



Local MSP Sarah Boyack joins walkers at the half way mark of VOCAL's Water of Leith sponsored walk in June. Participants relaxed with some refreshments at the Water of Leith Visitors Centre before completing the final leg of the 12 mile walk.



1,500 new respite weeks for Lothian

Years of carer campaigning for improved short breaks services are finally coming to fruition.

The Scottish Government's commitment to 10,000 additional respite weeks in Scotland by 2011 is set out in the concordat with local authorities – 2,000 weeks should be created in this current year and a further 4,000 each in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Already funded in large part through spending review allocations to local councils, the government has this summer injected a further £4 million over two years to ensure these targets are delivered (£1.3 million 2009/10 and £2.7 million 2010/11 – see page 5 on how this will translate for Lothian authorities.

New government guidance is published at the same time and expected in September. It will set out new directions and guidelines for the development of more personalised short breaks services tailored to the needs and aspirations of individuals and their carers.

In Edinburgh, Cllr Paul Edie - Convenor of the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee – will host a 'Short Breaks Hearing' on 9 October where carer representatives, lead Council and NHS officers and councillors from all parties will discuss a joint approach to respite developments in Edinburgh.

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Local carers reception

This week the City of Edinburgh Council's Lord Provost - Councillor George Grubb - held a reception to mark the contribution unpaid carers make to the life of the city.

The Lord Provost addressed an audience of over 100 carers who were invited to the reception through Edinburgh's main carer organisations.

In his speech Councillor George Grubb expressed City of Edinburgh Council's continued support for the development of carer services in the city.

What do we do?

The following services are available to carers:

- Information and Advice
- Training
- Groupwork
- Counselling
- Advocacy
- Support to carers
- Family Support (Addictions)
- VOCAL Midlothian
- South Edinburgh service

How to contact us:

Address

VOCAL Carers Centre
8 - 13 Johnston Terrace
Edinburgh EH1 2PW

Telephone

0131 622 6666 - General
0131 622 7625 - Advocacy
0131 466 8082 - Counselling
0131 622 6262 - Family Support (Addictions)
0131 644 8506 - Family Support South Edinburgh
0131 663 6869 - VOCAL Midlothian
0131 672 0987 - VOCAL South Edinburgh

Email and website

centre@vocal.org.uk
www.vocal.org.uk

VOCAL manages the Princess Royal Trust Edinburgh Carers Centre. Through its network of 122 Carers' Centres in Scotland and the UK, the Trust provides information, advice and support services to over a quarter of a million carers.

Many thanks to Sean and his team at Hampden Advertising for their help and assistance. If you would like to include an article in Carers News please contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 or send an email to centre@vocal.org.uk

Dear carers and readers

Following years of carer campaigning the Scottish Government's announcement on extra respite weeks headlines this issue of Carers News, and locally we are interested in how this national news translates for Lothian authorities.

We are also continuing to follow local developments in Edinburgh where the implementation of the Council's Home Care modernisation is under way and we are encouraged to find that council officers are taking carer concerns seriously.

Three officers attended a recent meeting of the city's Strategy Development Group (SDG) for Carers to discuss the process of implementation and carer concerns. They agreed to involve carer representatives in wider reference groups to scrutinise service developments. A VOCAL representative has joined a new Implementation Checkpoint Group which will seek the views of different groups on specific developments.

VOCAL also held a joint management board and staff team meeting with David Bolton, who leads the implementation of the Home Care modernisation, on 26th August 2008 to receive a detailed briefing and convey some of the feedback received from carers. So, as always, every available channel is being used to ensure your views and experiences are heard and taken into account.

We will report in future issues about important developments in the area of homecare and continue to invite you to feed back your experiences of the homecare changes to staff at the Carers Centre.

Finally, I would like to highlight VOCAL's autumn programme of carer workshops and carer training courses. Covering both the practical and emotional aspects of caring, there should be something for everyone - details on page 6 and 7.

