

CREATIVE BREAKS 2024-2025: IMPACT REPORT



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BACKGROUND

In Scotland there is an estimated 800,000 unpaid carers, including around 30,000 young carers.

Unpaid carers support family members, partners or friends due to disability, illness, addiction, frailty or mental health challenges. The caring role can be physically and emotionally demanding.

Regular, meaningful short breaks from caring responsibilities can significantly enhance unpaid carers' health and wellbeing, giving them time to rest and recharge. Shared Care Scotland is dedicated to widening access to quality short breaks across Scotland. As part of this commitment, we deliver three of the four Short Breaks Fund programmes on behalf of the Scottish Government.

The Short Breaks Fund

The Short Breaks Fund provides grants to third sector organisations so they can support unpaid carers to take a break. The aim is to increase short break opportunities across Scotland,

allowing more unpaid carers to take the right break at the right time.

Funding is delivered through the following programmes:

Creative Breaks provides funding to third sector organisations to develop and deliver short breaks for carers of adults, young carers and the people they care for.

Better Breaks provides funding to third sector organisations to develop and deliver short breaks for disabled children and young people and their carers.

Time to Live provides funding to organisations (usually local carers' centres) to deliver microgrants to unpaid carers. These grants help carers take flexible tailored breaks that suit their needs and circumstances.

A fourth programme, **Take a Break Scotland**, is administered by the Family Fund. The programme provides grants to parent carers of disabled children and young people who have complex

additional support needs or serious life-threatening conditions. Grants can be used flexibly to support short breaks that suit the individual needs and circumstances of each carer.

INTRODUCTION

Creative Breaks provides funding for projects that deliver short breaks activities for:

- ▶ Unpaid carers of adults (aged 21 and over).
- ▶ Young carers (caring for children or adults).
- ▶ The individuals they care for.

These funded breaks provide unpaid carers with opportunities to have a life outside or alongside their caring responsibilities, supporting their wellbeing. The breaks also benefit cared-for individuals and help sustain the relationship between the carer

and cared-for person. A short break can include day trips, overnight stays, residentials, clubs and social groups, befriending, complementary therapies, and any other activity that provides a break from caring.

Creative Breaks projects align with the outcomes and principles of the Short Breaks Fund, ensuring breaks are meaningful, tailored and flexible to carers' needs and circumstances. This report explores the impact and benefits of delivering short breaks whilst highlighting challenges, key learnings and future developments for the funding programme.

Principles of the fund

- ▶ **Mutual benefit:** a positive difference should be made to the lives of carers and the people that they care for, improving their quality of life and wellbeing, and supporting the caring relationship.
- ▶ **Personalisation:** carers and the people they care for should be actively engaged in the planning and decision-making about any short breaks. Projects aim to deliver short breaks that are genuinely personalised, providing the right break at the right time.
- ▶ **Targeted support:** all projects should make a difference to people who most need it, including cared-for people with multiple support needs and/or whose needs are not met by current models of service provision; carers who have a substantial caring role; carers who are less likely to access current support; or carers whose needs are not met by current models of service provision.

- ▶ **Adding value:** all projects should complement, and not replace or duplicate, the range of services which local authorities, the NHS and other agencies already fund or provide.
- ▶ **Knowledge and understanding:** all projects should be open to sharing learning and practice and helping to build a common evidence base that increases our understanding of short breaks and how they support the caring relationship.

Outcomes

The fund has three outcomes that projects should aim to deliver:

- ▶ Carers will have more opportunities to enjoy a life outside of the caring role.
- ▶ Carers will feel better supported to sustain their caring role.
- ▶ Carers and the people they care for will have improved wellbeing.



AWARDS

Assessment

Creative Breaks opened for applications in April 2024 and closed in May 2024, **receiving 102 submissions**. This is a slight decrease from the previous year, which saw 108 applications. Of applications received, 10 did not meet the funding criteria and 2 were withdrawn, leaving **90 eligible applications**. Funding all eligible projects at this stage would have required an additional £742,610 beyond the available budget.

Independent assessors reviewed the 90 eligible applications, evaluating their alignment with Creative Breaks principles and outcomes, as well as the organisation's capacity to successfully deliver the proposed activities.

Decisions on the applications were made at the Grants Allocation Panel (GAP). The panel is formed from a diverse mix of unpaid carers, staff from third sector organisations, individuals from other grant-making bodies, and local authority representatives. Additionally, a representative from the Scottish Government was in attendance as an observer. Each project was assessed on how well it aligned with the programme's principles and desired outcomes, which informed the final funding decisions.

56 projects were awarded funding totalling **£1,190,974**. A full list of funded projects can be found at the end this report.



