

## Markel (UK) Ltd. – Grant Funding Report 2014-15

Over 2014-15 Markel have donated a very generous £17,137.01. This report details all grant activity from June 2014 to March 2015.

In June 2014, **Carers Essentials** was launched. Previously called the Carers Relief Fund, Carers Essentials continues to provide carers with access to essential household equipment. Even the most basic of household tasks can become harder and more time-consuming when they need to be fitted around a demanding caring role. For those carers who cannot afford the equipment to assist them with these tasks, they become nearly impossible. Grants of up to £400 are available for items such as washing machines, cookers, fridge freezers or beds to help ease some of the stress and exhaustion of caring.

There has been a sharp increase in families living in income poverty (a 2014 report from the Joseph Rowntree organisation states that 13 million people in the UK are living in poverty) and decrease in the availability of local authority and statutory support such as the Social Fund and Community Care Grants. This has meant that more and more carers, many of whom are unable to work due to their caring roles, are reliant on charitable giving to pay for essential household items. This has resulted in Carers Trust receiving more applications to Carers Essentials than ever before.

Carers Trust holds assessment panels every two months for applications to Carers Essentials. We receive, on average, 70 applications to the Fund per panel and, thanks in part to the generous contribution from Markel, we have been able to fund approximately 80% of them.

### Key Outcomes

- Using the money donated by Markel, Carers Trust has been able to make 28 grants to carers for essential household equipment which has had an immediate and positive impact on their lives.
- Approximately 10% of all the grants awarded from the Carers Essentials were funded through the Markel donation.

| Total requested from Carers Essentials in June 2014-March 2015 | Total requested from Markel funding in June 2014-March 2015 | Total awarded from Carers Essentials in June 2014-March 2015 | Total awarded from Markel funding in June 2014-March 2015 |
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| <b>£ 105,563.91</b><br><b>(349 applications)</b> | <b>£10,556.03</b><br><b>(38 applications)</b> | <b>£ 65,119.96</b><br><b>(277 applications)</b> | <b>£7,348.97</b><br><b>(28 applications)</b> |
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It is very likely that the need for grants requested through Carers Essentials will rise again in 2015-16 and we are very grateful for Markel's continued support, which enables Carers Trust to provide this vital funding to carers. For 2015-16, we have reduced the maximum amount that can be awarded from the Fund from £400 to £300. We have made this reduction following research into the average costs of the household equipment we fund through Carers Essentials. We are confident that grants of up to £300 will enable carers to purchase the vital equipment they need whilst allowing our funds to be used to help as many carers as possible.

The Grants Team would welcome employees of Markel taking part in a decision making panel for Carers Essentials in 2015/16. If you would like to take up this opportunity please contact Sarah Walsh, Senior Fundraising Executive ([swalsh@carers.org](mailto:swalsh@carers.org)) for further details and potential dates.

### Some carers who have benefited from Markel's donations this year:

**David\* is 57** and cares for his wife Jane who has paranoid schizophrenia and various health conditions, which can cause incontinence. David's washing machine broke down beyond repair which meant he had to travel three miles to the nearest launderette on almost a daily basis, due to the amount of washing caused by his wife's condition. Using the launderette so regularly was becoming expensive and also meant that David often had to leave his wife at home alone, which was a source of great anxiety for both of them. **David was awarded a grant of £300 from Carers Essentials towards the cost of a new washing machine** which, he says, has dramatically changed his and his wife's lives for the better, easing some of the stress of his caring role.

**Carol\* is 71** and cares for her husband Tony, 75, who has the skin infection cellulitis and a range of other physical health conditions and their daughter Jenny, 46, who has severe epilepsy, anxiety and depression. Carol helps both Tony and Jenny with almost all aspects of daily living, including washing, dressing, administering medication and a great deal of emotional support. She does all the housework and looks after the running of the house alone. This has left Carol exhausted and her Carer Support Worker says that "her mattress is in a terrible state with springs coming through the lining and is very uncomfortable". She goes on to say that "the lack of comfortable sleep and rest is clearly taking it out of Carol" and that she is close to breaking point. **Carol was awarded a grant of £250 from Carers Essentials towards the cost of a new mattress.** Her Carer Support Worker reports

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that this has enabled Carol to get a good night's sleep so she is able to continue in her caring role with renewed energy.

**Sarita\* is 42** and cares for her 19 year old son Ricky who is autistic and has learning difficulties. Ricky has poor mobility and severe asthma and eczema and requires assistance with all aspects of daily life. Ricky's behaviour is very challenging and Sarita needs to watch him at all times. Sarita's Carer Support Worker states that she is "very isolated as a result of her caring" and she is exhausted as "at night she has to wake up several times to watch over Ricky for long periods". Sarita's cooker was faulty and she was having to use an emergency hot ring to cook meals for herself and Ricky. This was making cooking healthy and nutritious meals very difficult. **Sarita was awarded a grant of £275 from Carers Essentials towards the cost of a new cooker**, which will ease some of the stress of her very demanding caring role.

\* All names of carers and people in receipt of care have been changed.

**Thank you again to everyone at Markel; we look forward to continuing to work with you to make carers' lives that little bit easier.**