Best wishes



The Princess Royal Trust
for Carers

Making donations to VOCAL

VOCAL's services are free, but carers often ask how they can make donations. Donations to VOCAL can be made through our online donation facility at www.justgiving.com/vocal where Gift Aid is automatically reclaimed on any donation you make.

Winter flu jab



Don't forget your flu jab this winter. Carers of all ages and anyone over 65 should get the flu vaccination. Check with your local GP practice about making an appointment or if they are running a flu clinic. For more information and leaflets visit www.infoscotland.com/flu or contact the NHS Helpline on 0800 22 44 88. Further advice is also available from VOCAL on 0131 622 6666.

Cost cutting choices for carers

Are you aware of the discounted leisure options that you may be entitled to and where you can go for affordable goods? Here are a few tips to help you cut costs:

Royal Edinburgh Repository Shop

Located centrally at 23a Castle Street, this shop offers new, hand-made goods at very affordable prices. Items range from homebaking to knitwear and toys. Also, if you are on a low income and skilled in knitting, sewing, baking or arts and crafts, you can contact the Society on 0131 220 1187 to become a member and sell your handiwork in the shop.

Free light bulbs

E.ON and Grass Roots are providing two free low energy light bulbs to carers through local PRTC Carers Centres. Carers can collect their light bulbs at VOCAL from October or on Carers Rights Day, 5 December. Call 0131 622 6666 first to check availability.

Edinburgh Leisure Card

Carers can apply for a free Edinburgh Leisure Card which entitles you to discounts on a range of Edinburgh Leisure gyms, swimming and sporting activities. Contact Debbie at VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 for more details.

Cinema Exhibitors Card

Anyone who is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, or who is a registered blind person, can apply for the Cinema Exhibitors Card. It entitles their carer (or someone accompanying them) to free entry into the cinema. The card costs £5.50 and is available from the Card Network (0845 123 1292) or visit www.ceacard.co.uk.

Care and Repair Edinburgh: encouraging independence



Care and Repair offers a range of services to older people and people with disabilities in their homes. The Handyperson Service helps with small tasks such as changing light bulbs, fitting shelves or plugs and altering central heating clocks.

There is

no charge apart from any materials needed.

Care and Repair also maintain a list of names and contact details for a wide range of trades-people, including plumbers, electricians, decorators, gardeners whom they can recommend.

People can be referred on to other agencies for assistance – such as the central heating installation programme, the fire and rescue service for smoke alarms, the Council equipment service for handrails, the energy efficiency advice centre for help with cutting down on fuel bills, or changing fuel suppliers.

Contact: 0131 220 7630

Email: reception@careandrepairedinburgh.org.uk

Joiner

Care & Repair Edinburgh can also help with small joinery repairs. Their joiner charges £20.00 per job, plus the cost of any materials.



Case study

Margaret, in her 70's, contacted Care and Repair for help altering her bathroom. Having hurt her back, she was finding it impossible to use her bath. A technical officer visited, helped her decide what she wanted – to take out her bath and replace it with a level access shower – and suggested plumbers from the Care and Repair trades list. She went to a plumbing showroom and chose the fittings she wanted. She organised the work herself, although Care and Repair advise it is best to have an occupational therapist assessment. From her first contact in February, work was completed by end of June.



Carers and volunteers line up for the start of VOCAL's 12 mile Water of Leith Sponsored Walk in June

Looking for a new challenge in 2009? Why not pencil in the **Edinburgh Marathon** which takes place on Sunday 31 May 2009. Contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 for details on charity places.

Libraries Festival 2008

This week long event will showcase the capital's varied libraries and information services, with free events for all ages. Over 40 services will be taking part so whether you're interested in tracing your family history, want to find the latest children's books, need information on complex legal issues, or just want a great read, come along and find out more. Events will include talks on health and the human body, and support for a range of issues, including being a carer. Visit www.edlibfest.org for more details.

Festival runs in venues across Edinburgh from 8 - 14 November 2008

Carers in Employment

The European Court of Justice has ruled that laws which protect disabled people against discrimination apply not only to the person, but also to their unpaid carer. Although the ruling appears to apply only to parents of disabled children, Carers Scotland will be urging the Government to ensure that all people providing unpaid care benefit from this provision. Visit www.carerscotland.org for more information.

Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

From 27 October 2008, a new benefit called Employment and Support Allowance will replace Incapacity Benefit and Income Support paid on incapacity grounds for new customers. So what will these changes mean for new and existing claimants?

What changes will ESA bring?

Central to ESA is a new medical assessment (the Work Capability Assessment) which looks at what the customer is able to do rather than what they are not.

The Assessment Phase

When new claimants make a claim for ESA they will enter a 13 week assessment phase during which they will be asked for a medical certificate from their doctor confirming that they are unable to work.

Entitlement to financial support will be assessed and within the assessment phase ESA will be paid at a basic rate of:

- up to £60.50 per week for a single person aged 25 or over
- £47.95 a week for a single person under 25
- where income related ESA is payable, £94.95 per week for a couple

Work Capability Assessment

Within the first few weeks the customer will complete a questionnaire about their illness or disability and most will be required to attend a Work Capability Assessment.

After the Assessment Phase

Those who are deemed incapable of work go on to the support group rate of £89.50 per week. Those who are deemed able to undertake some kind

of work related activity go on the work related-activity group rate of £84.50 per week and will be supported to undertake some kind of work related activity.

Customers with a terminal illness will be fast-tracked into the support group so that they receive everything that they are entitled to as quickly as possible. They will not be required to participate in a work-focussed health-related assessment or any other work-related activity.

How will ESA affect me?

In the short term only new claimants will be affected by the new rules. Existing Incapacity Benefit or Income Support customers will initially continue to receive their existing benefits, so long as they satisfy the entitlement conditions.

Between 2009 and 2013 all repeat and existing claimants will be re-assessed using the new ESA work capability assessments and will be transferred to the new benefit. The first people to be affected will be existing claimants under 25 who will be reassessed at some point in 2009.

If you or the person you care for are in receipt of Incapacity Benefit or Income Support under the incapacity rules and are at all unsure about how the new benefit will affect you please contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666.

New Carer's assessment standards

What should you expect from your carer's assessment?



The new standards for carers' assessments were launched by the Scottish Government at the end of July. The standards are aimed at improving carers' experiences of assessments. In future all carers' assessments should help you to look at the impact that caring is having on your life, taking into account your health, finances, employment, education and other relationships. A date should also be set for a review of your situation, to check

if the support you are receiving is working for you. For a copy of the standards please contact Julie Gardner on 0131 622 6666 or e-mail jgardner@vocal.org.uk

Extra respite weeks continued from front page

Edinburgh's joint strategic action plan for carers – Towards 2012 – will form the framework for short breaks service developments in the city, underpinned by a comprehensive report on current service capacity and gaps published by the Edinburgh Community Health Partnership (CHP) in April 2008.

Other local authorities also have service plans and carer strategies to guide the development of additional respite services.

Nationally, additional respite weeks will be measured and monitored against Audit Scotland performance indicator data provided by local authorities twice a year. Initially, provisional figures from 2007/08 returns will be used as baseline data.

An annual report on the progress of concordat and manifesto commitments will be published jointly by the Scottish government and CoSLA.

For details of national and local short break developments visit VOCAL's website at www.vocal.org.uk. Readers can also view Edinburgh carers action plan Towards 2012 and Edinburgh CHP's report on short break services from VOCAL's website.



Do you have a family member who has a learning difficulty?

The Supporting Older Families Initiative, run by the Edinburgh Development Group, offers support to older families who have an adult son or daughter (or other relative) with learning difficulties living at home with them.



The project has developed a Life Book, which has proved very popular with families, to help them in planning together for the future, where families can note down the wealth of information they hold.

Project workers offer home visits to listen to what families would like, to make practical suggestions, to give a Life Book, and to offer support in other ways too. If you are part of such an older family and would like to find out more, phone Jill or Ellie at EDG on 0131 476 0522.

Pictured above, some of the carers who have received help and support from the Supporting Older Families Initiative.