56
projects funded

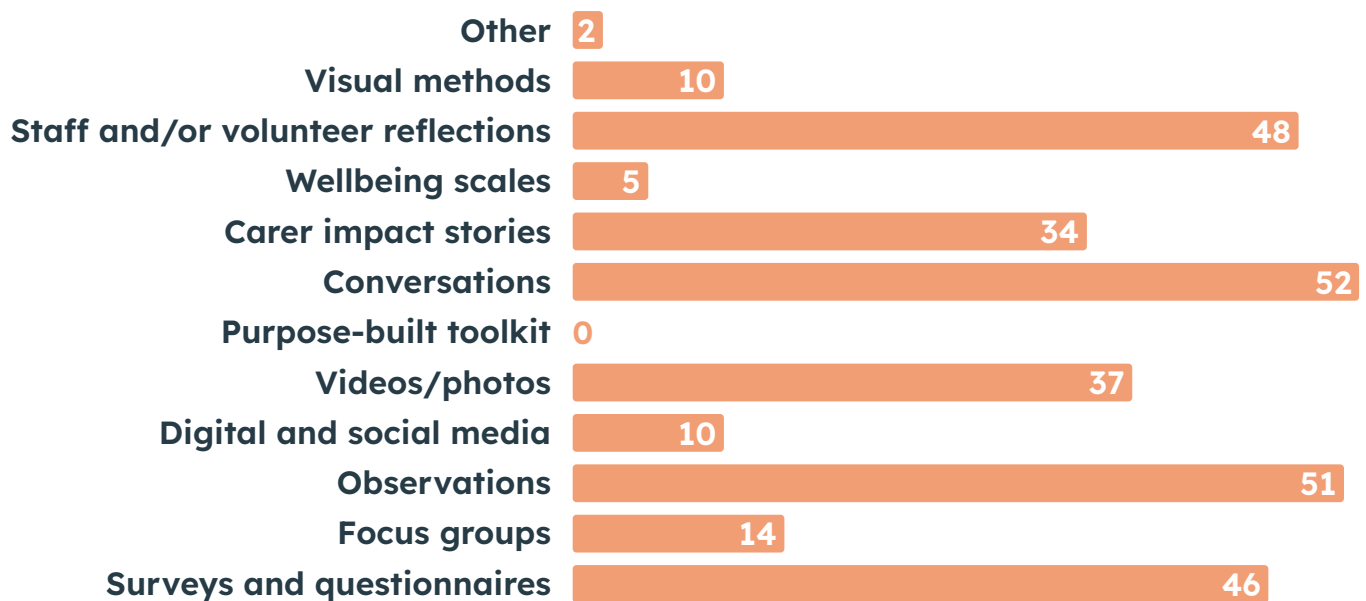
£1,190,974
distributed

Evidence gathering

The Short Breaks Fund continues to build an evidence base that strengthens the understanding of the value of short breaks, and their role in supporting the caring relationship. Grant holders contribute to this through monitoring, evaluating and reporting on their projects.

Each funded organisation submits a progress report midway through the

funded project period, and an end-of-grant report upon completion of the activities. Throughout the funded period organisations receive support from the Short Breaks Fund through training, one-to-one support and opportunities to connect with other short breaks providers to encourage collaboration and shared learning. Here are the ways in which our grant holders monitored their short breaks in 2024–2025:



“We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Shared Care Scotland. The funding process has always been straightforward and we value the assessment meetings that allows us to discuss our funding application further and answer any queries which I think makes it a very fair process.”

The Short Breaks Fund team regularly review the data gathered from reporting to support improvements in short breaks policy and practice. This process also highlights gaps in provision for unpaid carers and those they care for, further evidencing the developments required to meet their needs.

Grant holders are encouraged to use whichever monitoring methods work best for their project. In recent years, we have noticed a decline in the use of surveys and questionnaires,

possibly due to increasing ‘survey fatigue’ amongst unpaid carers. Informal practices that incorporate conversations, observations and reflections continue to be the most frequently used method of evidence gathering, highlighting the unique relationship between unpaid carers and project staff. Some projects have adapted their evidence gathering based on demographic, particularly in engagement with young carers where they have adopted digital approaches.

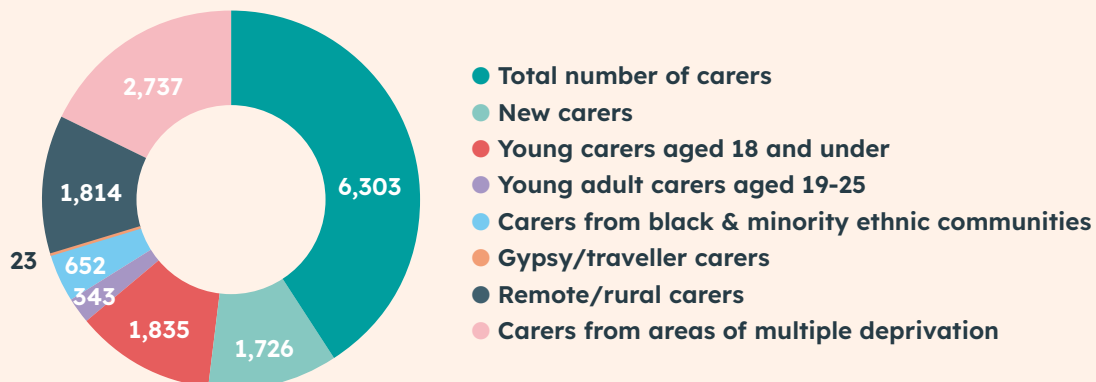
“We used new ways of evaluation, using methods for those who would best share their views in an expressive way – rather than a spoken or written way – inspired by useful learning from Evaluation Support Scotland training, in partnership with Shared Care Scotland.”

Breakdown of beneficiaries

The end-of-grant impact reports detail the total number of unpaid carers that benefitted from short breaks. This chart illustrates the demographic breakdown of those carers.



6,911
carers
6,076
cared-for people



The number of unpaid carers reached in this funding period is slightly lower than those in the previous round, as well as lower than initially estimated. This is due to a combination of factors directly linked to transport challenges, loss of venues, and a lack of replacement care. Additionally, carers reported emotional barriers, experiencing guilt and anxiety around leaving the person they care for. Stigma in some communities and a reluctance to identify as a carer were also contributing factors.

