carersleeds.org.uk