Based on the share of Scotland's population, Lothian authorities will be allocated

approx 15% of targets and additional funds. This would make Lothian's target of 1,500 additional respite weeks, funded by approx £600,000 of the additional £4 million allocation. Traditional allocation ratios within Lothian are Edinburgh 60%, West Lothian 20% and East and Midlothian 10% each.

Priorities for local authority spending in 2008-09

The first Single Outcomes Agreements (SOAs) between the Scottish Government and local authorities have now been published. The agreements set out what targets and outcomes each local authority will need to achieve and report to the Government, and will generally define where local authorities spend their money. As expected there is a lot more work to be done to ensure that carers' issues are included in these agreements. To this end VOCAL alongside the

National Carer Organisations are developing a 'toolkit' which local carer organisations can use to work with their local authority to make sure carers' issues are recognised and addressed in the SOAs for 2009-10. For more information please contact Julie Gardner on 0131-622 6666 or e-mail jgardner@vocal.org.uk.

New online short break information service

The Online Short Break Information Service (OSBIS) provides easy access to information on all forms of short break and respite care services including: home based and residential breaks, family placements, befriending projects, supported holiday breaks, guest houses and hotels. Launched during Carers Week, the directory is available at: www.carebreaksscotland.org.

Carers can use OSBIS to search for respite services according to age, care needs, type of break and location. If you can't find what you are looking for please contact VOCAL on 0131 622 6666 for more information.

VOCAL runs training courses offering information and support to carers, through a series of weekly sessions with expert speakers and professionals. Courses are free with travel and care costs reimbursed. Free lunch is provided, helping carers to benefit from valuable peer support. For more information or to register for any of the courses contact VOCAL's training team, Debbie and Jane, on 0131 622 6666.

Starting September

Caring for a child with additional needs

Seven week course for people caring for a child with additional support needs. Looks at diet, medicine, support from social services, the education system, communication and affects of caring.

Tuesdays, 2 September - 14 October, 10am - 1pm

Caring for someone who has had a stroke

This eight week course deals with secondary stroke prevention, medication and lifestyle management, communication problems, behaviour and mood changes, physical problems, support in the community and changing relationships. The final session focuses on ways carers can help themselves, dealing with stress and learning about ways to relax.

Wednesdays, 3 September - 22 October, 10am - 12.30pm

Foot care seminar

For carers who help someone with foot care and do things like washing their feet or cutting their toenails. Someone from the Podiatry Team will talk about how you can help someone else to have healthy feet and suggest techniques to make things easier for you.

Thursday, 4 September, 10.30am – 12.00pm

What are direct payments?

This seminar is being offered in partnership with Edinburgh City Council's Funding Independence Team. Providing information on direct payments, who can access them, how they can be used, how they are monitored and much more.

Thursday 18 September, 10am - 12.30pm

Are you worried about someone's use of drugs?

An information and support course for family members and friends of someone using recreational drugs. Through a series of sessions we will address key issues such as addiction, criminal law, coping strategies and safety.

Wednesdays, 17 September – 29 Oct 6 - 8.30pm

Starting October

Looking to the future with someone with mental health problems

A course for parents of adults with mental health problems which is designed to answer their questions. The course looks at housing, money, education, employment, making decisions, community support and helping parents to think about how their son or daughter will live, when they are no longer able to support them.

Tuesdays, 7 October - 18 November, 6pm - 8.30pm

Preparing financially for the future

Many carers are worried about how the person they care for will manage their money if they are not around to help. Are you concerned about the financial future of the person you care for? Join us for a free seminar looking at Wills and Trusts to find out more about how money can be effectively used. The seminar will explore how you can confidently leave money to someone with disability and how you can influence how the money will be spent.

Wednesday, 29 October, 10am – 12.30pm

Carers Information Day

Ideal for new carers or for carers whose role has just expanded, this information day provides basic information on welfare benefits, support in the community and support from the NHS.

Thursday, 30 October, 10am - 3pm

November

Carer's assessment workshop

A two part workshop provides information about what a carer's assessment is, and helps Edinburgh based carers to begin the process of assessment. Carers can attend the information part only if they wish.