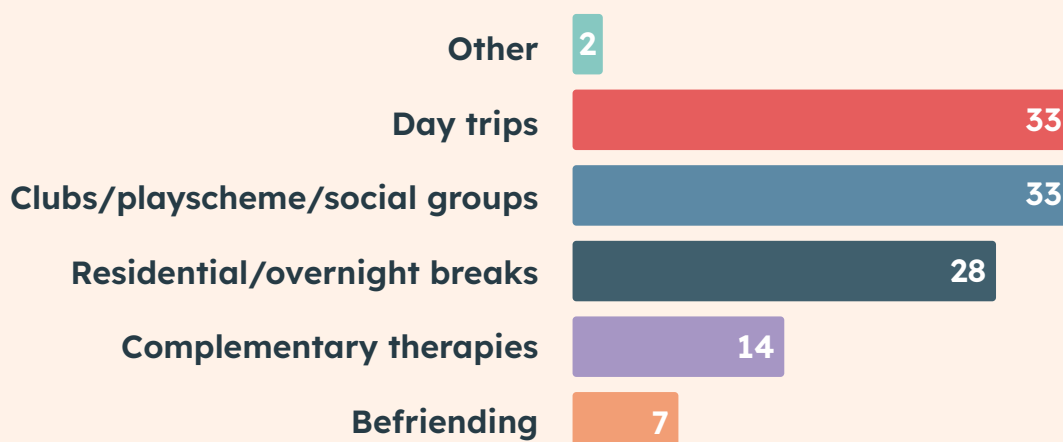
New carers represent **27% of all supported carers** this funding year, highlighting the growing numbers of people taking on caring responsibilities.

A significant proportion live in areas of multiple deprivation with this accounting for **43% of carers**, demonstrating that the fund is reaching those who are in Scotland's most disadvantaged communities.

"Access to reliable transport was a significant challenge for a number of participants, particularly those living in more remote areas."

"Carers can find prioritising time for themselves a significant barrier in feeling able to attend social activities. Many carers report that it has become increasingly difficult, as their responsibilities have grown, due to the cost-of-living crisis."

Types of breaks



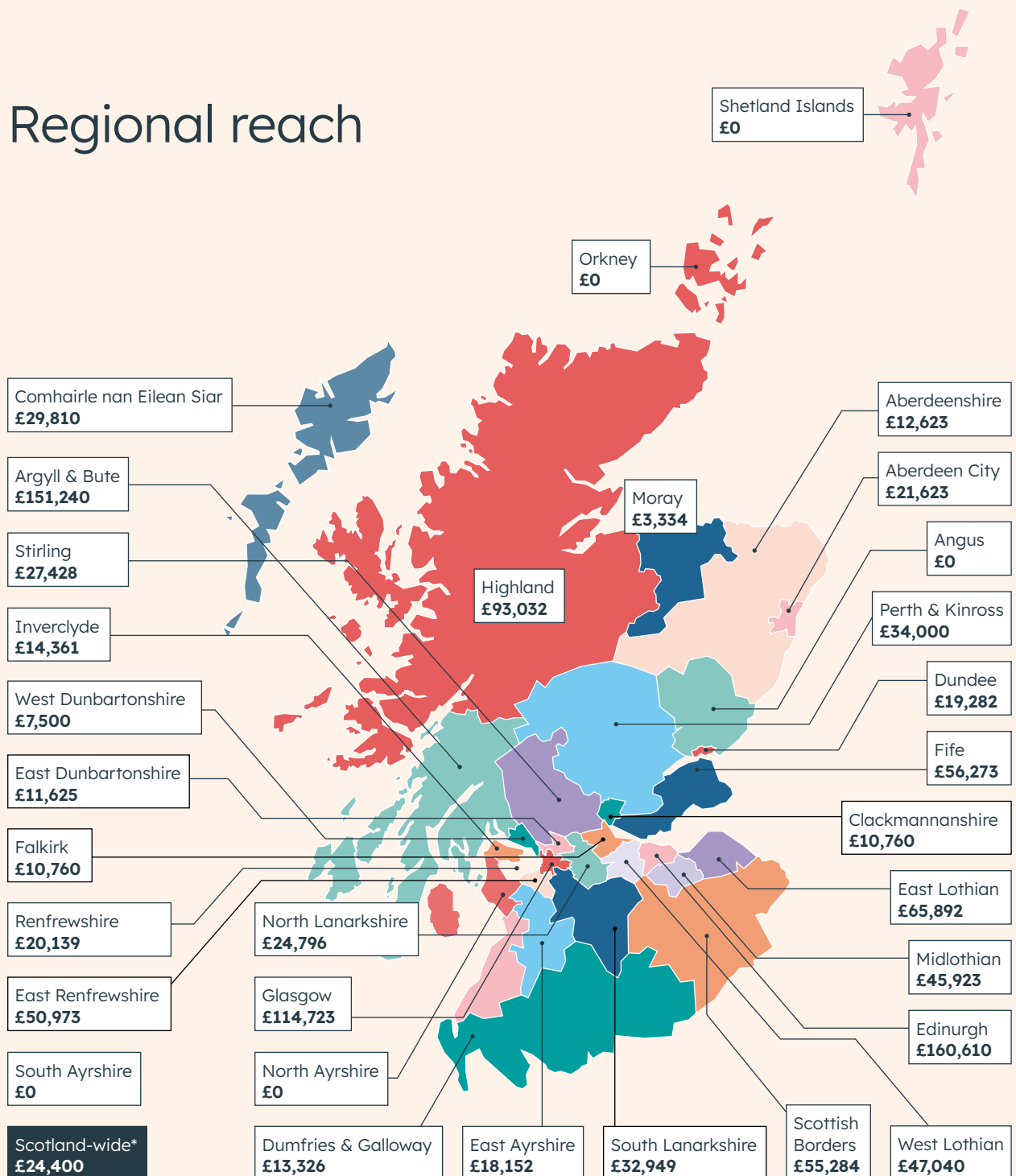
Projects reported that sessions delivered on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis remain popular, with unpaid carers benefitting from a consistent, regular break from caring. However, it is noted that this can only be possible with the appropriate replacement care provision in place. Day trips provide accessible short breaks, with residential experiences allowing for an extended time away from caring responsibilities.

