



The First Ten Years A Picture Guide



1994 - 2004





In April 1994 VOCAL opened the doors to Lothian's first Princess Royal Trust Carers Centre with the headline "All Carers Under One Umbrella!".

Later that year, HRH The Princess Royal formally opened the Centre and met with some 100 carers. In response to carers' requests, VOCAL launched *Carers News* and a carers emergency card. Ten years on, over 4,000 carers receive *Carers News* three times a year and over 12,000 copies of the carers' emergency card have been printed and distributed.



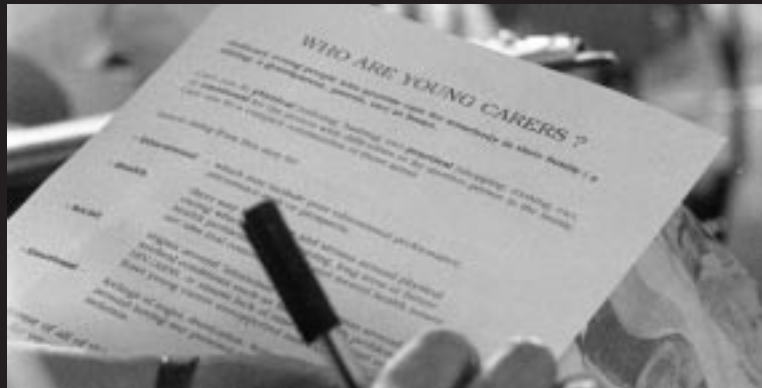
VOCAL also supported developments in other Lothian authorities. East Lothian carers set up their own organisation and launched a Carers Action Plan in 1995. Carers in West and Midlothian also developed their own carer-led groups with management support from VOCAL.

At the same time, NHS Lothian, Social Work and VOCAL developed a new training programme for carers. Today, 'Who Cares?' courses still run in four areas and benefit over 300 carers a year.



In 1995 carers supported the campaign for the Carers (Recognition & Services) Act. Joining forces with CNA Scotland, VOCAL invited Westminster MP Malcolm Wicks to Edinburgh to hear the views of carers. An autumn conference *Carers - Pillars of Community Care* laid the foundation for Lothian's first Carers Strategy *Towards 2000*. Extensive consultation with carers and support agencies produced Edinburgh's action plan *Towards 2005* in 2001. It still forms the city's main planning framework for carer services.





In 1994 research in North Edinburgh revealed an alarming number of young people with significant caring responsibilities.

Council support and lottery funding enabled VOCAL and colleagues in other agencies to develop the Edinburgh Young Carers Project.

Today, Edinburgh Young Carers is an independent organisation where over 500 young carers have accessed valuable help and support, and regular opportunities for breaks from caring.



Throughout the ten year history of the Princess Royal Trust VOCAL Carers Centre, the contribution of volunteers has added great value and quality to our work for carers.

Today over 40 volunteers support the work of VOCAL - as carers on the Management Committee, for administration and reception duties at the Carers Centre, as volunteer peer advocates and as counsellors. VOCAL could not function without their contribution and support.



VOCAL's move to larger premises near Edinburgh Castle attracted more local carers and even international visitors to the Centre.

VOCAL grew in numbers and influence, attracting hundreds of carers to meetings at the Balmoral Hotel and to political debates to influence the shape of the new Parliament.

The move also helped to develop new carer support - VOCAL's advocacy and counselling services were the first of their kind in the UK.





Since 1994, VOCAL provided an effective voice for carers. Carers gained recognition as full partners in the provision of care and are more involved in the planning, commissioning and resourcing of services. At the same time VOCAL helped develop new services and over ten years supported over 12,000 carers with information, advice, training, groupwork, advocacy, counselling and a wide range of new publications.



2003 marked a breakthrough for Action Midlothian. Carers won funding from Council, Health Care Commission and Princess Royal Trust for the role of carer support workers in Midlothian. VOCAL's Carer Advocacy Service was evaluated by the independent Safeguards Agency. They compared the volunteer advocates as "the most effective" professional ASA has seen to date.

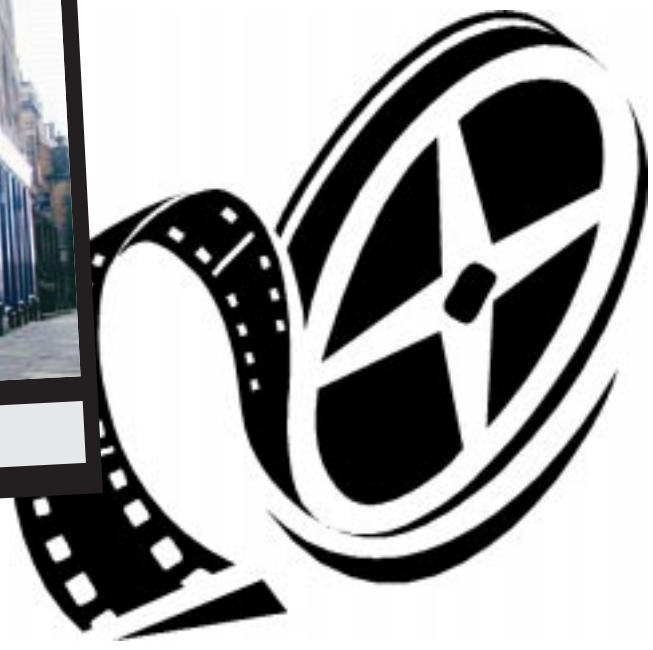
From 1999 VOCAL focused on the implementation of national and local carer strategies. Through the *Coalition of Carers in Scotland* VOCAL contributed to new legislation for carers.

In 2000 MECOPP opened Scotland's first independent carers centre for minority ethnic carers in Leith.

VOCAL supported a '*Fair Deal for Carers*' campaign, hosted a visit of Social Security MP Hugh Bayley, and accessed new financial support for carers through the Princess Royal Trust and Royal Bank of Scotland.



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Credits

VOCAL greatly values the contribution made by carers, colleagues, staff and volunteers - past and present - paid and unpaid - prominent but often quietly in the background - unseen and unheard - but in all cases hugely appreciated by carers, funders and politicians. Thank you all for your help and support!



Over the past ten years VOCAL has worked closely with many agencies and carer organisations, nationally and locally. Jointly we have shaped the carers' agenda. Much progress has been made by listening to and involving carers, by sharing ideas, joint planning and joint working and by collective leadership and creative partnerships.

The achievements of carers over the past ten years are the result of a common sense of purpose, a shared vision and collective action led by carers. VOCAL will build on these achievements in future years.

2004 and beyond...



As we go to press VOCAL has secured the lease of premises next door to the Princess Royal Trust Carers Centre.

This expansion will give the Centre full disabled access to comply with new legislation and allow VOCAL to increase both the amount and quality of carer support. We hope to welcome you to the opening in spring 2004.

Thank you to our funders

VOCAL gratefully acknowledges the contribution of many funders and donors.

We thank in particular our main funders over the past ten years - City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian; the Princess Royal Trust for Carers and Clydesdale Bank, who were major donors in the first three years of the Carers Centre; the National Lottery Board (Community Fund) whose seven three-year grants enabled many new projects and service developments to get off the ground.

We also pay tribute to over 50 trust funds who supported many of VOCAL's projects and continue to do so. And we are deeply indebted to many individual carers and supporters who have generously supported VOCAL - financially and in kind. Thank you!