Tuesday, 18 November, 11am - 2.30pm

Home from hospital support

VOCAL Carer Support Worker Roslyn Scott (pictured far right) works with Edinburgh Council's hospital discharge teams to support carers when the person they care for has been discharged from hospital.

Covering the Central and West areas of the city, Roslyn offers advice and support to carers who have taken on the role of looking after a relative or friend when they leave hospital. Support can include providing a listening ear, sourcing information, assisting with benefit queries, making referrals to Social Care Direct and liaising with other professionals within the Social Care departments to address individual issues.

Referrals are received from a variety of sources including social care workers, homecare co-ordinators and occupational therapists. Carers can also contact Roslyn directly on 0131 313 6725. If the person you care for is still in hospital you can still access support. Moffat Carer Support Worker, Keith Lugton, is based within the Royal Infirmary and St John's Hospital and can be contacted on 07525157358.

Roslyn is one of the Carer Support Workers recruited through funding awarded to the Princess Royal Trust for Carers from the Moffat Charitable Trust. One of the main aims of this post is to prevent crisis situations for carers while at the same time saving vital NHS funds by helping people to get home from hospital with additional support.



Photo courtesy of City of Edinburgh Council © 2008

Can we offer you a life line?

VOCAL carers groupwork programme for Autumn 2008 is open to carers and those who have been carers within the last two years. Lunch is provided and travel and sitter costs are also available. Numbers are limited to twelve for each workshop so please book early to ensure a place. Workshops take place at VOCAL Carers Centre (unless stated otherwise) and run from 10.30am – 3pm.

Dealing with guilt - Wednesday, 10 September YWCA, 198 Restalrig Road South

Questions what we mean by guilt and how to let go of inappropriate feelings of guilt and accept our feelings.

Remember me? - Friday 12 September Broomhouse Centre, 78/89 Broomhouse Crescent

Focuses on you not only in your role as a carer but reminding you of other parts of your identity, who you are now and who you were before you became a carer.

Letting go & moving on - Wednesday, 24 September

Caring brings many changes and once caring ends we have time to reflect on them. Explores how caring has affected us and how we can move on to a new place.

Managing loss & bereavement - Wednesday 22 October

How loss can affect us and the stages we may go through when confronted with different kinds of loss including death.

Remember me? - Friday 24 October The Engine Shed, 19 St. Leonard's Lane

Workshop content same as above.

If you are interested in booking a place or would like more details contact Ada Blair on 466 8082

Keep well

NHS Lothian 'Keep Well' project is a national initiative aimed at strengthening and improving primary care services in delivering 'anticipatory (ie preventative) care.'

People aged between 45-64 years who are registered in one of the 14 participating practices (see below) will be invited (by letter and/or telephone), to have a comprehensive health check, taking approximately 40 minutes.

Health checks cover blood pressure, weight, BMI, cholesterol, diet and physical activity. People can raise concerns, including barriers to accessing services, (eg. language or literacy), accessing benefits, unemployment, returning to work, debt, being a carer and stress.

There are links with a supported weight management programme (Counterweight), Stop Smoking Advisors, Alcohol Counselling as well as voluntary sector services both local and citywide including VOCAL.

Keep Well Outreach Workers offer a link between GP practices and the

local community. Their approach is person-centred - the informal 1:1 meeting is a chance to explore concerns in confidence, and to seek solutions if needed.

Referrals can be made through a Keep Well assessment, a local voluntary sector organisation or a self-referral (where the person is 45-64 years, registered with one of the GP Practices below)

14 GP Practices are:

Craigmillar Medical Centre, Durham Road Surgery, Gracemount Medical Practice, Ferniehill Surgery.
Contact: Pat Mackinnon (07866847290)

Sighthill Health Centre (Drs Watson & Brown, Drs Johnson & Rhein), Wester Hailes Medical Practice, Whipark Medical Practice.

Contact: Nick Bernie (07866847291)

Leith Walk Surgery, Leith Mount Surgery, Rose Garden Medical Centre, Restalrig Park Medical Centre.