Projects whose focus is primarily on complementary therapies and the creative arts are becoming increasingly sought-after options for short breaks. The positive impact on wellbeing is widely recognised, and the self-management techniques developed

during a break can directly support a carer's ability to sustain their caring role, extending the benefits well beyond the break itself. Many clubs and social groups also incorporate complementary therapies into their sessions, where they have been well-received by carers. Two breaks were classed as 'Other', one of which provided a drama school experience and the other providing breaks at home.

"The group's activities and days out have also been a real highlight. They give me a complete break from my daily routine and a chance to forget about responsibilities for a while, laugh, and just enjoy myself."

Regional reach



Funding is distributed based on a project's alignment to the fund's criteria, principles and outcomes. Edinburgh City received the **largest proportion of funding at 13.5%**, followed closely by Argyll & Bute with 13%.

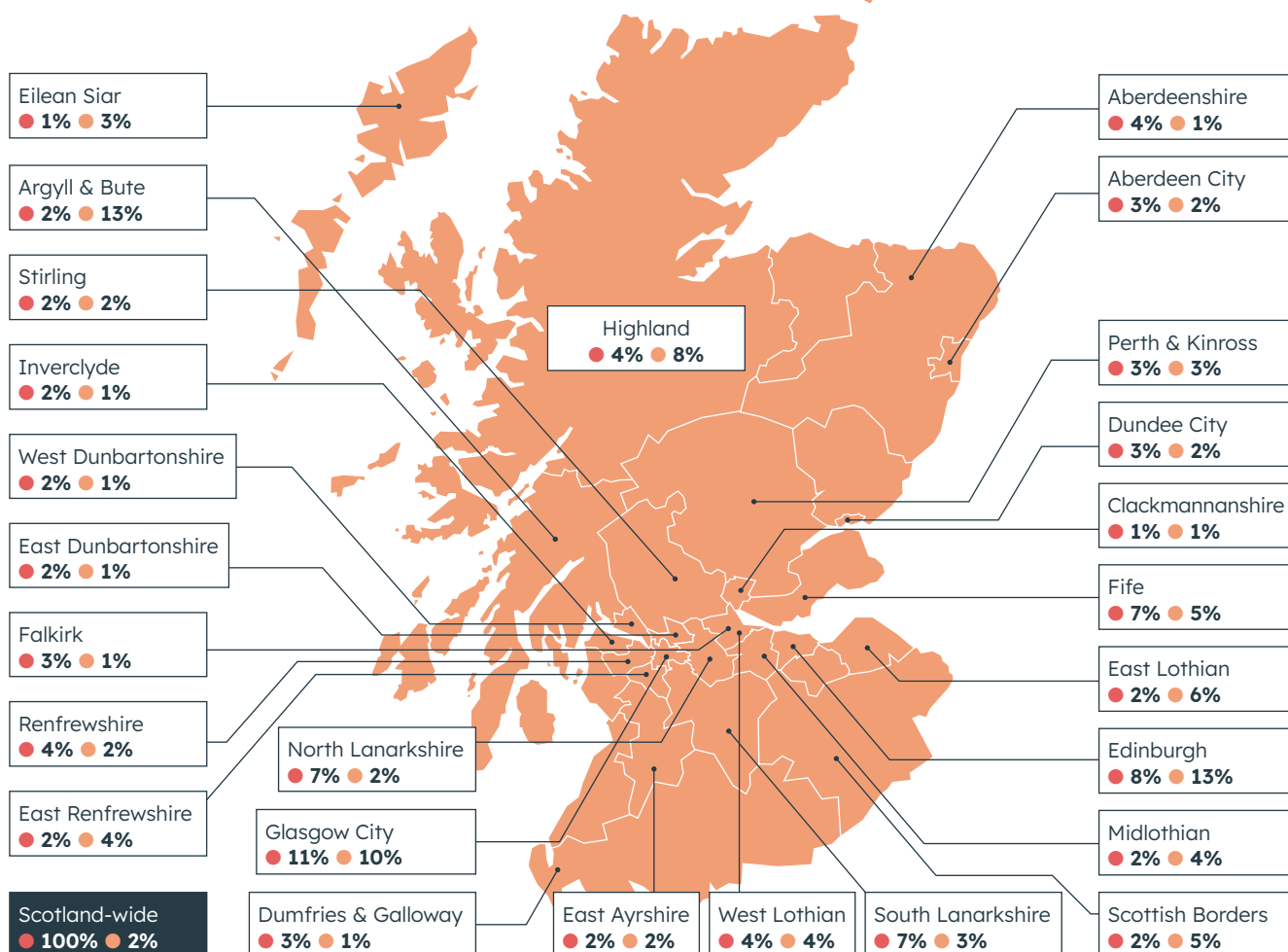
It is encouraging to see that projects in Inverclyde and Moray received funding this year as both were highlighted as

priority areas in the previous year.

