**Small Grants for Carers Groups**  **Guidance**

The purpose of the Small Grants for Carers Groups is to enable carers to set up and maintain carers groups that provide regular breaks from caring, opportunities for peer support and leisure activities for carers.

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, frailty, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support.

# Grants and Support for Carers Groups

Small Grants for Carers Groups are administered by Carers Voice Norfolk and Waveney as part of Carers Matter Norfolk. Carers Matter Norfolk is a county-wide service that supports unpaid carers aged 16+ caring for someone aged 18+. Funded by Norfolk County Council and NHS Clinical Commissioning Group Partners, Carers Matter Norfolk is led and shaped by carers, empowering and enabling them to improve their lives.

Small Grants for Groups funding consists of £30k per annum – this will be distributed to Carers Groups across **Norfolk only**, of which approximately 140 have been identified.Grants are applied for and awarded on an annual basis and will be divided across quarterly application rounds. Small Grants for Carers Groups should be seen as a contribution towards running a Carers Group, and may not cover all associated costs.

The outcome of all grant applications will be decided on by a panel of carers and allocation will be based on need and actual costs incurred. In order to avoid double funding and ensure funding is allocated based on greatest need, groups are required to disclose any funding received from other sources, as well as whether their members contribute financially. This could include funding in kind, i.e. provision of a free meeting room.

In the event available funding is oversubscribed, applications will be prioritised as follows:

* Volunteer facilitated Carers Groups
* Carers Groups with attached organisational support
* Top Up Grants (awarded to groups with existing grants who have identified additional funding need)

We will also look closely at the value for money your grant request represents by dividing the overall amount asked for by the number of carers it will benefit. We may not be able to fund full amounts where significant sums are being asked for a small group.

Funding deadlines will be advertised on the website and social media or available by contacting Carers Matter Advice Line: 0800 0831 148 / info@carersmatternorfolk.org

# Eligibility Criteria

A group must meet all the criteria below to be eligible for a grant:

1. Consist of carers aged 16 and over who are living in Norfolk and caring for people over 18. (The group may include carers from neighbouring counties; however, the majority of carers must be from Norfolk.)
2. Consist of at least 4 people who are carers over the age of 16. At least 50% of regular attendees must be over 16.
3. If the group is a mixture of carers, cared for and ex carers, at least 50% of regular attendees must be people who are currently caring.
4. Meet together a minimum of 4 times a year. This could be face to face, or using telephone conferencing, social networking, or other electronic media.
5. Groups must be open to new members and actively recruiting in their local community.
6. Give carers a break from caring.
7. Provide carers with one or more of the following: peer support access to information; advice and guidance; access to education and training; leisure/sport activities; promoting carers health and well-being.
8. All members of the group are required to register with Carers Matter Norfolk and Carers Voice Norfolk and Waveney in order to access the benefits of membership.

# Filling out the application form

Our application process was decided upon by carers themselves and is designed to be as simple as possible. We ask that you read this guidance in full before filling out the form.

Please complete all of the form in as much detail as possible, as this makes it easier for the panel to make a clear decision on how much funding to award.

You will have to assign amounts of money for each item request otherwise we cannot award funding. The panel will also not approve costs such as ‘other’ or ‘miscellaneous’. Where possible, please show how you have arrived at overall figures. e.g. instead of writing “room rental £300”, add detail such as “room rental £25pcm x 12 months = £300”.

If you are requesting funds for travel expenditure, please provide specific details of how this will be spent in the application form. e.g. “£50 per year as a contribution to the cost of hiring a minibus to collect members in rural areas.”

There is no formal limit on the amount that can be applied for, however the panel of carers have to be even-handed with all applications and receipts/evidence of mileage must be submitted.

# Procedures and Regulations

All successful applicants will be required to sign a Service User Agreement before any payment is released. Groups will also be required to complete evaluation documentation.

Payments will be transferred by BACS into a designated bank account in the name of the Carers Group. If a group does not hold their own bank account and this is a barrier to applying for a grant, please contact Carers Matter Norfolk for advice.

Groups will be required to keep receipts to evidence all spending and these must be submitted to Carers Matter Norfolk after 6 months and at the end of the funded year. The funded year for your group starts from when you receive your first payment.

On receipt of funding, groups should be willing to supply updates and good news stories – these will be used to publicise the groups and evidence the benefit of grant provision. Groups should also promote Carers Voice membership by encouraging individuals to join Carers Voice, and (where possible) providing a carer to represent their group at Carers Locality Network meetings.

If an applicant is unhappy with the outcome of their grant application, they should contact the Service Manager for Carers Matter Norfolk – contact details will be included with the application decision or available by contacting Carers Matter Norfolk Advice Line: 0800 0831 148 / info@carersmatternorfolk.org

# Existing Support for Carers Groups

Support offered to Carers Groups by Carers Matter Norfolk and other organisations extends beyond financial provision. Carers Groups can also access assistance with the following:

* **Local support from a Carer Connector** – Carer Connectors are based in the community and can assist groups with membership and recruitment. They also offer support, guidance and self-advocacy to individual carers on a 1:1 basis.

* **Education and awareness sessions** – these can be delivered at a group’s regular meeting and cover any subject matter relevant to the individual carer or skills around group set-up and governance.

* **Communications, advertising and PR** – assistance with designing promotional material and promoting group activities on social media platforms. You may wish to make use of this facility. Making use of this for free may be more cost effective than any money requested – please let us know.
* **Free Refreshments** – if regular refreshments are required, we ask that you first apply for a Co-op Community Gift Voucher <https://www.eastofengland.coop/community/how-we-can-support-you-(1)/gift-vouchers> as they may be able to provide with you with a voucher of up to £10 for refreshments.

**If you have any queries about Small Grants for Carers Groups, please contact:**

Carers Voice Membership and Grants Officer

Email: groupgrants@carersmatternorfolk.org Tel: 07932095260

Carers Matter Norfolk Advice Line

Email: info@carersmatternorfolk.org.uk Tel: 0800 0831 148