Contact: Elaine Farris (07866847288)

Crewe Medical Practice, Muirhouse Medical Practice

Contact: Lynne Simpson (07866847289)

Dates for your diary

Carers Rights Day 2008

This year's theme is 'Making the most of your money' concentrating on helping carers with their finances. Please contact VOCAL on 622 6666
Friday 5 December 2008

National Autistic Society Scotland Help Programme

For parents whose child has received a diagnosis of an autistic spectrum disorder and is aged between 3 and 14. Contact Lauren Jarvis on 0141 221 8090
25 September, Agenda Hotel, St. Johns Road, Edinburgh, 9.30am - 3pm

Caring & coping with loss in dementia

8 week course for carers looking after a parent with dementia, helping carers discuss the emotional aspects of caring. Contact Ruth 661 2077
Monday, 20 October - 8 December, 6 - 8.30pm, Eric Liddell Centre

Carers book group

Social group for carers interested in books, group meets on second Tuesday of every month at VOCAL. Contact Rosie on 0131 622 6666
9 September, 6 - 8.30pm, VOCAL

Keep well community events

South West – Tuesday 7 October
North West – Wednesday 8 October
South East – Thursday 9 October
Contact: Lynne Simpson (07866847289)

Parenting Together: an event for parents affected by disability

Capability Scotland, FirstHand, ENABLE Scotland and One Parent Families have organised a relaxing and informative event, with workshops on respite, additional support for learning and parenting strategies, therapists offering beauty treatments, refreshments and a free lunch. Contact Justine Davidson on 0131 556 3899 to request a booking form. Free childcare is also available - please book in advance.
Thursday 16 October, 9.30am-4.00pm
Capability Scotland, 11 Ellersly Road, EH12 6HY

Lifestyle management programme for people with long term conditions

Courses are about achieving control over your situation, practising self management strategies and boosting self esteem. Contact Lifestyle Management Team on 0131 661 3366
The Thistle Foundation, Niddrie Mains Road, Edinburgh EH16 4EA

Carers Health Conference

National Conference for Practice Managers, Practice and Community Nurses, managers and strategic planners exploring how primary care staff can support Scotland's carers. Contact Rena Friel on 0141 221 9141
Tuesday 7 October, Royal Society of Edinburgh, 22-24 George Street

Opportunities and Choice: Carers Conference

Information and advice around direct payments, self-directed support, telecare and technology to help with caring. Includes exhibition stalls, activities and pampering events.
2 December, Trades Hall, Glasgow

Holiday! What Holiday?

Looking at the barriers that are stopping many people with learning disabilities access holidays and showcase examples of good practice. Contact ARC on 0131 663 4444 for more information.
29 October, Apex Hotel, Grassmarket

Carer Support & Advice group

Based at The Open Door this is an informal support and advice group where carers have the chance to air views, problems or support needs. Contact Sandra Dixon on 0131 447 9757 for more information.
Third Monday of every month 2-3.30pm, Open Door, 420 Morningside Road

Carers Respite Service

Also based at The Open Door on a Saturday, this service offers a safe and friendly environment for those with memory loss/dementia. Contact Sandra Dixon on 447 9757
Open Door, 420 Morningside Road Saturdays, 10am - 3pm

If you would like to update or remove your details, or would like your name added to VOCAL's mailing list to receive Carers News, then complete this form and return to: VOCAL Carers Centre, FREEPOST 3172, Edinburgh, EH1 OXG

Carers

Title: Name: Add

Address: Remove

Previous address (if updating): Update

Postcode: Tel: Email:

Condition of person being cared for:

Relationship to person being cared for:

Your details will be stored on VOCAL's database and we will send you useful information and publications related to your caring situation. Email addresses will be added to our Carers Email Group to receive bi-monthly e-bulletins. We will not share your details with anyone else without first obtaining your consent. You can remove your details at any time by notifying VOCAL.

Professionals

Title: Name: Add

Organisation/Address: Remove

Tel: Email: Update

Your details will be stored on VOCAL's database. You can remove your details at any time by notifying VOCAL