In this round, short break providers in Angus, North Ayrshire, Orkney Islands and South Ayrshire either did not apply or were unsuccessful. While some carers in these areas are supported through Scotland-wide projects, the Short Breaks Fund will continue working to reach and support projects across the widest possible geographic spread.

Beneficiary reach

- % of carer population*
- % of Creative Breaks funding



We use 2022 Scottish Census carer data to understand how funding is distributed in local authorities. Weighting is given for rurality and deprivation to help make funding decisions fairer. Identifying exact numbers of unpaid carers across Scotland is challenging as many do not recognise themselves as carers or are under-represented. This year's

figures show that some areas, such as Argyll & Bute, received a significant proportion of funding based on their carer population, while others, such as North Lanarkshire, received less. While the fund does not aim to match these percentages, it does show us where there is a need to encourage more applications.

CASE STUDIES

Include Us

Funding amount: **£13,326**

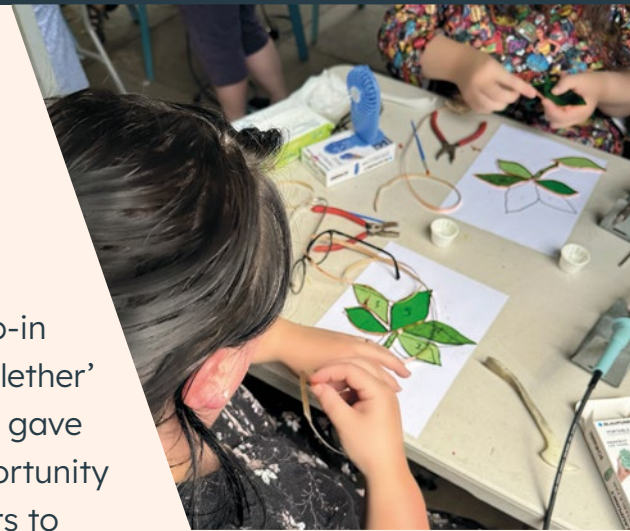
The 'Revive and Thrive' project provides creative workshops and wellbeing activities based in Catherine Street Inclusive Park in Dumfries and Galloway. All activities take place in their fully-accessible outdoor recreation space, where carers enjoy welcoming, inclusive and restorative gatherings surrounded by nature. **63 carers** were involved in the programme.

The monthly creative workshops include activities such as French knitting, wire words, clay windchime modelling, African drumming, copper foiling, glass suncatchers, and many more. Carers reported a range of benefits from attending the sessions including:

- ▮ a greater sense of worth.
- ▮ wider circle of support.
- ▮ increased knowledge of techniques to reduce stress and improve mental and physical wellbeing.
- ▮ more enjoyment of life in general.
- ▮ improved relationship with the person they care for.

The drop-in 'Bothy Blether' sessions gave the opportunity for carers to meet informally, build connections, craft and chat over a coffee. A lady caring for her mum who is living with dementia was new to the area. She struggled with feelings of isolation, stress and the ability to cope with her caring responsibilities. The sessions allowed her to chat freely with other carers, connecting through wellbeing activities and their shared experience of life challenges. Compassion and understanding from others empowered her to speak honestly and begin to understand that her needs are important. She has seen an improvement in mood, increased energy, better quality interactions with her mum and a renewed optimism about her ability to continue in her caring role.

"I love coming to park workshops. It's always a hoot. I love my wee party bag to take home. It's like a present to open when I'm in the house...the thing I like most about coming here is that we talk about ourselves and people ask each other how they are."



East Lothian Young Carers

Funding amount: **£28,620**

The 'Breaks Together' project supports young carers in East Lothian, providing a choice of short breaks that considers the changing needs of their caring roles. Sessions include a young carers' club, adventure club, family activities for young carers to enjoy with the person they care for, and activity packs for home-based breaks.

The adaptable nature of the project's short breaks played a key role in its success. Young carers were able to move between the breaks on offer based on what suited them best. This approach helped young carers and their families continue to feel supported and linked to the project, even during periods when engagement was more difficult.

"I found the space I needed to relax, make new friends and start to feel comfortable just being myself."

Young carers' club activities offered a consistent chance to step away from caring responsibilities in a safe, welcoming setting. Many of the young people referred to the project experienced loneliness, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Although the sessions were designed to be fun,

staff also provided structured support to help build confidence, encourage participation, and nurture a sense of belonging. Meeting new people, forming friendships, and trying activities they might not otherwise experience, young carers saw improvements in their overall wellbeing, confidence and social skills. Although the sessions were designed to be fun, staff also provided structured support to help build confidence, encourage participation, and nurture a sense of belonging.

68 young carers supported with **16** of those being new carers to the project.

"Just a wee thank you for doing this. The kids absolutely love spending time with you and the adventures you take them on. Thank you for giving some of their childhood back. It's incredible what you do and very appreciated".



Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision Group

Funding amount: **£9,920**

The 'Care for Carers' project offers a safe and welcoming space where unpaid carers can step away from their caring responsibilities and rediscover time for themselves. Through a range of activities such as arts and crafts, cooking, wellness sessions, tea and bletcher, and days out they provide opportunities for creativity, connection and joy, helping carers to enjoy life outside of their caring role. The group partners with Carers of West Lothian (COWL) who attended multiple sessions to provide information across a wide range of carer support.

Carer story

"I care for my uncle, who is in his 90s and lives with dementia, diabetes, and several other health issues. Because of his dementia, he relies heavily on me for reassurance and support. He often phones me between one and ten times a day, sometimes even during the night, which can be stressful and exhausting. Each visit can last up to two hours, as he needs help to bathe, eat and be settled again before I can leave.

He struggles to feel comfortable with carers he doesn't know, so on top of that, I handle his finances, bills, shopping, and appointments. It often feels like a full-time, 24-hour responsibility. While I care deeply about him, the constant demands can be overwhelming, and over time my anxiety has worsened.

That's why joining this carers' group has been such a lifeline. It has provided me with a safe space to talk openly, learn coping strategies, and find support from others who truly understand. The meditation sessions in particular have taught me valuable techniques for managing stress and anxiety. I now use these at home when things become too much, and they really help me stay calm and centred. The activities and sessions have also given me the opportunity to focus on myself for a change and to enjoy some 'me time'. When I attend the group, I can leave my worries at the door for a while and just be myself, not a carer. The day trips have been especially uplifting; they've given me moments of fun and laughter that I'd almost forgotten I could have."



Crossroads North Argyll

Funding Amount: **£34,747**

‘Keeping Connected’ supports carers through weekly, tailored befriending and respite sessions for those they care for. This is delivered both in the home and out in the community. A weekly Monday group session for carers and cared-for individuals provides the opportunity to socialise for those who are isolated or may find it difficult to go out on their own. In addition, the ‘Crafting Connections’ group was created to support Gypsy/Traveller carers, where a relaxing environment combined with traditional crafts evokes memories of community and enhances connection. During the funded year, **128 families** were supported across Oban, Lorn and Isles area, with **66 families being new to the service.**

Impact on carers

- ▶ Reliable, consistent breaks enabled carers to plan ahead and look forward to breaks, contributing to positive wellbeing.
- ▶ Strong relationships with staff and tailored support gave reassurance when leaving the cared-for person.
- ▶ Flexible support gave carers confidence and reduced the stress surrounding the unpredictable nature of caring.

- ▶ Carers had choice over what their break looked like, promoting empowerment and ensuring it was the right break at the right time.

“I try to make sure I have absolutely free time just for myself, it gives me space for myself and to catch up on things.”

Impact on cared-for people

- ▶ Person-centred support encouraged activities that were important to the person, offering enjoyment, stimulation and a sense of worth.
- ▶ Consistent, familiar staff providing support built trust, reduced anxiety and contributed to longer-term health and wellbeing benefits.

“Funding has allowed us to continue providing one-to-one support while also developing group activities in response to need identified by carers. This crucial support helps carers and those they care for manage the challenges of caring, giving them some essential respite and time for themselves.”



MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Contribution to outcomes

OUTCOME 1: Carers will have more opportunities to enjoy a life outside of their caring role.

54 projects met this outcome through a variety of approaches:

- ▶ Projects delivered a diverse range of short breaks of varying times, lengths and locations which provided more choice and increased carer participation.
- ▶ Carer-led approaches meant that breaks were personalised and meaningful, enhancing carers' experiences.
- ▶ Regular, planned and flexible breaks designed around caring responsibilities reduced the stress that can often be associated with taking a break.
- ▶ Carers and young carers enjoyed fun activities, establishing friendships with others who understood their situation.

OUTCOME 2: Carers will feel better supported to sustain their caring role.

51 projects met this outcome through a variety of approaches:

- ▶ Carers developed strong trusting relationships with staff which increased their confidence to access support and speak openly about their challenges.
- ▶ Breaks were designed to help carers reconnect with their interests and sense of self, making caring feel more manageable and sustainable over time.
- ▶ Reliable replacement care where available allowed carers to fully engage in breaks without guilt or worry.
- ▶ Carers were given opportunities to connect with others in similar situations, allowing mutual support to develop and sharing knowledge of other relevant services.

OUTCOME 3: Carers and the people they care for will have improved wellbeing.

55 projects met this outcome through a variety of approaches:

- ▮ Wellbeing activities that offered support to the carer and cared-for person gave the opportunity for shared positive experiences, helping to improve relationships.
- ▮ Projects incorporating holistic support, with a focus on wellbeing and mental health, provided self-management techniques that extended beyond the break.
- ▮ Breaks were delivered with a mixture of online and face-to-face sessions, providing choice and improved accessibility for carers.
- ▮ Carers had the opportunity to talk to others about their caring responsibilities which strengthened networks, reduced isolation and increased feelings of belonging.

Additional outcomes

27 projects reported achieving additional outcomes:

- ▮ Increased social connection and reduced isolation. Many carers formed lasting friendships and informal support networks.
- ▮ Development of new interests and skills which can be continued at home and shared with family members.
- ▮ Increased confidence and self-esteem amongst young carers, in particular reporting improved independence and social skills.
- ▮ Improved family relationships, reducing conflict and strengthening family stability.
- ▮ Feeling part of a community and having a sense of purpose.
- ▮ Empowerment of carers to share views and have the confidence to contribute to decision-making at organisational level.

ACHIEVEMENTS



Over the past year, funded projects have delivered a diverse and innovative range of short breaks, leading to positive outcomes for unpaid carers. While carers remain the primary beneficiaries, we also aim for these

breaks to strengthen and enhance service delivery within the organisations themselves. If third sector short breaks providers are supported, then the range and availability of wider short breaks provision will follow suit.

Key achievements in 2024–2025:

Enhanced service delivery

- ▶ Expansion of services and short break opportunities through residentials, wellbeing activities, outdoor experiences, creative workshops and culturally inclusive sessions.
- ▶ Increased flexibility, allowing organisations to pilot new ideas and respond to carers' changing needs.
- ▶ Increased understanding of the benefits to the caring relationship.

Improved reach and accessibility

- ▶ New carers to the service accounted for 27% of all unpaid carers supported.
- ▶ Projects removed barriers, such as cost and transport, to engage carers in rural areas and those who would be unable to participate otherwise.
- ▶ Enhanced programmes incorporating online sessions, weekends and evenings, and replacement care provision increased accessibility.

“Transport arrangements, paid staff, and trained volunteers allowed more carers and families to participate, including those who face practical or social barriers. The project also improved skills in planning and delivering accessible, inclusive short breaks.”



The Eric Liddell Community

Organisational growth and resilience

- ▶ Development of staff and volunteer skills through training, wellbeing support and by providing rewarding experiences led to improved morale and retention.
- ▶ Enhanced partnership working and capacity helped establish a reputation as a trusted provider.

Positive outcomes for carers and cared-for people

- ▶ Empowerment of carers with increased confidence to access short breaks and take time out.
- ▶ Carers accessing a wider range of support within the organisations and seeking out additional services via effective signposting.
- ▶ Isolation reduced as carers formed peer support networks and friendships, contributing to overall positive wellbeing.



CHALLENGES

Creative Breaks projects have demonstrated the significant positive impacts that can be achieved through effective planning, consultation and innovation. However, many projects encountered challenges that echo the increasingly growing pressures across the sector.

- **Capacity and resourcing:** Ongoing recruitment difficulties, staff turnover, the growing need for specialist training required to support more complex needs, and volunteer recruitment and retention all contribute to continued difficulties maintaining stable service provision. Sadly, one project did not go ahead due to staffing challenges.
- **Increase in demand:** Several projects reported overwhelming demand for the service, often resulting in implementation of reserve or waiting lists, prioritising those most in need, and limiting attendance to single sessions. Carers often wanted more sessions than what could be provided.
- **Financial pressures:** Increased operational costs, rising transport costs, reduced statutory funding, and a competitive funding environment has resulted in the sustainability of service provision becoming more of a challenge, with many projects reporting that they would not be able to deliver breaks without Creative Breaks funding.
- **Participation barriers:** The complexity of the caring role can limit a carer's engagement with services, particularly when replacement care is inconsistent. In addition, emotional barriers such as guilt and anxiety are a significant factor hindering participation. Access to services in remote and rural areas continues to be a challenge. Individuals who do not identify as carers, hidden carers and stigma within communities present added layers of complexity for organisations to navigate.

LEARNING

Projects found that short breaks are most effective when they are flexible, inclusive and carer-led, combining practical support with emotional and social benefits. Co-design, cultural sensitivity and strong partnerships were significant, whilst feedback and consistent evaluation ensured relevance and impact. Projects reported a variety of learning gained from receiving Creative Breaks funding:

- ▶ **Importance of co-design, consultation and feedback:** Involving carers from the outset of activity planning led to meaningful short breaks and increased engagement. Responding to carer feedback created trust and a strong sense of connection between carers and projects.
- ▶ **Flexibility in delivery:** Projects highlighted that to respond to changing caring responsibilities, individual needs and fluctuating attendance, a flexible model of delivery was crucial. This person-centred approach promoted open communication and an understanding of the needs of carers.
- ▶ **Accessibility and practical support:** Creative, cost-effective transport, as well as venue location, were essential for enabling carers to access breaks, especially those in remote areas or with limited travel options.
- ▶ **Variety and cultural relevance:** Providing a mix of activities that were culturally sensitive supported varied interests and increased engagement amongst under-represented groups, including Black and Minority Ethnic and Gypsy/Traveller communities.
- ▶ **Peer support and social connection:** Across almost every project, peer support was as valuable as the break itself, with carers benefitting strongly from meeting people who understood them, forming informal support networks and establishing friendships.
- ▶ **Partnership working:** Collaborating with local organisations, education and community groups broadened reach, enabling shared resources and expertise. This is becoming an increasingly essential approach amid rising demand and limited capacity.



Carers Forum Stirling

ORGANISATIONAL BENEFITS OF FUNDING

Organisations delivering short breaks for unpaid carers saw significant opportunities to extend their reach, strengthen relationships with those they support, and improve outcomes for carers. Projects also reported additional benefits to their organisation as a direct result of receiving Creative Breaks funding:

- Strengthened partnership working.
- Strengthened reputation as a Short Breaks Fund delivery partner.
- Attract additional funding opportunities.
- Increased organisational visibility.
- Improved monitoring, evaluation and strategic delivery.

“The success of the Creative Breaks programme has enhanced our reputation locally and nationally. Our ability to deliver such a varied and impactful programme has impressed partners and stakeholders, including the local authority. This has positioned us as a trusted provider of innovative, high-quality short breaks, opening doors for future collaborations and funding opportunities.”

“Successfully delivering meaningful short breaks reinforced our reputation as a reliable and responsive support provider. Carers now view our services as safe and supportive spaces, and many have reengaged following their initial experience.”

“Importantly, the funding has allowed us to embed our inventive, participant-led approach to feedback and evaluation. Rather than relying solely on standard forms, we’ve used colourful paint splodges, suncatcher comment templates, and metaphor-based prompts to gather reflections in ways that feel engaging and accessible. This has led to richer insights and more authentic responses, helping us continuously refine our programme.”

GRANT HOLDER SUPPORT

The Short Breaks Fund team remains committed to providing ongoing support to all grant holders throughout the funding year, to ensure the effective delivery of short breaks. In 2024–2025 this included:

- ▶ Visits by Grant Officers to newly-funded and existing organisations.
- ▶ Free Evaluation Support Scotland workshops to enhance organisation's knowledge of measuring and reporting on project outcomes.
- ▶ In-person conference that gives space to share experiences, learn together and explore ideas to improve breaks for unpaid carers.
- ▶ Flexibility with costs and project design, fostering good relationships and an understanding of challenges.

“The timing of the next round of funding decisions is very close to the end of the current project, which impacts planning and creates uncertainty. This is a concern given the number of carers relying on these services. For future rounds, earlier notification of funding decisions would help organisations plan and maintain continuity of support.”

In addition to this, the team promotes open, supportive communication throughout the funding period, helping projects navigate challenges to continue providing impactful outcomes for unpaid carers.

“From an organisational perspective, we have found the relationship with Shared Care Scotland to be positive, supportive, and empowering. The reporting process is clear, proportionate, and reflective rather than burdensome. It encourages us to think meaningfully about impact, learning, and continuous improvement, rather than simply numbers and outputs. The online resources, webinars, and examples shared have also been very useful in helping us reflect on good practice and learn from other projects across Scotland.”

CREATIVE BREAKS DEVELOPMENT

The Short Breaks Fund team continuously review and monitor internal processes based on the feedback from funded projects. Two prominent themes emerged from Creative Breaks end-of-grant reports, echoing feedback we have seen repeatedly in previous years:

- ▶ Reducing the application-to-decision time frame.
- ▶ Multi-year funding.

The team is committed to acting on grant holder feedback by making the application process more straightforward – particularly during a period when capacity in the third sector is under significant pressure – whilst remaining a fair and robust process. We aim to achieve this by continually streamlining forms and reports, providing projects with guidance ahead of application opening, and reviewing the timescales for assessing applications.

We will continue to explore multi-year funding as this would provide organisations with greater stability, allowing them to explore long-term goals and build on the services they already deliver.

“Would love to see multi-year funding options to give us more stability and security going forward and increased opportunities to build on the Creative Breaks work and increase funding amounts through the Right to a Break funding.”

“In terms of reporting, it would be useful to have the end-of-grant report in a format that is editable so we can draft our answers beforehand. The report requires input from several sources and an editable document means several people can work on it before it is input into the portal.”



SUMMARY

During the funding year 2024–2025, projects successfully delivered a wide range of short breaks for carers across Scotland, meeting the Creative Breaks outcomes:

- ▶ Carers will have more opportunities to enjoy a life outside of their caring role.
- ▶ Carers will feel better supported to sustain their caring role.
- ▶ Carers and the people they care for will have improved wellbeing.

Projects also reported benefits that contributed to positive outcomes for carers beyond the break itself. Carers experienced increased confidence, developed new interests and skills, were less isolated, formed meaningful friendships and family relationships improved.

The average grant for the funding period 2024–2025 was just over £21,000, representing a 7% increase on the previous year and reflecting a rising demand for services and higher

delivery costs. Projects demonstrated an exceptional level of resilience to overcome challenges such as loss of statutory funding, increasing costs, accessibility in rural and remote areas, diverse support needs and the changing circumstances of carers. A combination of creative service delivery, collaboration, community engagement and flexible support from the Short Breaks Fund enabled projects to navigate these challenges, empowering carers to access breaks.

Thank you to the Scottish Government for providing the vital funding that enables organisations to directly support carers and the people they care for, through the provision of short breaks. This makes a significant difference to the lives of families across Scotland, enhancing wellbeing, quality of life and strengthening relationships.

Thank you to all our funded projects 2024–2025 for their dedication in delivering short breaks and making a positive difference to carers and those they support.



Thank you to the funded organisations who delivered short breaks in 2024–2025

Action for Children	Fife Young Carers SCIO
Apna Ghar Womens Project (Our Home)	Glasgow East End Community Carers
Art in Healthcare	Hebridean Pursuits Outdoor Learning
Artlink Edinburgh and the Lothians	Helensburgh and Lomond Carers SCIO (HLCC)
Baillieston Community Care	Include Me 2 Club SCIO
Barnardo's	Include Us
Big Hearts Community Trust	Interest Link Borders
Boots and Beards	Inverness Caledonian Thistle Community Development
Borders Carers Centre	LifeCare Edinburgh
Brain Injury Grampian (BIG) Group	Milan senior welfare organisation
Breathe Easy Fife	North Argyll Carers Centre
Care for Carers	Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS)
Carers of East Lothian	Reach4Reality
Carers of West Lothian	Renfrewshire Carers Centre
Community Volunteers Enabling You (COVEY)	Scotland Yard Adventure Centre (known as The Yard)
Connecting Carers	Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs
Cosgrove Care	Scottish Huntington's Association
Crossroads Lewis	SNAP (Special Needs Action Project)
Crossroads North Argyll	Space@Broomhouse Hub
Deafblind Scotland	Stirling Carers Centre
Dundee Carers Centre	Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision Group (SCIO)
East Ayrshire Carers Centre	The Eric Liddell Community
East Lothian Young Carers	The Haven Caring Counselling Communication Centre
East Renfrewshire Carers' Centre	The Wee Retreat CIC
Edinburgh Young Carers	VSA (Aberdeen Association of Social Service)
Fallin Community Enterprises trading as 'Recyke-a-bike'	Western Isles Community Care Forum

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